

PUBLIC INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS POLITICS

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Abstract

'Politics is the field of thinkers'; this is the conservative thinking about politics. But what about today views of politics is 'Politics is the game of scandals.' This is the reason for the problem arising of public indifference towards politics.

Today Indian society faces this problem at large level. So this paper tries to find out the reasons of it including the corruption, criminalization, cast & religious base and at the core scandals in the politics. Further analyze that Political socialization and political culture is the main reason behind it. If we want to involve the youths in the politics at large scale we must purify the politics where they feels proud to be a part of it. At last there are some suggestions for further development related to solve this problem.



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Introduction

To address Public Indifference towards Politics BJP President NitinGadkari appealed to the "right thinking" people to join politics to address the issues confronting the country. "People being killed by terrorists, farmers committing suicides, and rising unemployment should be the reasons enough for the right thinking people to enter politics as good governance and right policies can solve these issues," He said, "Our political theories and principles are correct but there is a gap between the claims and deeds," (zee news.com:2010) During the time of Nationalist Movement the youth of this country wants to be a part of political movement but today there are no idols in politics before the youth of India. The politics is full of corruption, fraud, muscle base, cast and religion base so the youth of this country wants every field except politics as a carrier.

When we find out the problems in Indian politics we must focus on certain basic issues which are affects Indian politics.

Problems of Indian Politics

India boasts of running the largest democracy successfully for over 60 years. Now the time has come to revisit the facts and analyze one of the key areas where we have failed to achieve what was intended.

Caste Based Politics: Indian political arena has undergone radical changes from the moment we have attained freedom from the shackles of the British. Politics in India which were supposed to be free from discrimination and exploitation, have taken a turn around the moment power has been handed over to these fraudulent politicians. Caste based political parties have emerged with a vicious intention of cashing on vote bank of the most commanding class in terms of number.

Time has come to question these deceptive political parties and leaders, whether the triumph of their parties is realistic or not? Lot of caste based political parties sprung to life across the length and breadth of independent India. No state has been vulnerable to this practice. Caste based political parties have initiated a brutal process of concentrating on the large vote bank of a particular caste. It's disgraceful for every contender to the Parliament to claim their victory as a rational and satisfying to every voter in their constituency. Why are political parties trying to bank on support base of a particular caste? What made the political parties to opt candidates based on the caste? (The Views Paper:2009)

Now the political situation in the country is very grim. If we analyze the manifestos of political parties in 2009 general elections, the agenda revolved around wooing the various sections of the society. Looks like this general election have witnessed more number of caste based political parties than the previous ones. We have also witnessed political leaders making inflammatory statements in open meetings. The election commission has succeeded in arresting the political parties from crossing limits to some extent but it could not wipe them out completely. Caste based politics are surely a negative phenomenon to the Indian political arena. Political parties and leaders should understand that caste based politics might act as a hindrance to the nations development.

Criminalization of politics: Criminalization of politics and persons known to have a criminal past becoming legislators and ministers has not only become common but is being openly defended by leaders of political parties. A stage has now been reached when politicians openly boast of their criminal connections.

Criminalization of Indian politics is a major setback as well as a serious problem. (The Economist:2008),(Jo Johnson: 2007) In July 2008 The Washington Post reported that nearly a fourth of the 540 Indian Parliament members faced criminal charges, "including human trafficking, immigration rackets, embezzlement, rape and even murder". (Wax, Emily:2008) An international watchdog conducted a study on the illicit flight of money from India, perhaps the first ever attempt at shedding light on a subject steeped in secrecy,

concludes that India has been drained of \$462 billion (over Rs 20 lakh crore) between 1948 and 2008. The amount is nearly 40% of India's gross domestic product. (Prabhakar, Binoy:2008)

In Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections 2002, candidates with criminal records won 206 out of 403 seats in the assembly, i.e. more criminals were elected than regular politicians. In Uttar Pradesh state assembly elections, 2007, 74% more criminal politicians were given tickets by the mainstream parties. Manmohan Singh has said the country needed a law to define the meaning of "criminal" - and who should or should not be a minister. (Chishti, Seema:2004) In July 2008 Washington Times reported that nearly a fourth of the 540 Indian Parliament members faced criminal charges, "including human trafficking, immigration rackets, embezzlement, rape and even murder".(Wax, Emily:2008)

A statement made in the assembly by a minister of a north Indian state that he patronised and would continue to patronise gangsters to fight and win elections is an indication of the growing phenomenon where criminal background has become a prerequisite to win elections. Despite the countrywide debate generated by the Vohra Committee Report on criminalisation of politics, the system has changed only for the worse. Earlier in the 1960's, the criminal was content helping (covertly) the politician win the election so he could in turn get protection from him. The roles have now been reversed. It is now the politician, who seeks protection from criminals. The latter seek direct access to power and hence become legislators or ministers.

