

## RECENT TRENDS IN INDIAN POLITICS: AN INTROSPECTION

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### **Abstract:**

Revolutionary changes have noticed in Indian economy vis avis polity in the last two and half decades. However, some of these changes are progressive and fruitful to the nation and society whereas the others are regressive and suicidal in character. Hung legislatures, coalition politics, unstable and minority governments, weak position of PM and Chief Ministers, decline in public life, rising opportunism, lack of statesmanship, emergence of extra constitutional power centres, downsizing of public sector and rising corporates under the impact of LPG process, parochial outlook and rising insurgency and trend of road justice are the major challenges and issues of the day. If they are not addressed well in time, these can put at stake the unity and integrity of the Nation. Moreover, the progressive tendencies like strengthening of constitutional bodies as Election Commission, Higher Judiciary, Comptroller and Auditor General, Legislatures etc. as well as the vigilant and participatory citizenry need to boost up for making Indian Democracy more viable and vibrant. Ethics in public life and RTI Act, 2005 will be instrumental in attaining optimum benefits from the ongoing programmes of social welfare and development.

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Change is the law of nature. Everything in this world undergoes change irrespective of time and space factors. The change may be natural or man made, progressive or regressive, complete or partial, gradual or revolutionary. Change in one aspect of the life penetrates and affects the others too. However, the changes are revolutionary in the present age due to a number of factors like Information Communication Technology, development in the fields of transportation and science as well as in socio-economic sectors around the globe. Indian politics cannot remain unaffected of these changes that's why it has faced a number of challenges in the new situations. Accordingly it adjusted itself by making some structural and procedural amendments. The major issues to be dealt in this paper as the recent trends of Indian politics which are as under:-

1. **Hung Legislatures:** - Due to decline of statesmanship among leaders and emergence of many more political parties at national and regional levels, it is becoming difficult every day for a single political party to attain majority in the legislature whether the matter is concerned with Legislative Assembly or Parliament. After 1985 General Election, no political party could get majority in Lok Sabha at its own and the situation is not far good so far the Assemblies are concerned. Even states like Goa, Mizoram, Tripura, Jharkhand, Haryana, U.P, Jammu & Kashmir etc. are before us where hung legislature are the order of the day. In Haryana and Punjab, non-congress parties could not muster majority at their own which leads to hung legislature or a coalition politics. The trend of minority governments has led to the concept of seeking confidence motion by the ruling party or group rather no confidence motion.
2. **Coalition Politics:**- As none of the political party is in a position at the moment to attain clear mandate in the legislature, hence paved way for coalition politics. The coalition politics emerges when two or more political parties enter in a political pact to polarise votes or to get majority on the floor either to form a government or to topple the existing one. The coalitions may be pre-poll or post poll. It may be temporary or long lasting. It may be opportunistic or issue based. It is a fact that coalition politics has paved way for non-congress political parties to step in powers regime which was impossible for them at their own. Though India has far and wide experience of coalition politics and such governments were even formed before independence i.e. Provincial government of 1937 and Interim government of 1946 are coalition governments. However, in post independent India the tendency of coalition

governments took momentum after death of Pt. Nehru and with 4<sup>th</sup> general election (1967). Coalition Politics has become the order of the day in national and regional politics since late eighties. The National Democratic Alliance (1999-2004) and United Progressive Alliance-I and II (2004-09 and 2009-continue) are the coalitions of 13 and 23 political parties respectively. What required, is to ascertain the viability of such governments and coalitions formed?.

