

PERSONALITY FACTORS OF POLITICAL LEADERS OF ASSAM AND BIHAR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Introduction

The State of Assam, popularly known as the land of the red river and blue hills is the gateway to the North East India with its state capital at Guwahati. Geographically the state extends from 22°19' to 28°16' North Latitude and 89°42' to 96°30' East Longitude between the foot hills of the Eastern Himalayas and the Patkai and Naga Hill Ranges. The state is bordered in the North by Bhutan and in the East by Arunachal Pradesh. Along the south lie Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. Meghalaya lies to the South-West, West Bengal and Bangladesh to the West. The State is divided into 27 administrative districts. The state has a geographical area of 78,438 sq km i.e. 2.4 % of the country's total geographical area and provides shelters to 2.58% population of the country.

Bihar is located in the eastern part of the country between 83°-30' to 88°-00' longitude its state capital at Patna. It is an entirely land-locked state, although the outlet to the sea through the port of Kolkata is not far away. Bihar lies mid-way between the humid West Bengal in the east and the sub humid Uttar Pradesh in the west which provides it with a transitional position in respect of climate, economy and culture. It is bounded by Nepal in the north and by Jharkhand in the south. The plains of Bihar, adjoining Nepal, are drained by a number of rivers that have their catchments in the steep and geologically nascent Himalayas. Kosi, Gandak, Burhi Gandak, Bagmati, Kamla Balan, Mahananda and Adhwara Group of rivers originates in Nepal, carry high discharge and very high sediment load and drops it down in the plains of Bihar.

The political psychology as an independent branch of psychology gained recognition quite late but it was a subject matter of social sciences, i.e. political science, psychology and sociology from long back. Political psychology was born in the year 1930 with the publication of "Psychology and Politics" by Lasswell. Through out of his life Lasswell tried to reveal the relationship between Psychology and Politics. Though the idea was developed by Lasswell are no more acceptable but his writings paid the way to become political psychology as a field of psychology.

Since psychology is the study of the behaviour of living organisms, political psychology is the study of political behaviour, political psychologist are most interested in homo-sapiens, especially those who play political roles or are political actors. With the exception of radical behaviourist like skinner, psychologists accept the S.O.R. paradigm, viz., behaviour is the out-come of stimulus impinging upon an organism. Presently the paradigm has been enriched with the addition of the phenomena of feed-back, which means that the response in turn affects the stimulus and organism. In other words the relationship between S-O-R is not liner, but circular.

The study of political behaviour is common to behavioural political science, psychology and (political) sociology. But while in traditional political science, the explanation of political behaviour is sought in terms of its own disciplinary concepts like political institutions, processes or norms, the explanation of political behaviour in political sociology is attempted in terms of the basic concepts of sociology like class or social strata, and the explanation of political behaviour in psychology is presented in terms of the key concepts of psychology like learning motivation, and perception, the explanation of political behaviour in political psychology is attempted in terms of variables from all three disciplines by relating it to organismic variables, proximal and distal environmental variables in the S-O-R formula.

Politics in many democracies of the Western World has presumably become increasingly personalized. The personalization of politics encompasses two presumed processes. First, the personalities of candidates capture center stage and become the focus of voters' attention. Second, the individual personalities of voters, rather than their social locations in various interest groups, become decisive for political choice. The distinctiveness, diversity, and extremity of parties may be declining as they seek the political center to attract groups with diverse interests. Political issues are increasingly complex and political units increasingly interdependent cutting across traditional cleavages. And the electorate is showing greater concern with social relations and intimacy. The current research studies the individualization of politics in Italy. We examine the role of individual personality traits and particularly of basic personal values in political choice.

Basic personal values refer to the broad goals to which people attribute importance as guiding principles in their lives e.g., tradition, benevolence, hedonism. Basic values, as elaborated below, apply across domains and situations. As such, they underlie and are broader than the political values and attitudes typically examined in research on voter preferences. We see basic personal values as the crucial grounding of ideology. If they explain voting patterns, political leaders could use them to go beyond left-right and similar ideological dimensions to more complex readings of the range of the public's basic value priorities. They could segment the public based on fine-grained value priorities, not traditional group memberships. This would enable them better to communicate with the public, to assess the appeal of political positions, to frame political competition, and to organize and maintain cohesive political parties. Early research on personality in politics dealt mainly with individual differences in the dispositions, attitudes, and motives of voters and leaders.

