

REVIEWING THE RISE OF BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY AS SINGLE MAJORITY PARTY AND BEGINNING OF MODI ERA

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ABSTRACT

Politics, like money, never naps. Nor does Narendra Modi or so it seemed in 2019 Modi government, when the Prime Minister was constantly in fast-forward mode, working punishing hours even on holidays and setting a sizzling pace that his colleagues and rivals found hard to match. Modi offered himself at the head of 'A Majboot Sarkar' since 1980 when the Congress sought votes in Indira Gandhi's name, had a political party given primacy to an individual leader and his assumed transformational leadership over and above any other calculus. The BJP rise from two seats in the Lok Sabha in 1984 to 303 in 2019, and vote share of 7.7 percent to 48 percent today. BJP solo score can compare well with the popular sympathy vote caused by Indira Gandhi assassination in 1984 giving the Congress the highest 415 seats and 49.10 percent vote share. The consequence of the poll proved to be a breakthrough not just for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but in India's electoral history as well. Modi led his party to a clear majority with the BJP winning 303 seats on its own and its allies winning another 50 seats to take the NDA tally to 353 in the 545 members Lok Sabha not since Indira Gandhi's back to back majorities in the 1967 and 1971 elections. In Modi's quest for re-election, was ably assisted by BJP President Amit Shah, with whom he shares a guru-shishya relationship. Far from being self-satisfied after the 2014 victory, Shah honed the party into an even tougher fighting machine, its strength reaching 110 million in August 2019, making it arguably the largest democratic political party in the world. Modi's action to abolition of Article 370 of the constitution which gave special autonomy on J&K, ensuring closure on the Ayodhya Ram Mandir issue, setting up a National Register of Citizen & NRC (in future) to weed out illegal immigrants, etc.

KEYWORDS

BharatiyaJanata Party, National Democratic Alliance, Janata Dal United, Jan Sangh, Indian National Congress.

INTRODUCTION

The change of world's largest effective democratic political system in India from one party dominance system of governance to a multiparty coalition one has been a remarkable development. The multiparty system has certainly led to multi-cornered contests, within the broad multi-ethnic national matrix of India (Sastray, 2000). Since 1990s major transformations occurred in Indian politics, for instance, contention of Dalit politics, emergence of right wingers and liberalization of economy, which have resulted in the rise of local parties. The first three general elections of the Lok Sabha, viz. 1952, 1957 & 1962 were contested by numerous political parties, but the Congress Party maintained its electoral dominance by winning maximum seats in the Lok Sabha and even in almost all Indian states. The election of 1967 was a sort of crunch because the Congress Party was beaten in eight major Indian states, i.e. Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, Utter Pradesh,

Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha. At national level, the first non-Congress government of Janata Party was formed in 1977, in the post-emergency period (Yellaih, 2013).

The popular base of one party dominance, which ruled India during 1952-1989 (except 1977-79), represented diverse reasons viz. religious, caste, class interests, which succeeded in increasing the maximum number of seats. It provided a fertile ground for the birth of regional parties (Suri, 1994) and the regionalization of national politics (Ahuja, 2000). It started from the 9th general elections of Lok Sabha to 15th general elections. In the seven general elections, no single party was able to achieve majority in the Lok Sabha. In the 16th general elections which were held in May 2014, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, Bharatiya Janata Party won 282 of 543 seats reducing the Congress to 44 seats, a number so small the India's oldest party of Indira Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru for 54 of the 67 years that the country was ruled. In 2014, Modi the then long-time Chief Minister of Gujarat and leader of the Hindu nationalist BJP was elected to power by the greatest mandate the country had seen in the thirty years (Atish, 2019). In 2019 general elections of Lok Sabha, Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister since 1971 to secure a single party majority twice in a row after Indira Gandhi's back to back majorities in the 1967 and 1971 elections had.