3. **Decline in Public Life:-** In post Nehruian era, a sharp decline has noticed in public life. Today's, everyone think of his/her personal gains and none has nothing to do with the common and national cause. The proverb 'As the king, as the subject' is very much fitted in Indian polity of the day 'As the leadership as the citizen/voter'. Under the impact of lack of accountability among the persons at the helm of affairs and emergence of nexus among politicians, bureaucrats and mafia, the public or the layman of this country has turned hostile to the system. We are going to be overcautious of our rights and least concerned to our duties. In such circumstances a chaos has evolved around where everyone is conscious of personal score and it led to corruption and a number of scams which are far and deep in gravity as well as in frequency. Though a number of attempts are made by the Government to ascertain transparency and fairness in public life including the RTI Act, 2005 but these are not adequate to address the problems imposed. Ethics, purity and transparency in public life must be ensured for which the leadership can play vital role and set precedents for the people.
4. **Lack of Statesmanship:-** There is dearth of leadership at the moment in the country having statesmanship quality like Sardar Patel, Pt. Nehru, Madan Mohan Malviya, J.P Naryana, Ram Manohar Lohia, Ch Devi Lal etc. Hardly there is any leader who has mass followers from all sections and segments of the society. Most of the leaders are busy in polarizing their 'Vote Bank' on caste, communal, regional or lingual basis. None can dare to stand and speak against these petty and parochial issues. That's why the faith of layman has eroded rapidly from the leadership as their saviour and emancipator. Moreover, the public perceive them as villain and responsible for various regional and national problems. The public gruesome can be accessed from the instance of terrorists attack on Parliament (2002) when it was a general perception that the National Integrity and dignity was put at stake better it would be if some or majority of the leaders were also eliminated by the terrorists therein.

5. **Decay in Uniformity of Minister-in-Council:-** The coalition governments are made of heterogeneous groups having one or the other political agenda. In some cases, even the rival groups can be seen sitting together in the council to get share in power. The NDA government (1999-2004) led by Sh. A.B Vajpayee was a conglomeration of 13 political parties and most of them are rival in State politics. Similar is the position of UPA-I and II government led by Dr. ManMohan Singh where the partners are not only rival to one another but also/even rival of Congress itself. The cases of regional parties led by Mamta Banerjee, Ram Bilas Paswan, Lalu Parshad Yadav, Sharad Pawar, M. Karunanidhi are before us. Due to the ministers of these parties and other factionalism, the PM Dr. Man Mohan Singh has faced embarrassing situation at off and on hours. The approach of Mr. Mamta Banerjee in allocation of Ministry as well as in Green Hunt Operation; D.M.K Leadership in removal of Stalin, former Union Minister and undue defence of D. Raja, Union Minister for Telecom, implicated in multi crore 3G spectrum scam; press release by Jai Ram Ramesh, Union Minister for Environment on Dantewara Massacre; collision of Kama Nath, Union Minister of Transport with Jai Ram Ramesh in cabinet meeting; prolonged absence of M. Alagiri, Union Minister for Chemical and Fertilizer, from cabinet meetings as well as from Parliament etc. are before us when the PM seemed very helpless and his government had to come forward to protect their misdeeds. Such characters should not be tolerated in public life and the persons at the helm of affairs should be man of high integrity and commitment to their constitutional liability.
6. **Unstable Governments and Weak Prime Minister & Chief Ministers:-** The fractured mandate and consequent coalition governments lead to instability and opportunism. As the PM/CM has to bend to all undue demands and pressures of parties to retain his/her chair, hence his/her status and position has noted sharp decline. What to speak of Chief Ministers like Madhu Kode, Siby Soren, Mufti Mohammad Sayed, Mayawati etc? the Prime Ministers like Vajpayee and ManMohan Singh had to face unwarranted situations at one moment or the other. They are not free even to select their companions, allot them ministries as per their choice and capabilities or to drop them if circumstances demanded so. The CMs are made on rotation basis e.g.the BSP-BJP coalition of 1998 in U.P in which both parties had to hold the office for 6 months by rotation, the PDP-Congress coalition of 2002 in J&K where both parties had to hold the office for 3 years each, the JMM-BJP coalition of 2009 in Jharkhand are before us when the former partner refused to renunciate & share power with other and

they broke. The State of Jharkhand has undergone for the eight times under President rule (Atr.356) within a span of less than 10 years of its existence.

