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A Study of Process and Programmes of Congress party in India

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Abstract

We analyze party discipline, Process and Programmes in the House of Representatives between 1957 and 2000. The effects of party pressures can be represented in a spatial model by allowing each party to have its own cutting line on roll call votes. Adding a second cutting line makes, at best, a marginal improvement over the standard single-line model. Analysis of legislators who switch parties shows, however, that party discipline is manifest in the location of the legislator's ideal point. In contrast to our approach, we find that the Snyder-Groseclose method of estimating the influence of party discipline Process and Programmes is biased toward exaggerating party effects.

Key Words: Process and Programmes and Congress party

Introduction

Democracy is one of the most widely advocated and rarest forms of government in human experience. It is a system in which people decide matters together or collectively. Democracy seems to have scored a historic victory over alternative forms of governance. Nearly everyone today professes to be a democrat. Political regimes of all kinds throughout the world claim to be democracies. It bestows an atmosphere of authenticity on modern political life: laws, rules and policies appear acceptable when they are democratic. But the growth of the modern democracy cannot take place without certain conditions. Among the conditions a healthy, democratic and stable Political Parties occupies a unique place, even though it is an extra-constitutional growth. India being the world's largest democracy and having pluralistic society has formed its own model of democracy. Political parties are the pivots of the democratic forms of government in India. Here they play an important role in its functional democracy and they determine the operational character of the political system in this country. In India this political process started with the founding of Indian National Congress in 1885.

The formation of the INC was the brainchild of Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, who is known as the architect of this national organization. However, within the INC, and especially outside it, there were groups and organizations which took radical and left-wing nationalist positions and some of them followed a consistently socialist line. Then, there were parties which adhered to conservative religious-communal ideology and which played a notable, though largely controversial and, on the whole, destructive role in the country's political arena. For half a century the Congress Party was a most influential leader in the mass national liberation movement. The anti-imperialist movement derived its strength mainly from the heroic struggle waged by the multi-million Indian people.

The results of the Second World War, which ended in the rout of German Nazism and Japanese militarism, gave a powerful impetus to this struggle. The national liberation struggle ultimately put an end to the two-hundred-year rule of British imperialism in India. Congress became the wielder of power so much so that it came to be identified with the state government, even with the central government of the country. By leading textual lists it was given the name of single dominant party system that could not be linked with a multiparty system as existing in a country like France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. It afterward formed most of India's governments from the time of independence and often Rajni Kothari called it Congress System. The remarkable performance of the Congress was due to the mutual leadership of Minoan Singh, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

The gains made in 2009 by the Congress were lost in halfway as the UPA II government was blocked by numerous scams like 2G and Coal scams, increase of unemployment rates, price rise and the strategy paralysis that hit the country in the last two years of its government. The Lok Sabha elections in 2014 denoted the genuine turndown of the Congress as it saw awake election with a new dimension as there were two currents running simultaneously in the nation. The first current was a strong anti-incumbency wave against the Congress which pushed it tally of seats to 44 which is the lowest and its vote share fell below 20%. The second wave was in favour of the BJP Prime Minister Narendra Modi which helped the saffron party back to power in Delhi with an easy majority for the saffron party indicating the inauguration of the BJP supremacy in national spectrum of power politics.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To study the origin and evolution of Indian National Congress.
- To examine the role of Indian National Congress in Indian Political system as well as in National Development of India.

HYPOTHESIS

- The INC had great contribution in raising national movement wide over the nation during pre-independence era and has played a significant role in liberalizing the nation from imperial and colonial rule.
- The INC has great importance of framing the constitution, planning commission, green revolution, implementing panchayati raj institutions and making India a nuclear state.

PROBLEM OF THE WORK

Pointing out the academic significance of the work it should be stated that there is hardly any work that covered the entire period of Congress functioning after general elections of 1990-2014. Nearly a dozen of books have been referred to analyze the congress splitting in its History but a little amount of research has been done on its role at nationwide or central level after 1990's. The significance of the present study is that there is no work that highlights and studies the role of Indian National Congress & Its Role in National Politics of India, 1990-2014.