RISE OF BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

The Bharatiya Jan Sangh was an Indian right wing political party that existed from 1951-1977 and remained the political appendage of Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist volunteer organisation, founded by Shyama Prasad Mookerjee on 21st October 1951. He was a distinguished statesman and was invited by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru to join the first cabinet, because of his administrative experiences and personal integrity, but later he resigned from the cabinet, due to policy and ideological differences with Nehru and he thought of organizing an alternate to the Congress Party in Indian policies (Singh, 1977). In 1952, BJS for the first time fought the general election and got 3.06 percent of total popular votes (Malik, et al. 1977). After emergency in 1977, the Jan Sangh joined the mainstream of Indian politics and to end its political isolation, merged with several other left, centre and right parties and formed the Janata Party.

The Janata Party was apparently a single party, but in reality it was a combination of the socialist party, BJS, Lok Dal, Congress-O and the group of dissident congressmen led by Jagjivan Ram, Ram Manohar Lohiya and H.N. Bahuguna won the 1977 Lok Sabha elections under the leadership of Morarji Desai a coalition government was formed (Maheshwari, 1984 and Bakshi, 1998). In this government, Jan Sangh not only had the largest contingent of the Janata party MPs in the Parliament but also had three cabinet positions. Atal Behari Vajpayee, L. K. Advani and Brij Lal Verma,

were given the portfolio of foreign affairs, information and broad casting and industry by all accounts their performance in their respective department was highly rated (Malhotra, 1984); but in 1978, BJS leader resigned from the Janata Party rather than severing relation with the (RSS) when Raj Naryain, Madhu Limaya and George Fernades raised duel membership controversy (Janata Party and RSS) after the Janata Party split, on 6th April 1980 the former Jan Sangh was recreated as the Bharatiya Janata Party, which is currently India's largest political party by primary membership and representation in the Lok Sabha. BJP claimed its strength of membership, reaching 110 million in August 2019, making it arguably the largest democratic political party in the world (Rana, 2019).

The BJP returned to power in May 2019 general elections with a thumping majority, more than 600 million votes exercised their franchise in the national elections and 44 percent of them voted Modi led National Democratic Alliance to power with 353 seats. BJP solo score was 303 seats, it can be compared well with the one by Indira Gandhi in 1971 when she fought united non-communist oppositions 'grand alliance' one is not taking into account in popular sympathy vote caused by her assassination in 1984 giving the congress the highest 415 seats (Mahendra, 2010). Prime Minister Narendra Modi's critics said that 56 percent of the voter rejected him, but the first and foremost mantra of democracy is- 'one who wins the majority number of votes in a first-past-the post system is the winner and by that yard stick', Modi & Amit Shah were clear winners. On this thumping majority Modi said that the mandate laid the foundation for the 21st century India, where there would only be two castes, "the first would be the poor and the second those who want to fight poverty". Modi has gone on record saying 'My government's only religion is India first'. It treats the constitution as its sole scripture. It worships only the welfare of all (Gupta, 2015). On 30th May 2019, Modi, along with 57 Ministers took oath of office at a grand swearing in ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhawan.

In 2014 Lok Sabha elections, BJP won two out of every three seats, it contested 428 seats and won 282, which was a clear parliamentary majority, similarly, no party has captured more than 30 percent of the total votes since 1991 (Rahul, et al. 2014). While the BJP did get a majority on its own, its overall vote share was only 31 percent. In India's electoral history, the lowest vote share of a party securing majority in Lok Sabha was 41 percent, viz. Congress in 1967 and the Janata Party in 1977. The BJP polled 31 percent of the votes in the election. This was indeed a great leap for the party that had receded to 19 percent votes in 2009, it was 3 percent more as compared to the ruling Congress but could not emerge as the party with absolute majority in the Lok Sabha. In the last seven general elections starting from 1989 till 2009 no party has been able to achieve parliamentary majority but BJP has emerged as the single largest party in 1996, 1998 and 1999 general elections and formed the coalition governments, Vajpayee returned with a clear majority of

National Democratic Alliance in 1999 and completed its full term in the office (Sridharan, 2014).