7. **Rising Opportunism & Emergence of Extra-Constitutional Entities:-** The quotation, “Everything is fair and possible in war and love” is also applicable to politics. The Indian politics endorses this saying. With the decline of statesmanship quality and decay in public life lead to rising opportunism in our polity. Hardly any politician and political party has any reservation on any issue if it fulfill his whims and desires or paved way to political regime. There are number of instances when heterogeneous groups and rival factions even sit together to score their political goals. The coalitions of BJP-BSP in UP in late ninties, Samajwadi Party-Congress, Rashtriya Janta Dal-Congress, Congress-People Democratic Party, Congress-National Conference in J&K; INLD-BJP, BJP-BSP and BJP-HJC in Haryana in 2009 etc. prove the rising trend of opportunism in Indian politics. Due to these coalitions new extra constitutional entities like Convener of Coalition, Chairperson of Coalition or National Advisory Committee (NAC) etc. have emerged who acts as Super Prime Minister or Chief Minister or Super Cabinet. In the present United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government too the power centre is not the PM but Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, the Chairperson of UPA as well as National Advisory Council. Such extra constitutional entities should refrain from intervening in the affairs of constitutional bodies if these (constitutional) institutions become weak, then the system will not sustain any more. Moreover, it makes the system arbitrary and subjective. Rule of Law must prevail and the public should not appreciate opportunist people and coalitions.
8. **Downsizing of Public Sector & Emergence of Corporates:-** In early ninties, the process of LPG was initiated in India which emphasized on downsizing of public sector in a phased manner and opening the monopolized sector to private and corporate ones. During the last 2 decades almost all the sectors/areas own by government sofar, have been opened to private which brought revolutionary change in Indian economy. Now India is the largest 4<sup>th</sup> economy of the world with 2<sup>nd</sup> largest GDP rate after China. The downsizing of public sector has eased/lessened the burden of public exchequer to a greater extent and the Ministry of Disinvestment came into existence to comply with the directives. The share of private and corporate sectors have shown sharp rise in India’s GDP. A number of Indian corporate houses have ensured their presence in international market. Ambani Groups and L.N. Mittal and

TATAs are the most powerful MNCs of the day. According to the **Global-2000 List** of the Forbes Magazine published recently the list of 2000 most powerful companies spreading over 62 countries on basis of their financial outlays and performance, India stood at 5<sup>th</sup> rank with 56 companies whereas the USA topped the list with 515 followed by Japan 210, China 113 and Canada 62 companies [1] The LPG process has enhanced performance, economy, transparency and accountability in public sector. The concepts of contract, outsourcing etc. emerged in public sector with new issues and challenges to personnel administration and the size of service sector multiplied many folds.

9. **Impact of LPG Process:-** Indian economy was staggering when it was opened to LPG process in 1990-91. The Balance of payment, foreign reserve, percapita income, and GDP rate were adverse to it. That's why the Reserve Bank of India had to mortgage its gold reserve to Bank of London for loan and to meet out the exigencies emerged during Chander Shekhar Government in 1990-91. In such situation, the nation was pushed to a mid-term poll when the minority government led by Chander Shekhar succumbed to the pressure of Congress Party on a very petty issue of spying of late Rajiv Gandhi by two constables of Haryana Police. Again a minority government evolved led by Sh. P.V. Narshima Rao and Sh. ManMohan Singh as Finance Minister. This team took the hectic task of LPG which initially caused a number of scams and scandals. However, this process continued even in non-congress government led by United Frontor National Democratic Alliance. Today's, India is one of the fast growing economy of the world which was least effected by the world wide recession. India has the largest technical manpower in the world and high rate of GDP with more than 350 billion dollars foreign reserve Indian corporate are dominating the international fora. However, the process of LPG has further centralized the resources in few hands and widened the socio-economic disparities to the glaring hights. The rich are becoming richers day by day and the poor poorer. The foreign investment both direct and indirect has created new issues and challenges to the nation. The State has shifted from the main actor to the regulator role. The rapid presence of Indian manpower in global market has led to racial and ethnic riots and conflicts, particularly that of Australia during 2008-10 are notable. The Indian government has decided to extend dual citizenship to NRIs residing in 16 developed countries in the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference of People of Indian Origin (2009) and the Ministry of Indian Overseas Affairs is catering needs of over two crore Indians residing outside India. The NRIs

can be very helpful in the growth and development of Indian economy that's why the Government of India has decided to ascertain their role in the domestic affairs by extending right to vote for them. [2]