Personality

The term personality is used in a number of ways including the apparent features of a person. However, psychologists use it to refer to the characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling and acting. By characteristic pattern we mean the consistent and distinctive ways our *ideas, feelings and actions are organized*. When we talk about personality we usually refer to the totality or whole of the person. Thus, the enduring pattern expressed by the person in various situations is the hall mark of personality. Interestingly the theories of personality go beyond the literal meaning of "personality" which stands for large masks used by actors in ancient Greek drama. Contrary to this the personality theorists view 'personality' as the essence of the person. It is a person's "true" inner nature. The unique impression that a person makes on others is equally important in understanding personality. However the concept of personality has been defined by psychologists in many ways and it is the theoretical perspective or position which directs our attention to particular aspects of personality.

Founded by Sigmund Freud, this theory emphasizes the influence of the unconscious, the importance of sexual and aggressive instincts, and early childhood experience on a person. This theory has been very influential not only in psychology but also in literary circles, art, psychiatry and films. Many of Freud's ideas have become part and parcel of every day usage. Freud started his career as a neurologist. His theory developed in the course of his observations of his patients,

as well as, self analysis. He used free association to help his patients recover forgotten memories.

Freud discovered that mind is like an iceberg and we have limited conscious awareness.

Freud proposed that psychological forces operate at three levels of awareness: Conscious level: The thoughts, feelings, and sensations that one is aware of at the present moment. Preconscious level: It contains information of which one is not currently aware, however, they can easily enter conscious mind. Unconscious level: It consists of thought, feelings, wishes, drives etc. of which

we are not aware. It, however, influences our conscious level of activity. Freud thought that unconscious material often seeks to push through to the conscious level in a disguised manner. It may be in a distorted manner and or it may take a symbolic form. Interpretation of dreams and free association were used for analysis of the three levels of awareness.

Personality Structure

Freud believed that human personality emerges due to a conflict between our aggressive and pleasure seeking biological impulses and the internalized social restraints against them. Thus, personality arises in the course of our effort to resolve the conflicts. To this end he proposed three structures which interact with each other - Id, Ego and Super Ego. Let us learn about these structures:

Id: It is the unconscious, irrational part of personality. It is the primitive part immune to morality and demands of the external world. It operates on the pleasure principle. It seeks immediate satisfaction.

Ego: It is involved with the workings of the real world. It operates on the reality principle. It is the conscious and rational part of personality that regulates thoughts and behaviors. It teaches the person to balance demands of external world and needs of the person.

Super Ego: It is the internal representation of parental and societal values. It works as the voice of conscience that compels the ego to consider not only the real but also the ideal. It judges one's behaviors as right or wrong, good or bad. Failing up to moral ideals bring about the shame, guilt, inferiority and anxiety in the person.

Development of personality of an individual takes place in a socio-cultural context. The particular potentialities with which a child is born may develop or become stunted depending on the way maturation takes place and the kind of experiences encountered by the person. In the process of growth and development people develop unique configuration of traits which lead to individual differences. In this way one finds that personality formation is a complex process depending upon common and unique experiences on the one hand, and, genetic factors on the other. It has been indicated that there are stable ways in which specific situation trigger specific patterns of thought, feeling and behaviour.