The present work forms an academic pursuit on INC and its role in centre politics as the post period of 1990 remains almost a virgin field in Political Science literature.

THE RISE OF MODERN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN INDIA

The struggle for independence was thus over by 15th August, 1947 by putting an end to colonial political control, a new era has been started, centuries of backwardness were now to be overcome, the promises of the freedom struggle to be fulfilled and people's hopes to be met. India's Independence represented for its people the start of an era that was filled with a new vision. The attainment of independence was not an end itself. It was only the beginning of a struggle, the struggle to live as an independent nation and, at the same time, establish a democracy based on the ideas of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. The first and the most important task was to preserve, consolidate and strengthen India's unity, to push forward the making of the Indian nation and to build up and protect the nation state actors as an instrument of development and social transformation. The need of a new Constitution forming the basic law of the land for the realization of these ideas was chief. Therefore, one of the first tasks undertaken by independent India was framing of a new Constitution. Such a Constitution of India was a result of democratic debates, conversation and discussions for nearly three years, which came into force on 26 January 1950 (Republic Day).

The Constitution of India is one of the lengthy, elaborate and detailed documents in the world. Originally, it consisted of 395 Articles arranged under 22 parts and eight Schedules. Today, after many amendments, it has 461 Articles 12 Schedules. The principles of sovereignty, socialism, secularism, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity are preserved in our Constitution. These are adopted by an extensive range of parties across the political spectrum. Besides this, the principle of separation of powers was implemented to check centralization of power and mistreatment of power. In India there is a parliamentary type of government which is based on President, Rajya

Sabha (Council of States) and Lok Sabha (House of the People). India assumed universal adult franchise providing the right to vote to all adult citizens in the year 1950. India has adopted a three-tier federal system of governance, federal in such a way as there is a National or Union or Central form of government along with that there are regional level or state based governments (29 states) and also Union Territories.

At the local level, there are local government bodies, namely, Panchayats and Municipalities in rural and urban areas respectively. The elected term period of governments at the Centre and in the States is of five years. Transfer of power take place in a democratic manner, with regard to the people's decision. The vast diversity in the Indian society in terms of religion, language, region, caste, and class is reflected in the ideologies of national parties, State (regional) parties, and other parties. Coalition governments, particularly at the Centre, have become a regular characteristic of politics in India. The independent judiciary, election commission, public service commissions, education system, robust media, and various popular movements have been strengthening the democratic process over the decades.

GENESIS OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

India was far famed as El-Dorado of the East from immemorial times. Western states carried on profitable trade with India ever since the days of Solomon. European interest in India has persisted since classical times and for very logical reasons. India had much to give Europe in the practical form of spices, textiles, other oriental products. During the middle Ages, trade between Europe and India was carried on along several routes. One was by the sea along the Persian Gulf and from there overland through Iraq and Turkey and then by sea to Venice.

A second was via the Red Sea and then overland to Alexandria and from there by sea to Venice and Genoa. A third was the overland route which lay through the passes of the Northwest Frontier of India, Central Asia, and Russia to the Baltic.

The Asian part of the trade was carried on mainly by Arab merchants and sailors. Goods from Asia to Europe passed through many hands. Trade was highly profitable, especially the spice trade. Spices were needed to preserve meat through winter and to prevent decomposition. This trade suffered in the middle ages. The Mongol and Turkish invasion inter freed both the land and sea routes. Moreover there was the threat of monopoly shared between Venetians and Egyptians. Trade with India could not be given up. Apart from the spice trade, the fabulous wealth of India was an additional attraction as there was acute shortage of gold all over Europe. West European merchants began to search for new and safer sea route to India and the East Indies.

They wanted to break Arab and Venetian trade monopolies and bypass Turkish hostility. A free way to the East had to be discovered. Further, in Europe, the 16th century marks the beginning of new era. This was an age of discovery, exploration, of navigation and of invention, all of which led to colonialism and economic imperialism. According to Spear, "Crusading zeal against the Muslim and commercial zeal against spice monopolists were motives which sent Columbus to America in 1492 and Vasco-Da Gama to Calicut in 1498".