10. **Enlarging sphere of Social Sector:-** Though the process of LPG in contrary to social service and welfare by State, inspite of it, the UPA government has given due emphasis on social sector. Today, it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest sector on which the Government of India is expending a loin share of its budget. A number of welfare, development, health and education programmes are in the process of execution and some more are at anvil. Prominent among these are the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Rennovation Mission, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Total Sanitation Campaign, National Rural Health Mission, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan, Right To Education Act, Right To Information Act etc. which are in operation whereas the National Food Security Bill, 2010 is in the pipeline. The Government of India in 2009 waived of Rs. 72,000 crore loans of farmers all over the country and gave a big boost to the peasantry to get rid of debt. However, the out put of such huge investment and expenses is still a matter of appraisal as the number of BPL families and miseries of poors, down trodden are also increasing day by day. Transprency, economy and efficiency in administration are the need of hour to extract optimum benefit from the resources mobilized. Ethics in public life can be very helpful to attain the aforesaid goals
11. **Parochial Outlook:-** All the politicians and political parties are becoming more and more parochial in their outlook. The rational and nationalist thinking and outlook has become outdated. The role of Shiv Sena, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena of Raj Thackeray, Bahujan Samaj Party, Rashtriya Janta Dal, Lok Janshakti Party, Trinmool Congress, Daravid Munetra Kashagam, All India Anna Daravid Munetra Kashagam, Telgu Desham Party, National Conference, National Congress Party, People Damocratic Party etc. are before us which are provoking regional, casteists and communal feelings to attain and retain their vote bank. Even the role of Congress Party and Bhartiya Janta Party is not satisfactory and in tune with their national character. Not only the political parties but also the Union Ministers are over cautious to their political benefits. They try to impose their political whims and designs in policy formulation and execution. The coalition politics has opened new vistas to regional and local political parties and brought them at the centre from periphery. The impact of its can be seen

in public when the people are becoming more and more cautious of their culture and identity and they are organizing them at regional and national levels. Such tendencies are suicidal for national unity and integrity when parochial interests and identity prevail over the national. Thus the concept of Unity in diversity and Secularism should be kept in high esteem and people with parochial outlook must be marginalised.

12. **Terrorism and Naxalism:-** It is the most serious threat to Indian polity which has overcome more than 3/4th of Indian territory. The nation is hapless to the menace of naxalism and terrorism which are eating up the vital resources of Indian economy. What to speak of development in the affected regions, even the law and order is a greater challenge to the State? The areas under the grip of naxalites and terrorist outfits give more importance to their dictates rather than that of government. The rules and regulations as well as administration are confined just to law books therein. These outfits are capable to commit any attempt or incident whatever they want to do. They flourish on public extortion as well as smuggled resources across the borders.
13. **Glaring Socio-Economic Disparities:-** In spite of statutory provisions regarding the socialism and socialistic pattern of society, the socio-economic disparities are rising every day. The LPG process has fuelled in the fire of disparities. On one hand, we are talking of global fraternity and human rights, on the other, people in this country are dividing on caste, race, region and communal lines. The poor are becoming poorer day by day. The latest data released by three work groups on poverty pointed out that it is far -2 up (35-65%) than the government's speculations. The Government of India has revised the BPL criterion from a monthly income of 8 dollars to 10 dollars per family in rural areas and it has reduced their number (BPL) from 10.8 crore to 8 crore families in the country. It is a surprising fact that just a minor difference of 2 dollars has created a huge gap of 3 crore families which is far more than the total population of many countries in the world. The government has decided to introduce the Unique Identity Digit (UID) Number scheme to check the bogus BPL families and to identify them properly. This scheme will be helpful in ascertaining the delivery of government subsidy to the actual beneficiaries. The government will spend Rs 20,000 crore on this scheme and it will save an equal amount of the government funds released every (2-3) years from the subsidy head. In 2005, the Planning Commission pointed out that only 1/4<sup>th</sup> of



