

## EXTREME POLITICS, EXTREME RESULTS: A COMPARISON OF THREE STATES

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The paper tries to understand the political development in India taking into consideration two important ideological stands. One is moderate ideology which is mainly professed by Congress party and the other is extreme ideology professed by Bhartiya Janata Party and Communist parties in India. For this three states have been taken as a unit of study, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and West Bengal. These states are taken into consideration because Communists are in power in West Bengal, BJP in Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh is dominated by small parties like Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party replacing Congress from the state politics. The paper tries to analyze the role of ideology with reference to their performance in power politics.

After independence the political scenario with its strong centralized orientation was dominated by Congress. Almost three decades after independence, Congress did not provide space to any other political party to occupy the seat of power. The opposition at that time was diffused. The situation may be analyzed in terms of two important aspects of constant regimes and variable regimes. The constant regime is represented by constant political parties and variable regime by variable parties. The constant parties may be categorized into twofold, one, constant party with power and second, constant party without power. The variable parties in the same way may be categorized into two: one, variable parties with power and second variable parties without power. The character of constant parties may be defined as the national parties which are dominating the national politics, with a substantiate domination in the states also. The variable parties are the one's which are regional in character, have effective role in state politics, may also hold seat of power at the state level. But at the national politics they may due to their critical number try to manipulate the balance of power and play effective role in power politics. Sometimes the variable parties bargain to get more. They are always important in the present socio-political and economic conditions.

The variable parties attach themselves to a particular constant party, to make a permanent combination. Some of the variable parties do not prefer to attach themselves with same combinations but their choice depends upon the gains and importance they get in the government and power situation.

The constant parties with political power are Congress, BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party), and third front (combination of variables). The constant party without political power is Communist Party. All the constant parties have certain power bags in the states. For parties like Congress, BJP these power bags change from one state to another state but the power bags in terms of state domination in case of Communist Party is constant and lies only in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura. But the performance of BJP in Gujarat and Uttaranchal suggests that the party is gaining constant power bag in these two states.

The period of emergency was the crucial point for the diffusion of Congress constant party status. This led to the development of a constant party in terms of a coalition that is Janata party. The failure of Janata party experiment at that time speculated a positive probability for Congress from where it was difficult if not impossible for any party to gain the status of constant party status. The Communist upsurge and making the concept of variability, constant, in terms of capturing seat of power constantly in West Bengal is post 1970's phenomena. The Communist parties with the constant power bag in states like Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura made their status as constant party. The position of Communist parties is strategically very strong with reference to politics but they are not as strong as to produce any effect to capture the power at the national politics.

Why Communist and BJP failed: Every political system works on certain ideas and ideology (refers to the goal and ideas set by the Constitution). Within this frame of reference of ideology, the various political parties try to put their ideas and programs to the public (refers to the goal and ideals of the political parties). Some times these goals and ideology of the political parties works in consonance with the goals and ideology of the Constitution but some times there exists some dissonance. When the dissonance occurs it produces two consequences: first, either the political party with the deviant ideology comes to power by the support of population. One can refer to this population

group as a deviant group or a dominant extreme ideology professing group. This may be on the basis of religion, caste, region, language or any other factor. The second consequence may be that the political party with the deviant ideology may diminish or they may try to create effect by coalition or anti-social activities. In this context of deviance and extremeness, one can analyze the position of BJP and Communist Party. The Communist Party accepts the extreme ideas and ideologies as their basic frame of reference, for them Marxian line of extreme ideology is acting as the motivating factor. But the political development after independence moderated their extreme ideologies. They bent towards more moderate wings and left the extremeness of their ideas and ideology. This is the reason why Communist Party divided into many blocks. It is important to note that Congress and Communist emerged on the national scenario at the same time. The role of Communist Party in the Indian political system is to work as a pressure group. They work as a supporting player in the game of politics to form the government. They never tried to claim power. They may have many reasons to support their action but they get satiated only by getting certain concession from the government. In the liberalization, privatization and globalization regime they are adjusting themselves to the changing scenario instead acting as an opposing group. The recent episode with respect to Singur where the TATA group has taken a decision to shift its unit from West Bengal to Gujarat and Nandigram protests led to loosening of the extreme ideological plank taken by Communist Party. They have been identified with the ideas and ideology of the Congress. They are unable to capture power at the national level instead of their par excellence ideology that is associated with mass population.

