



## A study on the Indian political system and state governments' responsibilities

Dr. Chitra Acharya<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Soniya Joshi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, J.N.M.P. Govt. PG College, Phalodi, Rajasthan, India

<sup>2</sup> Department of Political Science & Public Administration, Banasthali Vidyapeeth, Rajasthan, India

### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to summarise current research on local and state government accountability in India. We'll take each of these in turn: low voter participation and ignorance; capture by elites; ideology, honesty, and competency of political groups and electoral candidates; clientelism and corruption and vote-buying; and so on. We begin with an explanation of the relevant departure from the Downsian paradigm, then move on to a discussion of the empirical evidence available in the Indian context for each of these potential "distortions," and finally, we discuss the consequences of policy interventions related to these potential "distortions." The section concludes with a brief overview of the lessons taken away and the follow-up inquiries they prompt. This paper evaluates the available data from the Indian context to discuss numerous possible factors for the failure of elections as a vehicle for imposing government accountability to its citizenry. This research makes a contribution by summarising and providing context for current studies on political and economic issues confronting municipalities and states in India.

**Keywords:** electoral competition, State government, policy interventions

### Introduction

Efficient markets and market imperfections are terms economists use to describe the positive and negative aspects of market economies, respectively, when applying the prevailing neoclassical framework. Political failure is a relatively new area of study, in which the actions and outcomes of real political and bureaucratic processes are dissected and compared to idealised norms. This has expanded the study of economics to consider the function of governing bodies during growth. The initial step of this review should be to define its parameters. The standard literature-based framework for political economy analysis will be outlined first. This framework makes it possible to examine the underlying assumptions and causal mechanisms of various theories or perspectives on governance and to test their empirical viability. Understand the normative effects, and look into the policy choices that can be made to alter the results. The key elements of government accountability are defined, and the framework clarifies the connection between them. These elements can be grouped broadly into four categories: voter properties (such as political understanding, involvement, and dedication, which affects the scope and nature of democratic opposition), politician or party features (including ethos, candour, expertise, and the consequences of political hesitations), special interest groups (and issues involving of campaign finance and elite capture), and democratic clientelism (e.g. vote-buying). In each case, I'll describe the empirical research conducted in India and the policy changes that emerged from the findings. In conclusion, I'll offer some thoughts on how these results shed light on the recent trends of governance transition across the various states of India.

A number of crucial elements of governance, such as national institutions, bureaucracy, and development led by local groups or NGOs, will be left out. I will not go into the specifics of theoretical and empirical methods, but rather highlight their importance within a broader framework. In

terms of empirical studies, I will only consider proposals based on statistical and economic analyses of micro-level datasets derived from representative household or village surveys. This approach is useful because it helps researchers get around problems caused by case studies' insufficient generalizability. Responses to factual questions, as opposed to perception-based questions or opinion surveys, were relied on as heavily as feasible in the study. Many are designed to examine the hypotheses about causation raised by the theory. The empirical method incorporates problems of inferring causal and unobserved heterogeneity, which can complicate identification of cause and effect. Rather of engaging in policy review intend to concentrate on studies that clarify the underpinnings of political economy.

Because of the constraints of micro-econometric research, many descriptive, institutional, and case studies will be left out. This is in no way meant to be a comparison of the merits of various approaches to social science. Studies of a qualitative or historical nature add context and nuance to the specificity and precision of quantitative approaches. Economists typically concentrate on the latter field because of their training, background, and comparative advantage. In order to gain a more holistic and nuanced understanding, it is crucial to supplement these investigations with knowledge from a variety of research methods.

### Government Responsibility

To be responsible, public policy must be sensitive to and address the concerns of citizens. This measure can be easily constructed because it is based on a single question: to what extent can policies satisfy the aspirations of citizens who have the same requirements and preferences? Consider a scenario whereby the government is able to provide relief to a region after a catastrophic event, the locals of that area are ready to bear the economic strain of such aid, and there's a consent among citizens that this aid should be delivered.

### **Voter engagement and consciousness**

Personal attributes of politicians, such as charisma and image, can sway voters; nevertheless, these qualities are extremely subjective and can vary widely even among members of the same narrow citizen group, such as those defined by caste, religion, socioeconomic status, or geographic region. This factor contributes to the stability of political dynasties in some emerging countries. Loyalties may also be affected by historical factors, such as assessments on the effectiveness of previous policies. Ethnicity is often cited as a major factor in "identity politics" in classical societies. To assess the expected outcomes of any given programme, even for the study of policy platforms, extensive expertise and resources are required. Different people with comparable interests may have different levels of access to information, leading to different assessments of how a policy would effect their own personal well-being. A highly educated electorate is less likely to be swayed by misleading statements made by candidates. Hence, it is impossible to anticipate the voting conduct of citizens in any social circle only on the basis of the real consequences of policy initiatives on that group's wellbeing. Voting has numerous other implications, many of which are separate from and unrelated to specific policies. Probabilistic voting can be described in this way. The voting conduct of an individual voter is much harder to anticipate than the voting percentages of other citizen types because of the accumulation of these multiple idiosyncratic variables. Vote distributions are influenced by candidates' varying policy programmes but are not determined by them.