The Election Commission's observation that nearly 40 members of the 11th Lok Sabha and 700 members of the state assemblies had a criminal past proves this. The Election Commission's requirement that the prospective candidates file an affidavit listing the criminal charges they face has hardly made any dent in the growing criminalisation of politics. Some radical reforms in the existing law need to be undertaken urgently. Until this is done, political parties could take some initiative to curb this trend, by denying tickets to politicians with a criminal background. Far from it, party leaders invariably issue tickets to those with a criminal past because they cannot only win elections, but also help other candidates win. The Election Commission is powerless in preventing criminals from contesting elections. The Representation of People Act allows it to debar candidates convicted of certain crimes, but cannot prevent those under trial or whose appeals from their earlier convictions are pending for disposal before the higher court for multiple murders or rape or corruption or theft from the public exchequer from representing the people in the

country's highest legislative forums. There have been a number of cases where persons under trial have contested elections, while in jail and won. Unfortunately, no political party has taken any concrete step to curb this malpractice. (Romila C J: 2008)

It is not difficult to see why political parties put up criminals as candidates. Given a situation in which the sanctity of elections is being increasingly undermined by rigging and booth-capturing, a criminal with muscle power has greater chances of winning than a clean and decent individual without such 'capabilities'. And most often criminals do win, which is why they are increasingly present in the country's representative institutions. The consequences of the trend, if allowed to continue unchecked, hardly deserve an elaboration and are seen in the increasing criminalisation of the process of governance with ministers, legislators, bureaucrats and unscrupulous businessmen combining to plunder public funds and prey on the public.

In fact a new dimension has been added to the process by the criminalisation of bureaucracy and the police. What makes the situation particularly dangerous is that a criminalised administration poses a serious threat to the country's security even as Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism continues unabated. This is clearly reflected in the fact that agents of the Inter Service Intelligence [ISI] have no difficulty in getting passports and driving licenses and carrying out their deadly assignments in India. De-criminalisation of politics should be the main issue in all elections in the country. While political parties have a serious responsibility not to put up criminals as candidates, voters have an equally strong responsibility of defeating candidates with a criminal record.

Lately, the Election Commission of India has taken noticeable measures to check criminalisation of politics. It has already banned convicted people from contesting elections to the state legislature or parliament, at the same time; it has asked all criminally-charged persons to disclose all the charges they face, in the nomination paper. This information will be easily made available to the public. Cases pending against politicians should be settled as quickly as possible. It is found that cases against them remain pending for long and they keep winning elections while the cases remain pending. Later, with their ministerial power, they manipulate the cases in their favour. Withdrawal of criminal charges against some tainted ministers of the present government is a case in point.

Indian political scandals: An Indian political scandal commonly refers to some action by a politician deemed unacceptable in law or by custom, or which is held to be morally

unacceptable to the politician's peers or the electorate. In almost all Indian political scandals, the politicians are not prosecuted. (Indian political scandals: 2010)

List of Indian political scandals:

a) 1900s

- Telecom scam (Sukh Ram)
- HDW Submarine
- Bitumen scam
- Tansi land deal
- JMM Bribery Scandal
- St Kitts case
- Urea scam
- Anantnag transport subsidy scam
- 1971 Nagarwala scandal
- Fodder scam
- 1975: Declaration of Emergency
- Churhat lottery scam

b) 1990s

- Bofors Scandal (1990)
- Animal Husbandry Case (1990)
- Bombay Stock Exchange Manipulation & Fraud by Harshad Mehta (1992)
- Hawala scandal (1993)
- Bangalore - Mysore Infrastructure Corridor (1995)
- Sukh Ram (1996)
- Fodder Scam in Bihar (1996)
- Kerala SNC Lavalin power scandal (1997)

2000s

- Ketan Parekh Scandal, Barak Missile Deal Scandal, Tehelka Scandal (2001)
- Taj corridor case (2002–2003)
- Telgi scandal (2003)
- NitishKatara Murder Case (2004)
- Oil-for-food programme scam (Natwar Singh) (2005)
- Jessica Lal case (2006)
- Human Trafficking Scam involving BabubhaiKatara

- Cash-for-votes scandal
- Satyam scandal
- MadhuKoda, laundering money worth over Rs. 4000 crores
- GegongApang, public distribution scam (business-standard.com: 2010)
- 2G spectrum scam
- Adarsh Housing Society scam

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_political_scandals

Corruption: Political corruption in India is a major concern. A 2005 study done by Transparency International in India found that more than 75% of the people had firsthand experience of paying bribe or peddling influence to get any type of job done in a public office. (transparency.org:2010) (India Corruption Study:2005) Taxes and bribes are a daily life fact, common between state borders; Transparency International estimates that truckers pay annually US\$5 billion in bribes. For 2010, India was ranked 87th of 178 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, with a CPI score of 3.3, which is a slight worsening of its 2009 score of 3.4 (rank 84th)[4]. India compares favorably with other BRIC countries, with China having a CPI score of 3.5 (decreasing from 3.6 in 2009) rank 78th, Brazil 3.7 (rank 69th), and Russia 2.1 (rank 154th, the worst of the BRICs) (Corruption Perceptions Index:2010). We can see the corruption in all departments and fields in Indian administration including Bureaucracy, Land and property, Tendering processes and awarding contracts, Medicine, Death Certificates, Transport, Income tax, Preferential award of public resources, Judiciary, Armed forces, Police, Religious institutions etc. The major support and involvement of political leaders in corruption is the big problem in India.