Agencies of Political Socialization

1. **Family:** The family, school, peer groups, secondary groups like occupational or professional associations, political parties, religious organisations and mass media are the principal agents of political socialisation. Key also holds that family experience shapes a child's adult political behaviour.
2. **School:** One does not choose one's parents or family, parents choose the child's school, and spent money for schooling. The school is a formal institution established either by state or by private management. Children spent considerable time in school daily and over years. School provides for civics courses to develop political attitudes and orientations. They are meant to instruct the young and sometimes instruct them in political values. They aim to produce children with attitudes and dispositions that would support the society. They teach and reinforce attitudes towards law, Government, Citizenship in both direct and indirect ways. The climate of the school itself contributes to political socialisation.
3. **Peers:** Childhood playgroups friendships cliques, small-work groups, brothers and sisters and cousins etc. are the most common types of peer groups. Like school, joining in peer group is voluntary. Peer group helps the child in adjustment to school life. The dominance of few members of a peer group provides for political socialisation of individual; the authoritarian attitudes of some member's leads to the acceptance of standards practiced by them, and the incoming members learn to conform these standards. Democratic relationships among peers are more conductive to political socialisation. Peer groups make up for what is not given in the family or school.
4. **Secondary Groups:** Like occupational, professional, political, religious associations influence political socialisation both directly and indirectly. They promote conformity behaviour and deviance is avoided due to fear of social ostracism. Participation in strikes, demonstrations, and other union activities provides fresh skills to the individual. Where an individual belongs to several secondary groups, he may be exposed to different political views, leading to a conflict situation. The extent of an individual's socialisation process depends on the extent to which he subscribes to the groups values and attitudes.
5. **Media and Events:** In view of the wide exposure to mass media in the present day industrialised society, then media may appear to be prime socializing agency. But this is not so. The media instead of changing people's attitudes seem primarily to reinforce attitudes formed elsewhere. An enhancement in the sophisticated use of mass media, it is suggested, may erode rather than add to people's political understanding
6. **Genetic Factors:** Almost all theorists consider heredity as a major determinant of personality. Some like Freud, view personality as purely biological. However, others recognize the value of social and cultural factors. In fact it would be wrong to view the question in either or manner and give more emphasis to heredity or environment. Studies of behaviour genetics suggest that most personality variables are 15 to 50 percent inheritable.
7. **Early Experience:** Most of the theorists of personality think that personality development is a continuous process. The early years play very important role in the shaping of personality. However, the immediate environment and experiences are also found to be of immense value.
8. **Primary Groups:** While explaining personality development family is found to play a critical role. The early relationships with members of family are particularly important. Freud thought that many of the problems during adult life are due to problematic child rearing practices leading to emotional disturbances. The sense of identity and relevance of appropriate modeling has been emphasized.

9. **Culture:** People living in one culture often share similar practices, beliefs and values. The child is expected to learn to behave in the manner expected by the culture. For instance boys and girls are expected to show different sets of personality characteristics. The various occupational roles are also shaped by culture. However, the effect of culture may not be uniform for everyone belonging to that culture because they are transmitted through different ways and persons and people also have certain unique experiences.

Review of Indian Studies

Ghosh (1974) studied the development of social identity in Indian children. Sushma Washington (1984) studied the political socialisation of Indian children. On the Indian scene, the differences in R and T (R=Radicalism & T= Tender mindedness) factors of members belonging to four major political parties have been investigated (Bhushan, 1968). The subjects were 38 communist, 42 congressmen, 41 Jana sanghies and 44 Samyukta Socialists, all males, 5.9 to 7.5 years of party sending, 33.4 to 37.1 years in age, and 14.1 to 15.5 years educated. It was found that the communist party members were the most radical, and the Jana Sanghis the least radical, with the congresses and the Samyukta Socialists occupying middle ranks. On the T- factor, the Jana Sanghis were found to be more tender minded, with the other two party members occupying middle positions. The data on SD's were more revealing. The SD's were high for both Congresses and Samyukta Socialists, suggesting that they lack unity of purpose. The maximum number of defections from this parties confirm the suggestion.

Extend of authoritarianism in members of various Indian national parties was also investigated (Bhushan, 1969). A Hindi version of the F-scale was administered to 160 members of CPI, Congress, JS and PSP (40 of each). Subjects were drawn from two districts of Bihar, were males with a mean age of 38.04 years, education 14.20 years, and duration of party membership 12.34 years. Jan-Sanghis were found to be the most authoritarian and the CPI members the least authoritarian, with the Congresses and PSP members in, between. The difference between the F scores of JS and CPI, CPI and PSP and CPI and Congress was found to be highly significant, but the difference in the scores of JS and Congress, and Congress and PSP was insignificant.