REGIONAL, RELIGION, CLASS AND CAST SUPPORT BASE OF THE BJP

The Bharatiya Janata Party has been a major player in the northern, central and the western regions of India from the 1970s onwards. When the 2019 Lok Sabha elections commenced, there was not much doubt about the powers of the BJP as far as the north, central and western India. The curiosity was about the east and the south. In 2014, the BJP had a skewed base and was not able to expand enough in the two regions, now that has changed. The BJP almost doubled its parliamentary seats count in the northeast as the National Democratic Alliance bagged 18 out of 25 seats in the region in 2019 Lok Sabha elections due to “Look East Policy” which yield positive results to the BJP. Among southern states, Karnataka is the only state in the South India that followed the national trend of endorsing a second term for the BJP. The BJP registered its best ever concert in Karnataka, won 25 of the total 28 seats while another seat was won by an independent candidate supported by it, in 2004 when it won 18 seats. It kept up the tempo & winning 19 and 17 seats respectively in 2009 and 2014 polls and won four seats in Telangana, a remarkable performance by the party. While it has still not made head way in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and only limited inroads into Orisha (Partha, 2019). On BJP defeat in Tamil Nadu, DMK leader Stalin’s said, they were able to sustain the anti-Modi campaign all through the last few years in every nook and corner of the states. In Andhra Pradesh, BJP vote share of 0.90 percent lower than the 1.50 percent polled by the none of the above (NOTA), but in Kerala, party might not have succeeded in breaking a long standing ‘Political Curse’ of not winning a parliament seat in Modi wave.

The BJP won 18 seats out of 42 in West Bengal the left’s failure in opening its account, and the BJP went from 10 percent vote share in the 2016 assembly elections to 40 percent in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. It took almost 40 years since its inception on 6th April 1980 for the BJP to truly reach the Trinamool and challenge Mamta Banerjee’s popularity. Although 43 percent of the voters of West Bengal liked Mamta Banerjee more than Modi as a leader, Modi was not far behind 37 percent. Modi popularity at the national level prevailed over. 42 percent of the respondent’s preferred Modi as Prime Minister while only 13 percent preferred Banerjee. Among the best Prime Ministers, Modi was rated higher than all other prime Ministers by a substantial margin of 37 percent compared to Indira Gandhi (14 percent) Atal Bihari Vajpayee (11 percent) and Jawahar Lal Nehru (9 percent). Modi has the remarkable skill of keeping his ear to the ground and feeling the pulse of the people, better than anyone else in the history, that coupled with a tremendous self-belief, deep convictions, hard word, the ability to think big and take even bigger risk extraordinary communication skill and talent for dramatic fates accomplish

seems to have elevated him to his current exalted status. Four other significant qualities that make Modi are pro-poor, uncorrupt, possessing an extraordinary connection with people and believing in Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas, Sabka Vishvaas (Arun, 2015). Charismatic leaders have always resorted to truth manipulation and have shown the totalitarian aspects of leadership which are more than evident in Modi's personality, campaign and speeches (Krishnan, 2014).

Narendra Modi's wave was clearly visible in North India states, like Haryana, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi where the BJP won all the seats while the Congress drew a blank. The BJP not only gained majority of Lok Sabha seats in the western states like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and central states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand for the second straight elections but won them also with huge margins bigger than those in 2014 around six months after the BJP lost the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh to the Congress, the party along with an ally, carried out a near complete sweep of the Lok Sabha seats in the three states winning 62 out of the 65 constituencies it was a 100 percent strike rate in these areas. In Uttar Pradesh BJP won 64 out of 80 seats along with its ally Apna Dal winning 39 out of 40 seats, the NDA registered an unprecedented victory in the Bihar getting 53 percent votes. The only seat that the NDA lost was minority dominated Kishanganj where the Congress candidate defeated the JD (U) candidate. The 2019 verdict has also dismantled social justice politics in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, two states that together send 120 members to the Lok Sabha.

The rise of Hindutva since the 1980s had a parallel new wave of backward caste, mobilization in many parts of northern and western India. Modi also played his OBC card in the Deep South in Kerala. The strategy aimed at eroding the left party's power base in Kerala (Bhadra, 2014). Modi's life story was communicated as the struggle of a man from a backward caste, born in poverty and devoting entire life to the cause of social service and the welfare of people. The past two decades leaders from middle and backward castes became the face of the party at the state level too, about one-third of the OBC's voted for the BJP and they constituted nearly 40 percent all the voters the BJP got in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP saw a rise of 8 percent vote among the OBC's 10 percent among the scheduled castes and 14 percent among the scheduled tribes while only 24 percent of the poor, 31 percent lower class, 38 percent of the upper middle classes favored vote for the BJP in 2019 elections.