THE MAKING OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The decades following the Sepoy Rebellion were a periods of growing political awareness, manifestation of Indian public opinion, and emergence of Indian leadership at national and provincial levels. Threatening economic uncertainties created by British colonial rule and the limited opportunities that awaited the ever-expanding number of Western-educated graduates began to dominate the expression of leaders who had to begin to think of themselves as a nation despite gap along the lines of region, religion, language and caste. The time has been ripe for making a strong nationalist party. The initiative in this direction was taken in 1885 by an eminent member of the civil service whoserved in various capacities in India. He was Allan Octavian Hume, a Scott by birth and a democrat by aptitude, temperament and training and retired senior official from the Board of Revenue of the North-West Provinces. Greatly loved, respected and admired by Congressmen and his well-wishers, Hume found out a political and constitutional channel which was the result of the spread of a new model of western education imparted to a tiny fraction of Indian population which had become very keen and enthusiastic in giving a new interpretation to the existing political system in India. Though many regard Hume as the father of INC, in fact various circumstances and movements of the past prepared the ground for and culminated in the formation of an all Indian political organization-the Congress has its roots in the separate political associations that already existed in various parts of India and was watered by controversies over the vernacular Press Act, the Arms Act, the Reduction of the age limit for entrance in to the Indian Civil Service and the Albert Bill.

The struggle for India's independence from British colonial rule, led by the IndianNational Congress was a popular, broad based movement that attracted support formal sections of society and from all parts of the country. The political history of INC which is synonymous with the Indian National Movement from its foundation in 1885 to the Independence of India may be divided into five major distinct periods. The first period which extends from 1885 to 1903 was a period of Moderate Nationalism and the Indian nationalist leaders guiding and directing the Congress came to be known as moderates. Those early congressmen were moderate in their political demands.

They did not want to terminate British rule immediately, they wanted to liberalize that rule. Yet with the passage of time even the moderates became more and more critical of British rule. The moderates were determined to follow the methods of peaceful and constitutional agitation which had proved successful in Britain. Progress was to be harmonized with orders, freedom was to grow gradually from standard to standard, and great changes were to be effected in a bloodless manner. Gokhale and other moderate leaders asked Indians tobe defending.

THE DARK PERIOD OF SPLITS AND EMERGENCY IN INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Parliamentary Election or the 4th Lok Sabha was held in February 1967which witnessed many surprises. This election was a watershed in Indian politics, which followed major structural changes in the political system, which led to shift from dominant party system to competitive polity. The overwhelming dominance of Congress at the Centre eroded. The first damage became visible in this general election, when first time Congress won only 40.78

% vote and 54.62 % seat. The Congress lost its popularity very much. However the INC got the success at fourth time but the number of seats won was not as much of. While the congress in 1962 had got victory over 361 seats, during 1967 election it won only 283 seats. As contrasted and 45% votes, this time it got just 41%.The fourth most noteworthy victory, with 42seats, was Swatantra Party, which had won just 18 in the 1962 contests.

The third biggest party was Jan Singh, with 35 seats. For the first time in eight decades the Congress hold over the heart of the national affairs of India began to seem weak for a while it was broken. The Congress failed to secure majorities in eight states and its majority at the center was reduced significantly. Politically few extraordinary events came out during the period of 1967-71. One of the main events was the split of the Congress Party into Congress-R i.e. the ruling wing and Congress the organizational wing over the issue of choosing. V Giri as the leader of India after the sudden end of Zakir Husain in 1969. It resulted in the division of the party into two sections i.e. Old Congress (O) and Indira Congress.In 1969 after many disagreements with Desai, the Indian National Congress split. Here an opportunity has come to Indira to prove herself as the best leader. She took support from socialist and communist parties and ruled our country for the next two years. During this time for the first time, she took a daring and dashing step in the year 1969 by abolishing Privacy purse and Nationalization of Fourteen Banks at time. As Indira did not want to head a minority government, she called for mid-term elections in 1970, one year ahead of the schedule.