In the light of this arena of Indian politics how can we expect the Indian learned and well manner people to come and join politics? The youth of India has a passion of social work, but is Politics a better instrument for social work? We have to find the answers of above questions for the betterment of the country.

Role of Youth in Indian Politics: Democracy is the buzz word for our political system. But is it really so? Is it democracy that a nation where a majority of population is below 40 elects a majority of people above 60 to power? Are we really satisfied with the way our country is being governed? Should it not bother us that at the age people generally take retirement and rest, our politicians actually become eligible to be at the helm of affairs? Why is it so that people below 50 years are considered as political 'kids'?

The country desperately needs some young leaders who personify energy, enthusiasm, morality, and diligence. No doubt we have progressed a lot in the last 62 years but the development pace would have been completely different had some young torchbearers led this process of development.

At the time of independence, Gandhi called upon the youth to participate actively in the freedom movement. Young leaders like Nehru came to his reckoning and led the movement. But this is not the case now. Nowadays we have only a handful of young leaders like Rahul Gandhi, Sachin Pilot, Varun Gandhi etc, but they are in the political scenario because they belong to influential political families. It is next to impossible to find a young leader with no political family background in the furor of politics.

There can be two reasons for this deplorable scene of Indian politics.

1. One may be that the youth today are not interested in actively participating in the political field. They are content with what they are doing and how the country is being governed. But this reason seems to hold no ground seeing the discontent shown by the youngsters towards cases like reservation, Jessica Lal murder case etc. The youth of modern India are aware of the problems facing our country and the world at large. Given a chance they would be ready to change the political condition of the country for better.

2. Second reason may be that young people are not given opportunities to prove themselves claiming that they are not equipped with experience to participate actively in the governance of the country. This reason seems to be more logical seeing the monopoly of old leaders in almost all the major political parties of the country. Old people should realize that proper development can take place only when they make way for younger people to take control of the activities.

There are few things which need to be clarified.

a. One that youngsters do not mean people who are 20 years old with no experience at all. Youth in this context is meant to refer people in their 30's or early 40's with a good mix of energy and experience.

b. Two, it is not intended to mean that old people should leave the political scene and rest. What is wanted is that they should be there but for guidance because they are treasures of invaluable experience.

There are a few things which I would like to suggest. There should be a retirement age for politicians as well which may be around 65 years. There should also be some educational qualification for politicians. How can we give those illiterates the key to our country whom

we cannot give the key to our house? People with serious criminal background should not be allowed to contest elections.

As for the youth of our country, they can contribute in more ways than just contesting elections. Much can be done in areas like educating people, raising awareness about various social ills, and many other areas.

We can just wish that the next time we go to vote we find more names of youngsters who can make our country a better place to live in.

Political Socialization and Political Culture:

Political Socialization is the base of political participation of any person from any corner of the world. In India there is prejudice about politics in the society. The common people think that the politics is a field of rich person. Since childhood we hear negative thinking about the politics from our elders. So our attitude about it the politician has been change and we see him as a bad man. The corruptions take over the politics. Criminalization is a core of politics. Cast and religion is a basic quality to involve in politics. From school age we have learnt that a politics as a bad field and at the young age we realize it is true by our own experiences. This type of political socialization creates a negative political culture to get in the politics. At last man is a social animal and his/her experiences and observances create his/her values of life. So the above experiences create a Public Indifference towards Politics.

Suggestions:

To overcome this problem I can give some suggestions as below.

1. **Political Parties:** Political parties have to take some concrete step to curb malpractices in politics. Political parties should take some initiative to curb this trend, by denying tickets to politicians with a criminal background.
2. **Voters:** Voters have an equally strong responsibility of defeating candidates with a criminal record.
3. **Right thinking people** should join politics.
4. **Legal Reforms:** Some radical reforms in the existing laws need to be undertaken urgently. The Representation of People Act should amend for preventing criminals to enter in politics. Country needed a law to define the meaning of "criminal" - and who should or should not be a minister.
5. **The Election Commission:** The Election Commission of India has to take some measures to check criminalisation of politics. Electoral reforms make sure to remedies problems related to the entry in the politics.

6. Society: Indian society has a big role in politics. We should make positive picture about politics in the mind of teen age or adolescent. The political socialization process should proceeding in the right direction where the youth of this country identify there responsibility about politics. Youths should not run from politics but to participate in it for the betterment of the society.

According to Ex. President of India Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, "India will be the super power in the year 2020." He calculates that in 2020 most of the population of India will be the young age (age limit of 18 to 40 years). But it is necessary to accept a positive approach towards politics for the overall development of India.

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