the total subsidy is reaching to the actual needy or target group. [3] The socio-economic security and justice must be ensured to all the citizens.

14. **Judicial chaos and rising trends of Road Justice:-** Though socio-economic and political justice is one of the prime goals of Indian constitution, yet the government machinery has failed to deliver it to the people. Over 3 crore cases are pending in various courts and generally it took 15 years in final disposal off a case. The cases of Delhi Riots (1984), Union Carbide Tragedy in Bhopal (1984), Demolition of Dispute Structure in Ayodhya (1992) etc are before us where the trial courts took over decades to reach a final conclusion and the appeals in High Courts and Supreme Court are yet to be filed in these cases by the grievanced parties. The trial process is so complex, lengthy and costly that it is too difficult to a layman to get justice.[4] That's why the people try to avoid litigations even at the cost of injustice and humiliation because the consequence of former are far and wide in gravity. A number of alternative measures like Fast Track Courts, Special Courts, Lok Adalats, Circuit Courts, Consumer Courts, Information Commissions etc. have be adopted to cope up the problem but these could not do much in tackling the problem. Free Legal Aid and PILs are also practised to ensure justice to the marginalized sections of the society. Still the justice is a far cry to the layman of the country. The poors and innocent are lying in the jails for want of trial whereas the powerful and potential are roaming free for want of adequate evidence and fair trial. That's why the tendency of road justice is on the higher side every day and people prefer to force administration to fulfil their demands by blocking the roads, railway tracks or by locking up the government installations. Moreover, in their personal animity or rivalry they opt to pay their opponent in their own coins on the road or outside the court. The rising trend of road justice among the layman is a serious threat to the integrity of nation as well as the civil society. Judiciary must retain its faith among the laymen by ensuring fair , speedy and cheap justice to all.

15. **Rising number of Independent Candidates:-** In spite of multiparty system in the country, the number of independent candidates is on the rise in every election. The role and status of such candidates has remained doubtful in the history of Parliamentary democracy in the country. Rather spoiling the votes and causing undue burden on the State exchequer, these candidates provoke defection and opportunism in politics. Moreover, they lack of sound

ideological basis. Their presence in the democracy is not a healthy symbol. Curative measures like enhancing security deposits should be taken to deal with the menace.

16. **Decline in the Status of Legislature:-** Chaos is overpowering our legislative bodies everyday whether the matter is concerned with State Legislatures or Parliament. The level of sincere debate and decorum in the house is fastly replaced by the frequent agitation, boycott, nuisance and adjournments. The Speaker or Chairperson finds it very difficult to manage the affairs and carry out business. In spite of rising expenditure on legislature, its output and working hours are decreasing day by day. Manhandling, unfounded arguments and even cash for votes like incidents are becoming the part of gory history of our Parliament and Legislatures. Moreover, the persons with criminal background and sound financial position are dominating the scenario in these august bodies. What to speak of the State Legislatures in U.P, Bihar, Jharkhand, J&K, even the Parliament is not far behind in this race? In 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha over 200 MPs are of criminal background and 300 MPs are crorepatis. Similarly, in the latest election of 49 seats of Rajya Sabha spreading over 12 states, there were 54 candidates in the fray of which 15 have accepted in their nomination forms that the criminal cases are registered against them and 6 of them are booked in serious criminal offences like attempt to murder, kidnapping and forgery. What is more interesting, is that all of them have won the election and are now the Hon'ble Members of the Parliament. Hardly any political party desists from giving ticket to such candidates, in spite of a lot of hue and cry regarding criminalization of politics and need of purity and ethics in public life. Moreover, 80% of the candidates (43 out of 54) are crorepatis and 38 of them reached the Rajya Sabha. Thus, money and muscle power have maintained its hegemony in Rajya Sabha elections and the number of such MPs is on the rise in this august body whereas the number of women representatives is on the decline, in spite of this fact that Rajya Sabha has already passed the Women Reservation Bill, 2010. In the present election only 3 women contested the election and all of them won it. If such are the representatives, then how we can expect that there will be decency and etiquette in their behaviour and they will think of the laymen. Dignity of these august bodies must be restored at any cost.[5]