2019 Lok Sabha election saw not only the highest number of the women candidates contesting (724), but also the highest number of women winner (78) for the first time in India's electoral history, the voter turnout for men and women was almost equal 66.79 percent and 66.68 percent. Out of 542 MPs 78 are women, with Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal leading at 11 each. Nearly 12 percent of the members in

17th Lok Sabha are below the age of 40; in 16th Lok Sabha had 8 percent of its MPs below the age of 40 years. The proportion of the MPs below 40 years of age has steadily declined from 26 percent in the first Lok Sabha.

The history of democracy tells you that nationalism and (majority) religion are matchless combinations. The Hindu were on one side and the minorities were clearly on the other side, demonstrating a deeply polarized verdict only 8 percent of Muslim voters, vote for the BJP 11 percent Christians, 20 percent Sikhs. This lack of enthusiasm for the BJP among the minority communities are also evident in the party not being able to perform too well in minority communities in minority concentrated states like Kerala, Punjab, Goa and J&K. The most prominent charge leveled by Modi's opponents is that he is communal and divisive and will alienate the minorities, but BJP leaders believe that recent results for instance the increase in the alliance's vote share in the 2019 Lok Sabha election are a result of Prime Minister Modi's popularity (Kumar, 2014). India represents a civilization of composite and syncretic culture. Thus, India is a blend of diverse cultures where none loses its unique characteristic and qualities and yet forms a perfect union. This Ganga Jamuni Tehzeeb championed by freedom fighters life (Satya, 2019).

SCHEMES, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES OF MODI'S GOVERNMENTS

Bharatiya Janata Party had declared Narendra Modi as its Prime Ministerial candidate in September 2013, nine months before the votes were polled for the 16th Lok Sabha in May 2014. He was proclaimed as the Prime Ministerial candidate, by the 12 members Parliamentary Board of the BJP (Anubhav, 2019) The BJP's strategy of declaring its Prime Minister candidature, several of months before the elections provided the party an advantage over its principal rival the Congress. In 2014 general election, BJP consciously crafted its entire campaigns around Modi's personality of a strong Vikas Purush (Reetika, 2014). Over the last four general elections in India, the leadership factor has been crucial to election campaigns. In this election Modi covering 3,00,000 kilometers within nine months, attending 5187 events, addressed 477 rallies in 25 states, 1350 rallies through 3D technology, 15000 hoarding across India, bought the most prominent ad slots, across nation, regional and vernacular newspapers for 40 days and bought about 2000 spot a day across-Hindi, English and regional news general entertainments (Shreyas, 2014).

The pitch was rooted in the promise of achhe din, jobs revival of manufacturing, basic welfare for the poor, Modi came through as a strong Vikas Purush as someone who set India off on a new trajectory and get the Sunehri Chidiya to fly again. After declaration of elections result BJP won an absolute majority in the Lower House of Parliament (282) for the first time in its electoral history after the Congress Party's appeal vanished in a haze of corruption. Modi and his NDA were criticized for winning the popular vote share lower-even 31 percent and 330 of the 543 available

seats in parliament and Congress won 44 seats, a number so small the India's oldest party no longer even had the right to lead the opposition. The decline of the Congress is symptomatic of the fading appeal of the old ways of conducting politics and also fails to elevate its message modes of outreach and organizational structure.