The position of BJP is different. Their arrival in the power politics took a long time period. The reason for their late coming in the mainstream politics is very clear. They followed the extreme ideas and ideology. Religion, nationality, temple issue were their main element of campaign. In the initial stage the people were not ready to accept their radical and extreme politics and they were let down by people of India. But as early as they initiated the emotional issue of Ram temple they professed the extreme politics with extreme emotions and came to power. But after that they once again adopted the more moderate policies and ideology. Due to the liberalization, privatization and globalization regime, they are helpless and professing the economic policies of the Congress, therefore they are unable to spread their message that they are different from Congress.

Due to the process of moderation in the ideas and ideology the constant parties like Congress, BJP and Communist Party led to the cleavage in these parties. This cleavage in these parties led to the development of local level political parties which captured the power at the local level. These aberrations in the constant party may be due to dissatisfaction of a particular group with a leader or it may be an independent development which affects the vote bank of the constant party. The example is Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) which targeted the vote bank of Congress and ousted Congress from state politics of Uttar Pradesh.

The basic conclusions may be drawn are as follows:

That the political party who follows the extreme ideas and ideology comes late in power but certainly comes to power.

The failure of Communist in the politics of India is that they were unable to maintain their extreme ideology.

The BJP shall be out from the political scenario if they do not profess the extreme ideas and ideology.

Therefore in Indian politics if political parties want to remain in power they have to profess extreme ideology. They can not take on moderate stand. The process of developing equilibrium led to fail or fall. The reason is that the political parties have to be different than Congress. India is an average society. Gandhi imbibed that and he never professed extreme politics. Congress has taken its goal and system from Gandhi that is why they remained successful for long period of time. They still maintained their supremacy in the coalition era. Communists instead of imitating Marx imitated Gandhi; therefore it was difficult for the people to differentiate between the two. The important factor that is associated with the Communist party is that they profess the same common characters which all the parties share. They have to profess the extreme policies and act accordingly. BJP is also adopting the moderate stand which is visible in its policies and ideology. According to Swaminathan( 2005), "Extremism may help create a base but the majority of votes in any democracy lie in the centre, and so

extremists have to move towards the middle to attain power. The opposite is also true. Parties of centre may find they do not have enough votes, and so will ally with extremists to gain majority. Thus democracy constantly produces two faced politics, with communalists some times acting secular and secularists sometime acting communal".

With reference to this extreme ideological frame, the political results of West Bengal, Gujarat and U.P have been compared. Not only this, the comparative study tries to test the hypothesis that "state politics is freer of the control of national politics and is often in a position to dictate terms to national politics"(Yadav, 2008). The three states are taken for the study because West Bengal is an extreme state in the sense of economy, as the ideology adopted by the ruling political party CPI (M) is on the line of Marxian ideology and the party is ruling the state for more than three decades. Gujarat is extreme in the sense that Chief Minister Modi has used the religious variable in a nice way to maintain his power equation intact in the state. Therefore West Bengal is extreme in the economic sense and Gujarat in socio-cultural sense. But Uttar Pradesh is a moderate state in the sense that most extreme devastation has been done with reference to religion that is the Babri demolition at Ayodhya in the year 1992 but the people have taken the moderate stand by defeating BJP in the recent elections. Not only this peasant movement occurred in all over Uttar Pradesh and the Communist Party could provide leadership to only in few districts. It seems as people rejected their ideology altogether. The extreme form of Naxalite movement is more or less absent in the state as compared to other states. Therefore an initiative has been taken to study the dynamics of power with reference to state and national politics and with reference to constant and variable party system.

The scenario in U.P suggests that the parties which are performing better at the national level are also performing better at the state level. The table- I shows the position of Congress and BJP as a stable one with bad performance in state as well at the national level. The position of BJP in Lok Sabha elections shows that the party dominated in the elections of 1991, 1996 and 1998 but the elections of 1999 and 2004 show a sharp decline in its performance. The position is same with reference to Assembly elections. In the year 1991, 1993 and 1996 the seats won by BJP was more than any other political party. But the elections 2002 and 2007 show a clear cut downfall with reference to the performance of BJP. This position is due to the fact that BJP is moderating its stand and is adopting the ideology and policies of Congress. The extremeness of BJP that has given it an edge is now no more. Congress on the other hand is moderate in its stand and doing no effort to improve its tally. Congress is mainly providing its attention to certain seats with the intention that whosoever wins from U.P except BJP will support it at the national politics. This moderation of BJP and patience of Congress led to a positive election result in the Lok

