

Developmental Welfarism and Programmatic Politics: India's Changing Electoral Landscape

Athul Nandan¹, Swathi Raman U²

^{1,2}Research scholar Department of Political Science University of Kerala Thiruvananthapuram

Abstract

The welfare state is way of governing in which the state or an established group of social institutions provides basic economic security for its citizens. Modern states have programs that are reflective of a welfare state, such as welfare pensions for vulnerable sections affirmative actions and spending on education, health etc. Tamil Nadu ruled by Dravidian parties, they were one of the best executors of the welfare politics in electoral arena. Tamil Nadu's welfare model is being copied in other states since it gained massive electoral advantages. Political parties have realized that the surest way to reap electoral dividends is through benefits to an individual voter. Nowadays Indian elections are turnout into a programmatic way. Voters are more likely to give credit to the governments for their welfare schemes. This paper tries to analyse the Indian electoral scenario and the influence of welfare politics. The astounding victory of left democratic front (LDF) in the Kerala assembly election and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi can be seen as its scheme of blending governance with developmental welfarism. Apart from the crises such as flood and covid19 the effective operationalisation of government gives electoral dividends for these parties. The NDA government has been crafting its flagship programs since 2014, welfare programs such as Ujjwala, Jan-Dhan Yojana are helped to bag the votes and again get power in central

Keywords: welfare schemes, NDA, LDF, Aam Aadmi Party, Electoral victories

Introduction

The elections are playing a vital role in a democratic system is known as the backbone of democracy. Election is the method through which a modern state creates among its citizens a sense of involvement and participation in public affairs. It spread political consciousness and political education to the people. It is the process that helps and accelerates the growth of political socialization and recruiting new ruling classes or elites. India conducts the world's largest political participation through its general elections. It makes the widest degree of popular participation millions of ordinary Indians who have different caste-religion, language culture, etc. at the same time someone is geographically and culturally isolated from the mainstream. However, they have to participate in the world's largest democratic process. Therefore, it also is known as the festival of democracy. Electoral politics in a democracy deal with an important role it regarded as a measure of political consciousness, interest articulation and political participation of the society. Analysis of the voting behaviour and voting pattern of particular locality or constituency which studies inhabited a very important place in the sphere of electoral politics. Hence the study of electoral politics helps to make an in-depth empirical study of the pattern of political inclinations of the people in a particular constituency. (Dhal 1956)

Development for welfare

A welfare state is concept of government in which the state place a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social wellbeing of its citizen. It based on the principles of equality of opportunity equitable distribution of wealth and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for good life. The concept of modern welfare state was emerged in Germany Otto Von Bismarck, the first chancellor of Germany establishes the tradition of welfare programmes. Bismarck launch welfare schemes such as old age pensions, accident insurance and medical care this was a mile stone in the development of the welfare state concept. These social welfare policies attained the support of the proletarian class for the German empire and decline the outflow the immigrants to United States. Where wages were higher but welfare did not exist.

The view of Development and welfarism has converted quite significantly in the last three decades. The liberalisation of the Indian economy in the early 1990's was a landmark moment in this regard. The Rao's government created an impression that the open market framework would in the end facilitate an independent and self-regulating economic realm. This new thought was critically accepted by all political parties including communist parties and BJP. The state began to clarify itself as a neutral agency to mediate between competing social groups and communities while maintaining a distance from the economic sphere. In the backdrop of this important political change, a Sectoral approach to the idea of welfare evolved gradually. Women, children, Dalit's, Adivasi, minorities unorganised labour and so on were addressed as particles to design policies. A state that does not envisage welfare as its basic political duty, instead offers benefits as acts of benefit and generosity to its citizens in the realm of competitive electoral politics. This will pave the way for the formation of the Charitable State. (Ahmed 2022) Given these shifts in social structure and party competition we argue that both left and right parties face a fundamental trade-off between their vote-seeking and policy seeking incentives one that crucially depends upon the degree of electoral competition. When electoral completion is high, parties should follow their vote seeking incentives and pressure a strategy of vote maximisation by reaching out beyond their core constituency. In case of low competitiveness, however their policy seeking strategies should dominate and they will follow their traditional ideological profile and the preferences of their rank-and-file members. (Tarik About n.d.) Social welfare has traditionally not been a significant part of the electoral discourse in many states in India but recent days the electoral arena of India talking about the developmental welfare matters. The election season has made it clear that social welfare continues to be the under lying political strategy for campaigns run by different political parties irrespective of their ideology. In an election with few factors and where caste and religion often dominate discourse, beneficiaries of government social welfare schemes have become silent voter class emerged. Now in India political parties believe that social welfare strategies are their best bet in consolidating votes. The astounding victory of left democratic front (LDF) in the Kerala assembly election and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi can be seen as its scheme of blending governance with developmental welfarism. Apart from the crises such as flood and covid-19 the effective operationalisation of government gives electoral dividends for these parties.