The study confirms the view that F- scale is a measure of right authoritarianism, and also the finding that JS and CPI are more compact ideologically than Congress or PSP. The congress should be as right authoritarian as JS in truly revealing.

Research Problems

Review of previous studies in the field of Political Psychology reveals that although the area has been subjected to investigation to a great extent a number of problem skill exist, which need further experimentation and clarification. Personality of political leaders of different political parties in an area, which has been explored by only a few psychologist (Paul Sniderman, 1976; Jeanne Knutson, 1974; Constantini and Clark, 1972; and Jeanne Kirkatrick, 1974). On the Indian scene Bhusan (1968, 1969) studied in the differences in the radicalism (R) and tender mindedness (T) of four major political parties, i.e., Communists, Congressmen, Janasanghis and Samyukta Socialist. Bhusan (1969) also studied authoritarianism in the members of CPI, Congress, Janasangh and Praja Socialist Party (PSP). Both the studies in India were done quite long back. Since then nobody has attempted to investigate the other personality factors like anxiety, hostility, Insecurity of

different political parties and their leaders within this general framework, an attempt will be made to answer the following questions:

1. Do the political leaders of different categories of political parties differ in anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitude?
2. Do the political leaders with different levels of leadership differ in anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitude?
3. Do the political leaders with different age differ in anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitude?
4. Do the Bihari political leaders of different categories of political parties, different levels of leadership and different age differ in anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitude of Assamese political leaders?

Hypotheses: Three major hypotheses related to main effects, three hypotheses related to first order interaction and one hypotheses related to second order interaction effects were tested.

Major Hypotheses:

1. . There will be significant difference in anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitude of political leaders of Bihar and Assam representing three different categories of political party
2. There will be significant difference in anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitude of political leaders of Bihar and Assam representing different levels of leadership.
3. There will be significant difference in anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitude of political leaders of Bihar and Assam representing different age levels.

Hypothesis Related to Interaction Effects:

1. There will be significant interaction between leaders of three categories of political parties and level of leadership.
2. The first independent variable, leaders of three categories of political parties will interact significantly with the age of political leaders.
3. The variable level of political leadership will interact significantly with the age of political leaders.
4. There will be significant interaction between categories of political parties, level of leadership and age of the political leaders.

Method:

Experimental Design: A between groups factorial design of 3x3x2 with 18 cells each for both states will be used in this study. There will be three independent variables, i.e., categories of political parties, level of leadership, and age of the leaders. The first factor of interest is categories of political parties and it will be varied at three levels viz. Rightist, Centralist and Leftist party. The second variable is level of leadership. It will also be varied at two levels viz. below District level and State level and above. The third variable is the age of the leaders. It will be varied at three levels viz. young leaders (25-45 years), old leaders (46-60 years) and very old leaders (61-75 years).

Sample and Subject: For the present investigation, 180 political leaders representing 18 cells (10 leaders in each cell) will be selected in each state. There will be 60 political leaders from rightist, political 60 leaders from centralist and 60 political leaders from leftist party in Bihar and Assam. There will be significant difference in anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitude of political leaders of Bihar and Assam representing three different categories of political party. Each group of 60 political leaders will consist of 30 political leaders from below district level and 30 political leaders from state level leadership. Each sub-group of 30 political leaders representing a particular party and particular level of leadership will include 10 young leaders (25-45 years), 10 old leaders (46-60 years) and 10 very old leaders (61-75 years).

Materials: The materials used to carry out the research work are -

1. Personal Data Sheet.
2. Anxiety scale for measuring the degree of anxiety.
3. Insecurity scale for measuring the insecurity level.
4. Hostility scale for measuring the degree of Hostile tendency.
5. Attitude scale for measuring the attitudes of leaders towards public and authority.

Procedure: Total 400 samples of Political leaders of Assam and Bihar were collected by administering the above scales during the year 2004 -2006. Out of which total 360 samples are randomly taken for analysis, out of which 180 samples of political leaders were from Assam and rest 180 sample of political leaders were from Bihar.

Results and Discussion

The responses obtained on anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitude quantified to investigate the effects of political party, level of leadership, and age of leaders. Data obtained analysed by using ANOVA followed by t-test. The following obtained results interpreted in the light of theoretical framework:-

The central party of Bihar and Assam were more anxious than other parties.