### U.P ELECTION

(Seats won by the three parties)

Table-I

Year	Lok Sabha			State Assembly			Year
	BJP	CONGRESS	CPI/CPI(M)	BJP	CONGRESS	CPI/CPI(M)	
1991	51	05	01	221	46	05	1991
1996	52	05	0	177	28	04	1993
1998	57	00	00	174	33	05	1996
1999	29	10	00	88	25	02	2002
2004	13	10	00	51	22	00	2007
2009	10	21	00	-	-	-	-

Source: Election Commission

**GUJARAT ELECTION**  
(Seats won by the three parties)

Table-II

LokSabha				State Assembly			
Year	BJP	CONGRESS	CPI/CPI(M)	BJP	CONGRESS	CPI/CPI(M)	Year
1991	20	05	0	67	33	0	1990
1996	16	10	0	121	45	0	1995
1998	19	07	0	117	53	0	1998
1999	20	06	0	127	51	0	2002
2004	14	12	0	117	59	0	2007
2009	15	11		-	-	-	-

Sabha election of 2009 for Congress. U.P has given Congress the status of number two party with reference to seat tally. Bruce(1990) correctly perceives JanaSangh the precursor of BJP in the following words and these words are true for present day BJP also: "The Jana Sangh was very much a prisoner of the Congress raj, accepting many of its economic and social values and unwilling to explore the possibility of a direct and radical attack on its basic assumptions about how the economy should be managed'.

In Gujarat the preference of voters at the state determines what they want at the national level and vice versa. The results of the LokSabha elections of 1991, 1996, 1998 and 1999 show the good performance of BJP. Likewise the performance in the Assembly elections suggest that BJP is continuing with the good performance of 1995 and the party is showing promising results in the elections of 1998, 2002 and 2007. The slight variation is visible with respect to the LokSabha election of 2004 where the party is getting less seats but that number is more than the tally of Congress in the state.

In West Bengal, the results of the LokSabha and Assembly elections show conformity with one another. The Assembly and LokSabha elections results reciprocate one another (Table-III). Now the first major question is with reference to the industrial policy adopted by the Communist party and its consequences with respect to Singur and Nandigram and the second major question is with respect to the relationship between industrial policy and its repercussion with respect to the panchayat election performance of Communist Party in the panchayata elections held in 2008.

The performance at grass root level is not encouraging for them. Mukherjee (2008) points out that "at the panchayat samiti and gram panchayat level the two most important tiers in the functioning of the panchayat system, the left front has virtually been out in the districts of East Midnapore, 24 Parganas( North), 24 Parganas( South), Nadia and North Dinajpur. Even in quite a number of those districts where the left front has been able to maintain its domination in the Zilla parishads, the Congress and Trinamul Congress have done exceedingly well at the panchayat samiti and gram panchayat level and have made heavy inroads into the left vote bank". These two questions are related to one another and the way Communist in West Bengal have taken a moderate stand while inviting capitalist industrialization system they suffered protests and heavy loss in panchayat elections and recently in urban local body elections.



**WEST BENGAL ELECTION**  
(Seats won by the three parties)  
Table-III

LokSabha				State Assembly			
Year	BJP	CONGRESS	CPI/CPI(M)	BJP	CONGRESS	CPI/CPI(M)	Year
1991	0	05	30	0	43	194	1991
1996	0	09	26	0	82	163	1996
1998	1	01	27	0	26	150	2001
1999	2	03	24				
2004	0	06	29	0	21	184	2006
2009	1	06+19(TMC) =25	13	-	-	-	-

The performance of communists in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections shows that their moderate stand is paying them badly. Not only this, their methods and matter of protest been taken over by other parties. From this analysis one can assume that the Communist may continue to repeat their bad performance in the coming state assembly elections.

If one analyses the overall scenario, one can conclude that the extreme ideological stand with respect to economy or socio-cultural variable plays an important role in the electoral politics and moderation of this stand leads to loss. This is the case at least with the constant parties that is Congress, BJP and Communist Party as a whole. Not only this the performance in these three states conform to the fact that performance in Assembly elections do have its impact on Lok Sabha and vice versa.

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5. Note: Source of all the tables is Election Commission.