Schemes translated into Votes

NDA government's development efforts at grass root level have also helped them. Various schemes launched by the Modi government. The Ujjwala Yojana which is directed at women was most popular. The government has issued seven crore gas cylinders to new users. Swachh Bharath Abhiyan, Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Beti Bachao Beti Padao are the popular schemes adopted by

Modi Government. Sanitation programmes, government has given major focus on this area through Swachh Bharath Abhiyan and the country has nearly eliminated the open defecation and manual scavenging through the construction of toilets at massive scale and by spreading awareness about hygiene. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bhima Yojana (PMFBY) provide a comprehensive insurance cover against the failure of the crop thus helping in stabilising the income of the farmers. The Scheme covers all Food & Oilseeds crops and Annual Commercial/Horticultural Crops for which past yield data is available and for which requisite number of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) are conducted being under General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES). The scheme is implemented by empanelled general insurance companies. Selection of Implementing Agency (IA) is done by the concerned State Government through bidding. The scheme is compulsory for loanee farmers availing Crop Loan /KCC account for notified crops and voluntary for other others. The scheme is being administered by the Ministry of Agriculture. Therefore, BJP was able to attract more voters to this time as a result of a rise in Narendra Modi’s popularity as well as the impact of this government’s schemes. (vidbha attri 2019) 2009 General election statistics shown that Bharatiya Janata Party has conventionally received less support from female voters than male voters. Despite the BJP’s watershed victory in 2019 general election the party continues to have a gender disadvantage of three percentage points among women voters at all-India level. as per the CSDS national post poll survey resulted that, when voters were asked to name one policy or scheme of the Modi regime that they influenced most, the Ujjwala yojana which scheme influenced many women voters. An equal proportion of Men and women have benefited from this free gas connection scheme. Among women beneficiaries of the scheme more women voted for BJP compared to those who did not get benefit. BJP was able to attract more women voters in this time and these schemes impacted very much in the election fields.

Table 1
Vote Share of 2014 and 2019 Parliament Election

Source: Election Commission of India

2014			2019	
Party	Total seats	Vote Share	Total seats	Vote Share
BJP	282	31.00 %	303	37.38%
INC	44	19.31 %	52	19.55%
BSP	0	4.14 %	10	3.63%
TMC	34	3.84 %	22	4.07%
others	183	41.71%	15	35.38%

Landslide victory of LDF in Kerala

Kerala once again wrote new history when the result of the assembly election 2021 declared. Giving a clear majority for the incumbent government, left democratic front created history by securing spectacular consecutive victory. Bagged 99 seats and more remarkable this victory breaking the states over 40-year-old tradition of alternate governments. The LDF success can be largely accredited to the social welfare schemes and that helped it defuse a series of corruption charges and allegations against government. LDF government in Kerala recasting the development experiments focused on the comprehensive and inclusive development model to promote welfare for the people. Such social welfare schemes bringing the proximity

between the people and developmental state utilised for political mobilisation and consolidation among different sectors of the society by the ruling party overriding the political completion existing in state. The government timely intervention of distributing the essential food items in the grocery kit monthly ration items such as rice, kerosene, wheat, and sugar during the Covid -19 pandemic. It addressed poverty of large sections. (V 2021) The grocery kit through ration shops during the pandemic has had directly influenced on people especially the working class as many had lost their livelihood during the lockdown. The timely distribution of welfare pensions for the old age and socially and economically vulnerable to their doorsteps brought the sections closer to the government and created a pro-poor image of the government. The fight against flood and the Covid-19 turnout to be s mass public action and social mobilisation in Kerala. These collective actions and state governments' active role contributed to reduce the infection rate initially and the mortality rate in the in subsequent phase of the spread of the virus. No public action is successful without the effective contribution of a government and responsive leadership. The left government propagated the idea of government along with the people during the flood in 2018, reiterated the 'government in front of the people' in dealing with the Covid crisis. (V 2021).