17. **Reckless Media:-** Though Media is the Fourth Estate in democracy and its relevance and impact has increased multiple in quality and gravity today. Simultaneously, the media and particularly the foreign Media and private channels are becoming more and more aggressive

and irresponsible to their liabilities. TRP is their prime goal, to attain which they don't desist from sensitizing the issues and creating such news which are detrimental to the society. Media of the day is far way from the objectives of national integration, social reforms, awakening and taking up the cause of the poor and marginalised sections. No doubt, some times it has taken up very pertinent issues and forced the State Machinery to render justice to the needy. But most of the time, it stepped in even those issues and matters which caused more harm to the nation and society rather benefits. Thus the role of Media should be fair, impartial, regulated and accountable.

18. **Glaring gap between Theory and Practice:-** The dual character of persons at the helm of affairs is exposing everyday. If such will be the character of elite class in the country, then how it can be expected that the layman of the country will behave otherwise or will be honest, sincere and committed to national cause. Most of the leaders of the day believe in attaining their goals by all fair and foul means and the process begins with the contest of elections. A number of scams unearthed in the last 2 decades in which high profile personalities were indulged, hardly any one of them dare to confess the guilt or own the responsibility. The latest examples are that of N.D Tiwari, Governor Andhra Pradesh; Buta Singh, Chairman, National Commission for Schedule Castes; Ketan Desai, Chairman, Medical Council of India; S.M. Sharma, Chairman, Railway Recruitment Board, Mumbai etc.who are indulged in grave cases of moral torpidity, misconduct and corruption.. This conduct of elite class is transcending among the laymen of the country. The dual character is a serious threat to the national integrity and credit, hence must be curbed or bridged up by minimising the gap of theory and practices.

**Conclusion:-** In spite of the aforesaid tendencies in Indian politics, there are some positive and pragmatic aspects which are indications of a sound democracy. Prominent among these are establishment of Election Commission as a powerful institution, rising role of women in political arena, vigilant and vibrant citizenry with increasing political participation, collapse of one party hegemony, emphasis on social sector and development activities like Total Sanitation Campaign, Women Empowerment, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, National Rural Health Mission, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Sakshar Bharat Mission etc., strengthening of the process of democratic decentralization as well

as evolution of Indian Economy as the 4<sup>th</sup> largest economy of the world with a high rate of GDP, per capita income and adequate foreign reserve. India has the largest strength of professional and technical experts in the world which is a great asset to its future development. The stride in the field of science and technology is a great achievement and its benefits need to percolate to all the sections and areas of the society. Ethics, honesty, transparency and accountability are the need of the day in Indian polity to address the new challenges emerged in the last two and half decades. The Right To Information Act (2005), Right To Education Act (2010) and National Food Security Bill (2010) will prove the milestones in the history of Indian democracy. The insurgency and terrorism are the greatest challenges of the day and these must be tackled by all means without any delay. The people also adhere to their duties besides the claims of rights. As the challenges are far and wide, therefore, attempts should be made from all directions to cope up these. It is pertinent to follow what Mahatma Gandhi remarked, “Politics without ethics and spirituality is a dangerous thing. Believe in doing rather saying. Reforms oneself, every thing will change with due course of time’.

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