1. The rightist and leftist party of Bihari leaders were more anxious than the Assamese leaders.
2. The rightist and leftist party of Bihari leaders were significantly more insecure than the Assamese leaders.
3. All the three political parties of Assam were significantly more hostile than the Bihari leaders.
4. In Bihar the Centralist party was more hostile than other parties.
5. Bihari central party had favourable attitude while in Assam the rightist party had more favourable attitude.
6. In both the states the age as effective factors for increasing the anxiety level of leaders.
7. In Bihari leaders there are negative relationship between age and insecurity while in Assamese leaders are relation is positive.
8. In Assam age is not effective factor for hostility but in Bihar as age increases the hostility level decreases.
9. In Bihar there is positive relation between age and attitude i.e. as age increases the favourable attitude also increases.

10. Anxiety and attitude were not affected by leadership level, but hostility and insecurity are affected by leadership level in both the states.

The relation among the personality factors with the party of leaders, age of the leaders and level of the leaders are the neglected field of social psychology in India. Therefore, the study provides excellent evidence for the postulates that anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitudes are affected by political ideology, age and level of leadership.

The present study provides sufficient evidence for the role of political ideology and age of the leaders, either they belong to district or state level. In the present study it was found that the central party of Bihar was more anxious than the other parties. Similarly it is obvious that centralist party of Assam were more anxious than the rightist and leftist party. But when we compare the anxiety scores of the leaders of Bihar and Assam it was found that in all the three parties, the Bihari leaders were more anxious than their counter part.

The anxiety level of rightist party and leftist party of Bihar leaders were significantly higher than the Assam leaders. So far the insecurity is concerned it was found that in comparison of centralist, the leftist and rightist party of Bihar were significantly more insecure than the Assamese leaders. In hostility aspect in Bihar the leftist party was significantly more hostile than the rightist party. In Assam it was found that the central party was significantly more hostile than that of leftist and rightist party. But when it was compared with Bihari and Assamese leader parties, all the three parties of Assam were significantly more hostile than the Bihari leader party. So far the attitudes are concerned with regard to parties it was found that Bihari central party significantly had favourable attitudes in comparison of leftist and rightist in which rightist party had significantly more positive attitudes than the Assamese leftist party had significantly more positive attitudes than the centralist party. Although when we compare with Bihari and Assamese party it was found that all the parties attitudes of Bihar except leftist were more positive than the Assamese party. The Assamese leftist party had significantly more positive attitudes in comparison of Bihari leftist party.

Age is also effective factor for the personality dimension of the leaders of Bihar and Assam both. We found that as age increases the anxiety level decreases in both the states leaders. But comparatively Bihari leaders were more anxious than the Assamese leaders except the very old leaders. About insecurity factor as age increases insecurity level decreases in Bihari leaders, but Assamese leaders, as age increases the insecurity level also increases. It was also found that young Bihari leaders were significantly more insecure than the young Assamese leaders, but in case of very old leaders the result is reversed i.e., Assamese leader were significantly more insecure than that of Bihari leaders.

In case of hostility Assamese leaders in all the three-age level they are more hostile in comparison of Bihari leaders and as the age increase they become less hostile. So far the attitude is concerned it was found that in Bihar as the age increases, the attitude towards favorableness also increases but in Assam the young leaders, the trend is same as Bihar but in very old leader it was not like that. The mean attitude score was much lower than the young and old leaders.

In the present study it was found that the anxiety and attitude were not affected by leadership level, but insecurity was affected. It is also found that Bihari leaders significantly were more insecure than that of Assamese leaders, but in both the states, the state level leaders were more insecure than the district level

leaders. Similar is the case with the hostility, the leaders of state level of Bihar and Assam were less hostile than the district level leaders. So, the trend in both the states was same but when it was compared with state-wise, it was found that Bihari leaders at both levels (state & district) significantly less hostile than Assamese leaders.

Conclusion

The findings of the study constitute an addition to the existing scientific knowledge about anxiety, insecurity, hostility and attitudes. It is hoped that it would be fruitful for the researchers who are interested in doing research in this area.

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