Bharatiya Janata Party electoral successes after 2014 are largely the result of communal mobilization, various schemes, which recognition of the life changing benefits that the government had been able to deliver on the ground to the poorest of the poor. Toilets were made in almost every home, which saved crores of women from the same of open defecation. Jan Dhan bank accounts that gave crores of Indian their first taste of the formal economy, LPG, which freed families from spending their evenings in the discouraging environment of smoke filled huts, Ujjwala Yojana, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Bharat Aayusaman Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Bet Bachao, Bet Padhao (Purnima, 2019). Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Vidutikaran Yojana, Mudhra Yojana, Make in India, Digital India, P.M. Kisan Saman Yojana, start-up India, (Diwakar, 2018) such many schemes and programmes that Modi government launched and executive successfully in last five years. The 2019 general election BJP was fought on, development, national security, nationalism and sectarianism (Ram, 2019), Vikas rather than Hindutva that contributed to BJP's massive win in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls is evident from the massive 8 percent increase in turn out of rural women. The party win percentage was 59 percent in rural India versus 52 percent in urban (its traditional turf) against pointing to the appeal of grass roots schemes that actually went through gave 48 percent popular vote to the BJP. It can claim to be close to the 1984 score of 49.10 percent (415 seats) and BJP got 7.7 percent then and only two members won.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, BJP is replacing its candidates or denying ticket to long-term MPs paid rich dividends to the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections with the party winning 89.8 percent of those 89 seats which was replaced by the party. The party side lined nine other MPs by giving their seats to allies such as the Janata Dal (U) in Bihar, the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and the Apna Dal in Uttar Pradesh. The allies won all the seats the BJP had yielded. The result of 2019 Hindutva has pushed Nehruvian secularism to the margins of Indian politics. This election was led by Nehru's great-grand son Rahul Gandhi, did better than in 2014, but not enough to ever be recognized as the official opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi took 100 percent responsibility for the humiliating defeat of his party in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Punjab is the only state in the northern region and the second after Kerala in the whole of India where the Congress performed well. Since 2014, it has been noted that young voters are mainly strong supporters of the BJP. Party started several campaign programmes to attract the youth before the 2019 Lok Sabha election. A digital campaign, youth with Modi, was launched on social media to connect people on a single platform to discuss and advertise the popular policies

introduced by the NDA government. The youth wing of the BJP's Yuva Shakti this was used to popularize. The BJP's schemes among college students were also propagated. The Party President Amit Shah schemes to have had different plans of establishing its own independent footprint exploiting the admiration of Narendra Modi.

Modi headed the government during a period of major job losses, severe agrarian crises, marginalization of the minorities and division of society. And yet he was re-elected to power what is the secret of his appeal to voters across, class and caste? Over the past five years we see a worldwide trend, e.g. in the US, Russia, Turkey, the Philippines, Hungary, Poland and Brazil of a shift to a mode of politics known as strict populism, populist leaders are not anti-democratic, they are elected often with huge mandates. Modi government took historical steps within six months on the most prominent accomplishment of removing Article 370 from J&K. The state has been demoted to Union Territory status, and key powers shifted to New Delhi ban on instant triple talaq and Supreme Court order for the construction of Ram Temple at Ayodhya. Passed the citizenship (Amendment) act (CAA) in the winter session of Parliament. This type of performance by Modi government, nobody can take Modi away from the BJP. No leader seems to be rising anywhere at this point who could possibly challenge Modi even in 2024 general elections. The history of democracy tells us that nationalism good governance and (Majority) religion is an invincible combination to win the popular votes. Modi government dreams to take India's economy to \$ 5 Trillion by 2024.

CONCLUSION

Modi and the BJP have also started losing their aura of electoral strength in recent months, yielding power in the Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Delhi Assembly Elections to a new opposition combine and forced to form a coalition government in Haryana. Today the BJP's foot print in the states has halved from 71 percent in December 2018 to about 35 percent now. The Delhi assembly judgment may force the BJP back to the drawing board on its girds up for future elections. Five are coming up over the next two years. Meanwhile, protests continue across the country over (CAA, NRC, and NPR) the perceived communal prejudice. This disputes are held by opposition (mostly Congress and Left Parties) may have found the glue that will give them oxygen and polarization of the Muslim Voters in favor of them against national interest. Modi government on the national issues of Abolition of Article 370 from Kashmir, ban on Instant Triple Talaq and Construction of Ram Temple at Ayodhya a still larger majority (59 percent) are in favor of these issues and nationalism, strengthen the Modi government for future polls against opportunist opposition parties.

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