Nava Kerala Mission

First LDF government launched the Nava Kerala Mission it emphasizes the implementation of four schemes. This initiative implemented four central schemes for the enhancement of health, education, agriculture and housing with the help of local bodies. Haritha Kerala mission envisages a clean state by taking up various waste management programmes it also planned to implement sanitization schemes, project for preserving water sources, agriculture development and promotion of organic farming. Ardrum is aimed at improving facilities in public sector hospitals with a view to extend treatment at a reasonable cost. The life scheme is one part of nava Kerala mission it proposed housing for all houseless people. This aids more than four lakh families around the state that do not have home or adequate amount of land. forth part of this scheme is comprehensive educational rejuvenation program, its emphasis preserves and strengthen the public education system of Kerala and also maintained an international standard. Nava Kerala mission was the development outline for upcoming 25 years; it's a collective action of civil society and government work together for rebuilding Kerala. Apart from individual benefits, the development vision and crisis management. One most important factor for the verdict was the government's effective handling of two floods, cyclone Oakhi, Nippah

Freebies and triumph of AAP

In 2020 Arvind Kejriwal and Aam Aadmi party voted back to power with a huge mandate in Delhi assembly election, AAP won 62 seats. Aam Aadmi chose the route of focusing on their own report card. The AAP campaign for the Delhi assembly election 2020 AAP stressed on the development done by them in the last five years. AAP leaders highlighted the work done by for the government schools the health care sector by opening Mohalla clinics. AAP try to delivery of freebies. From offering subsidies on electricity to giving free bus and metro rides for women, AAP has taken some steps which might have made the Delhi voters happy. That a higher number of women voters turned out to vote for AAP in the state. The gap between male and female voters also narrowed to be a record minimum of 0.07 percentage shows that probably Kejriwal's freebies for the women of Delhi might have served the intended Purpose. In 2020 Kejriwal said that this victory is not mine it is the victory of all those households who have started getting 24-hour free electricity. It is a victory of those families whose children have started getting a good

education, those who started getting good treatment in our hospital. Kejriwal made addition of announcement in the run up to the elections making bus rides free for women pricing auto and taxi fares launching a free public Wi-Fi service many of subsidies and schemes while aimed at the power were not meant exclusively for Thereby reducing utility bills for almost everyone. (Economic Times 2020)

Free electricity: The AAP government launched a power subsidy scheme soon after it came to power in 2015 But radically changed it six months ago but making electricity free for those consuming between 201 and 400 Units were eligible for a subsidy I do flat 50 percentage. The announcement was timed in such a way that maximum households in Delhi could avail the free and subsidized power schemes in the winter months

Free water: Free water subsidy scheme benefit around 1.5 million households according to the government data according to experts it seeks to encourage water conservation and also increase the coverage of the water metering system.

Education: Building over 8000 classrooms and started free coaching for all students in slums. There has not been any state or national education where education has been discussed like it was this time. It is because of this strategy of AAP that rival parties like the BJP and Congress had to come up with additional and better promises in this Sector.

Health care: health care Los a key issue in the elections with the AAP Speaking of its mohela clinics and upcoming And the BJP bringing up the non-implementation of its flagship National Health insurance schemes Ayushman Bharath in the national capital.

Transport: The slew of announcement regarding transport began with Kejriwal promising free ride to women in buses and in the Delhi metro. CCTV cameras and Wi-Fi In 2018 AAP finally secured the clearance to install CCTV cameras in all residential market areas several residents association have welcomed the move. The welfare measures brought by Kejriwal played a major role in bringing the AAP back to power. Beyond the concept of a welfare state, the governance of the AAP was a new experience for the people of Delhi. (sing n.d.)

Conclusion

The dynamic electoral politics in a liberal democracy is shaped by different agents that are directly or indirectly impact the electoral mandate. Incumbent governments try to expand its mass base and electoral strength to various sections of the community through developmental schemes and welfare actions. The politics of welfare in liberal democracy push the government in a difficult position as it has to renew the people's verdict in specific time. In the neo-liberal era when the concept of development shifted from state centric to market oriented. Some governments experimented with populism in the development at the state level and thereby reduce mass discontent against the government. The Indian electoral landscape now in a new path, the recent election results in the country which shows that the ruling parties are came to power again. Political parties using developmental welfare schemes as a election strategy to establish its dominance over opponents. The strategic use of developmental welfarism and social outreaching can triumph over emotive issues and dislodge the political bigotry of the opposition. The BJP was banking on the beneficiaries of government at center. "Labharathi" a group of beneficiaries emerged as a new group of voters in elections. Schemes beneficiaries would definitely vote for the party as they have benefited from the welfare schemes launched by the center as well as by the state government such as direct benefit transfers, ujjwala scheme, kisan samman nidhi, PM awas yojana and free ration scheme. Tamil Nadu ruled by Dravidian parties, they were one of the best executors of the welfare politics in electoral arena. Tamil

Nadu's welfare model is being copied in other states since it gained massive electoral advantages. Political parties have realized that the surest way to reap electoral dividends is through benefits to an individual voter. Nowadays Indian elections are turnout into a programmatic way. Promises of clean governance and populist measures in health, education and power supply were able to sway a large section of a disenchanting electorate.

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