### **Political engagement and sensitivity**

Various countries have employed household data to investigate the connection between political participation or knowledge and socioeconomic conditions; these countries include the United States and Latin America. Many studies of voter turnout in different countries are summarised by Przeworski (2006). The political system contributes to inequalities in a number of ways, including the positive correlation between socioeconomic position and political engagement. Yet, there is a wide range of differences in political engagement and knowledge between countries. Disparities in voter turnout, campaign engagement, and political knowledge persist along racial and socioeconomic lines in the United States. The correlation between political action and socioeconomic features is quite stable in the greater part of other developed and emerging economies where such data is available. Household surveys have been used by Bardhan *et al.* (2011) to look at differences in political engagement and knowledge of local govt politics by social class in two Karnataka districts, 3 districts of M.P., and Rajasthan. According to the data, ninety percent of eligible voters from all income brackets register and cast ballots in local elections.

This is not due to differences in landlords per se but rather to the increased prevalence of non-agricultural professions, immigration, and a lower educational attainment (in the case of West Bengal). In Bengal, same factors consistently accounted for disparities in political protest participation and understanding of government assistance programmes and available data.

### **Political competitiveness, voter allegiances, and politician calibre**

It is possible to adapt the current probabilistic election framework to take into consideration candidates' varying degrees of competence and integrity. Consider the possibility that these characteristics of politicians are universally acknowledged and held to be stable by the voting public. When everything else is equal, voters who care about the policy implications of the election results will choose the more honest and capable candidates. Applicants rarely contend only on mandate qualities, and there's usually at least one other major difference. There may be other aspects of a candidate's character that voters find more appealing than their competence or honesty, allowing them to stay in the race. Several of the most notoriously corrupt mayors of early 20th-century American cities, such as New York's Jimmy Walker and Boston's James Curley, were also among the most popular and widely re-elected. Voter allegiance can be influenced by political legacies in contrast to caste, religion, and sex. The electoral victory of Laloo Yadav, Mayawati, and the Gandhi dynasty in India can be attributed in part to these elements. If voters prioritise personal characteristics over policy considerations, they may choose dishonest and ineffective leaders. Achievements and standards on strategy aspects may ultimately have less of an effect on election results if non-issue-based criteria are included in voting, as they provide a competitive edge to individuals of the preferred caste or family.

It's possible for a comparable situation to occur with the effectiveness of government or the degree of corruption among those in elected office. If an incumbent official is anticipated to be re-elected only on the basis of his or her personal charisma, caste, or religious identification, then that individual understands that bad governance performance will not significantly harm re-election prospects. Therefore electoral competition is unfair and doesn't serve as a form of self-control. Candidates that receive a large number of votes from their supporters are more likely to participate in corrupt practises, neglect development projects, favour special interest groups, and so on.

### **Promotional funding, special organisations, and privileged acquisition**

Here we present a previously unmentioned aspect of economics and politics: the solicitation of politicians by major interest groups and the potential of such groups exerting influence over laws through campaign funding. Many prominent thinkers like Marxists, Gary Becker and the Chicago school, have asserted that governments are largely powerless since they're collected by specific interest groups, and the initiatives of these governments can be deduced from the preferences of the various social strata that capture them. Yet, the actual mechanisms of this capture are rarely discussed in depth. It is assumed that campaign commercials can sway impressionable or misinformed people to choose a certain candidate, and that this chance increases as the expenditure advantage of one candidate over another grows. So, politicians nowadays have two key instruments to alter their vote shares: (a) persuading knowledgeable voters with policy options, as in the old Downsian approach; and (b) persuading ignorant people with the sum of cash they can acquire for their electoral campaigns. Because of this, they are ready to deviate from Downsian strategies that optimize

share of votes among knowledgeable voters in order to raise more money for their campaigns and use it to increase their share of the vote among uneducated voters. This is the cost-benefit analysis that can be used by lobbying organisations. They can put strings on donations to political campaigns, such as requiring candidates to support a certain set of policies if they want their money. Under the premise that special interests make such open-ended proposals, the theory provides a number of intriguing predictions. It has been found that politicians who are popular with the public for reasons unrelated to the issues they stand for are more likely to be captured and to stray further from Downsian ideals.