This period, is called the period of tug war between the Prime Minister and the Syndicate. It was largely due to the support of the Syndicate that Lal Bahadur Shastri and not Morarji Desai could become Prime Minister. This state of affairs continued up to 1971.The fifth Lok Sabha Election in 1971 occurred a year prior to the ordinary five-year term of the administration. This time the Indian National Congress, which was the governing party, was in a decent position to win the contest once more. This midterm contest was the extremely fifth one in the historical backdrop of general elections in India. There were numerous things that affected the contests, similar to the development of Bangladesh and the India-Pakistan war of 1971.

CONGRESS A FIRM BELIEVER OF NATIONALISM AND COMMUNAL HARMONY

Nationalism is a political term aims the gaining and maintaining self governance or full sovereignty and promoting the interests of a particular nation. The political ideology of nationalism holds that a nation should govern itself, free from unwanted external disturbance, and is linked to the idea of self-determination. Nationalism is further oriented towards developing and maintaining a national identity based on shared characteristics such as culture, language, race, religion, political goals or a belief in a common ancestry. In India Congress and nationalism are synonymous to each other as they were the first expressions of creating idea of unity among diversified country during colonial rule. They were also successful in dragging out the alien powers and putting down the basis of independent nation. Congress and Indian Nationalism as a whole have attracted international scholarly attention primarily since India attained independence in 1947.

The Congress has since its inception and all through its varied phases believed in national unity and worked for communal harmony. The partition did not affect the basic objective of the Congress that all communities in India, major and minor are integral parts of the nation. All men and women of India regardless of their religious affiliations are equal citizens of the country. It is spelt out in clear and unambiguous language in the Constitution of India. All political parties in the country owe loyalty to this Constitution and all its basic principles. Along with nationalism maintenance of Communal Harmony has been one another cardinal principles of the Congress throughout its history both before and after independence. It is an inseparable part of the way of life which has been embodied in the Constitution of India and which the whole country has accepted. All political parties whatever the diversity in their social and economic programmes owes loyalty to this basic way of life.

The AICC, therefore views with grave concern the recent communal disturbance in various parts of the country. It is duty of every citizen to promote in every possible way of peace and harmony among the various communities of India and to maintain law and order in the country. The AICC is convinced that left to themselves our people by and large wish to adhere to the secular values, but unfortunately there are communal elements in our body politic whose thinking does not conform to the secular concept of our foment communal disharmony and organize communal violence in order to achieve their narrow political ends. Our countrymen should realize the grave danger to the unity of India if communal elements operate in the country to create communal unrest. The Central and State Governments must do everything in their power to strengthen the forces of national unity and communal harmony and put down the communal disturbances quickly and ruthlessly. The AICC expects all citizens of India to stand behind the Governments incurring disruptive communal forces in our society. Congressmen have a special responsibility in this regard. They should be prepared to make any sacrifice for maintaining communal peace. The AICC, therefore, welcomes in this connection the appointment by the Working Committee of a sub-committee which would watch the situation in the country with vigilance and launch steps expeditiously to meet any potentially dangerous situation developing in any part of the country. This is one of the challenges facing the country today and the AICC and the PCCs should be prepared to meet it effectively Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes and other economically under-privileged classes have always been a source of special concern of Congress. Despite increasingly amounts set apart for their welfare levels of well-being among these communities have not raised appreciably. As the Congress surveys the nation scene, it is disturbed at the growth of violence, and of regional, linguistic and communal friction. Democracy involves give and take. Solutions must be found through discussions and persuasion. There is no question whether it is economic or political, whether it is inter-regional or between States and the Union which cannot be solved in peace manner.