Hence, there is no coherent platform being offered by the many contenders. By understanding the philosophy of opposition parties as a type of captivity by the special interests that contribute to their campaigns, Downsians are able to provide an explanation for why contending politicians choose distinct policy positions in the actual world.

### Manipulation of votes

From the aforementioned, it seems reasonable to conclude that analysing the proportion of government advantages that go to financially or socially disadvantaged populations is one way to conduct a rigorous analysis of government accountability. Do influential and affluent groups, who are not targeted by anti-poverty programmes, wind up reaping the most of the advantages? Or are organisers stealing from them, as is frequently reported in media tales of corruption in India? Is the SC/ST population receiving a smaller share of the total benefits budget than the general population? Is there a correlation between the size of a population and the share of those who live in poverty? If the poor receive welfare, is the Left "buying" their votes? How have they stayed at the top of West Bengal politics for almost 3 decades? This brings us to our next form of distorted politics.

It is common practise to provide clientelistic exchange to the impoverished, who are more likely to sell their vote for less pay. They give people hope that the government will take into account their needs. However, as evidenced by countless case studies in a wide range of emerging countries, they usually take the shape of programmes supplying short-term private gain on a proportionate basis to a select population segment, as compared to conceptual transfer programmes, social utilities, or long-term effort to deliver in fields like public healthcare and education. In line with the hypothesis of Dixit and Londregan, they stand for the inclination of politicians to court "swing" voters by measures such as targeted transfers, tax cuts, and pork-barrel projects (1995).

### Conclusion

We have looked at several possible explanations for why elections fail to hold governments accountable to their constituents, and we've analysed the facts that exists within the Indian context to decide which explanation is most likely. How successfully does direct governance function 20 years after the 73rd and 74th amendments to the constitution established a three-tiered system for local governments? While summing up the results, it's important to remember that empirical research, especially that pertaining to local governments, has had a patchy geographical scope. Particularly over-represented are the states of West Bengal

and southern India. This means that the findings cannot be generalised to the entire country. You can't make any conclusions without meeting this condition. As far as election practises, patterns of political engagement, and political consciousness go, the analysed states have all the makings of a robust and well-established democracy. Voter turnout is high and elections are generally fair.

So, it is important to look farther below the surface for results-oriented performance measures of the institution. Votes based on considerations irrelevant to politicians' development success, such as race or communal identity or a propensity for political dynasties, are a matter for concern. These factors weaken the incentive for elected officials to offer effective leadership by decreasing the correlation between electoral success and continued service. There is evidence to suggest that the quality of government in a number of countries has declined as a consequence of the growing ethnicization of politics. There is an opportunity to enhance in corporate governance, it seems, by giving people more insight into the performance of their elected politician and by enhancing government openness, despite the fact that the media is proactive and adds to the attentiveness of governments.

### References

1. Anderson S, Francois P, Kotwal A. "One kind of democracy", working paper, 2011.
2. Department of Economics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
3. Ban R, Rao V. "Tokenism or agency? The impact of women's reservations on village democracies in South India", *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 2008;56:3:501-530.
4. Borquignon F, Verdier T. "Oligarchy, democracy, inequality and growth", *Journal of Development Economics*, 2000;62:285-313.
5. Chattopadhyay R, Duflo E. "Women as policy makers: evidence from a randomized policy experiment in India", *Econometrica*, 2004;72(5):1409-1443.
6. Downs A. "An Economic Theory of Democracy", Harper & Row, New York, NY, 1957.
7. Engerman S, Sokoloff K. "Institutions, factor endowments and paths of development in the new world", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 2000;14(3):217-232.
8. Fung A, Wright EO, "Editors", *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, Verso, New York, NY, 2003.
9. Gajwani K, Zhang X. "Gender, caste and public good provision in Indian village governments", IFPRI Discussion Paper No. 807, IFPRI, Washington, DC, 2008.
10. Krishna A. "Poverty and democratic participation reconsidered: evidence from the local level in India", *Comparative Politics*, 2006;38(4):439-458.
11. Lindbeck A, Weibull J. "Balanced budget redistribution as the outcome of political competition", *Public Choice*, 1987;52:273-297.
12. Niehaus P, Sukhtankar S. "The marginal rate of corruption in public programs: evidence from India", working paper, Department of Economics, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, 2012.
13. Palaniswamy N, Krishnan N. "Local politics, political institutions and public resource allocation", IFPRI Discussion Paper, IFPRI, Washington, DC, 2008.