THE CONGRESS IDEOLOGY

Coming to Congress ideology it is proud of that India is the home of all the significant religions of the world. Secularism is the foundation of Indian Unity. Despite temporary setbacks here or there, the constitutional provisions for equal treatment to all Indian citizens irrespective of their faith have been implemented with the

greatest authenticity. The fundamental rights of Indian citizens to profess and practice the religion of their choice are guaranteed by our constitution. The Indian National Congress bears true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as bylaw established and to the principles of Nationalism, socialism, secularism and democracy and upholds the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

The Congress Governments have always been concerned for the welfare of the masses. Poverty elimination and inclusive growth are the top most priority for the welfare of every state. To meet these socio-developmental objectives, the Congress Governments have introduced a number of welfare schemes with special emphasis on helping the poor, destitute women, children, Schedule castes and Schedule tribes, Other Backward Classes, physically handicapped, widows and orphans, literate and illiterate poor, rural and urban.

CHARGES OF SCAMS & CORRUPTION ON CONGRESS

Corruption in India is a phenomenon that one has to face practically at every level and in every walk of life. It could be the local rationing department, police, municipal, authorities or educational institutions like schools and colleges. In the industry regular bribes are collected by the public servants at the cutting edge of administration of the various departments of Central and state governments. Corruption has bothered many great Indians in the past. Gandhiji had warned of its dangerous effects at the beginning of independence. In 1963, the then President of the Indian National Congress, D. Sanjivaiyya Reddy had observed that Congressmen who were pauper in 1947 had become millionaires without having any superficial source of income.

The Swedish economist, Gunnar Myrdal called India a soft state where nothing moved unless a bribe was paid. Since Myrdal says the level of corruption has risen from leaps and bound. It has become so widespread that the credibility of the entire political system is at stake. Let us not forget that at the final stage of transfer of power to India, the then British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said; they (Indians) are all corrupt and they will not be able to run their administration. We laughed at Churchill's observations but his predictions have come true. In 2013, according to Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer report, out of 114,000 people surveyed in 107 countries, 54 per cent of Indians reported having paid a bribe to access public services or institutions compared to 27 per cent respondents globally. Indians reported having paid bribes to the police, to access utilities, for registry, permit and land services, as well as in sectors such as education and healthcare. India is also famous for its corrupt politicians. Due to the disintegration or weakening of national parties, they have no other choice other than to support these corrupt among them. Most of the allies in the Government forming political parties have less than 50 seats and among them 90 per cent is corrupt. But as the national parties do not have clear majority they have to get the support of small regional parties which have only a few elected members. So most often they have to be blind when the allies make any wrong move. Political corruption in Indian politics in post 1990 has undergone a sea change from the Rao (1999-1996) to Manmohan era (2004-2014). Congress's rule is a story of how the rule of law was systematically weakened and greed, duplicitous, fake, fraud becomes governing virtues. Here is evaluation of scandals and scams which declined the INC after 1990-2014.

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CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

The foundation of the Indian National Congress was one of the first expressions of political unity in India, it created a sense of independence among the Indians which at last results the freedom of Indian people under the leadership of some great leaders from the alien rule. Congress party since its inception in 1885 has evolved as the most organized and vibrant force through every nock and corner of India. Needless, to say the very existence of congress goes to the British account. The congress party had a strong social and ideological base.

The party had people from different social fabrics and from different ideologies. The strong social and political base helped congress retain the power for decades. But with the change in Indian political culture the politics of

competition erupted which gave the country much needed chance at every crucial juncture to change the guard. Finally, the congress shifts from one party dominance to multi party political tussle. The party at present does not have a strong leader and workable structure and its ideological agenda of leftist-welfare-its policies for the poor has been hijacked by the BJP which is using it cleverly to position itself as the single dominant party in Indian politics. The Congress needs to rewrite its ideological agenda and open the entry gates of the party for people with rightist views within its broad spectrum of secular politics to counter the BJP surge in the country. The party can revive itself by rebuilding the party organization by repopulating its cadres with foot soldiers and flag bearers at the grassroots level and set up realistic goals to do a political rebound in the distant future.

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