

# Role and Importance of Youth in the Formation of Modi 2.0

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THE General Election of 2019 was the watershed year in the history of Indian democracy. It was the first election of independent India when a non-congress government returned to power with thumping majority<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, Modi government was the first government in the world which came back to power after introducing the biggest indirect tax reforms, GST (Goods and Services tax)<sup>2</sup>. Against all the odds, misinformation & false narrative, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) sailed through under the leadership of Narendra Modi. The most glaring thing which was noticed in this election was the connect which BJP and especially the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has established with the youth. In a country which is believed to vote not on qualities and credentials of leader but on caste and religious lines, PM Modi proved that a better understanding of the pulse of voter can break any barrier. In his Himalayan effort to bring “Development” at the centre stage of electoral politics, youth acted as catalysts. This was the first time, India witnessed a sweeping election without any divisive lines. People and especially youth voted in favour of the incumbent government mainly on two issues; First, Nationalism and Second, Development.

Youths are the largest stakeholders of this vibrant democracy. Having the share of 65% in humongous Indian population, they are the builder and shaper of Indian politics. Despite giving highest participation in freedom struggle, Initially, it was believed that this class should focus more on study and carrier and later it was considered as they are disinterested in politics. It was a no-go zone for younger generation. Sometimes, it was also said that youth are not mature enough to take policy decisions. Fortunately, at a time when this country required their service most, youth stood up and shut all their critics. In this article, we will see the political trajectory of India and the role of youth in Indian politics particularly in the formation of Modi 2.0.

## **Pre-Independence**

India is a country which is always lead by youths since time immemorial.

During the time of Ramayana, it was Lord Rama and his three brothers; in Mahabharata, it was Yudhishtir along with Bheem and Arjuna and in Mauryan Empire, it was Chandragupta Maurya under the guidance of Chankya. Irrespective of ideology and political parties, Youths were the largest participants in freedom movement. They sacrificed their life for this great nation. Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, BatukeshwarDutt, Khudiram Bose, Subhas Chandra Bose were the few in the long list. Their energy and bravery shook the base of the mightiest empire of the world and eventually they had to leave the country. Youths like Adi Shankaracharya, Swami Vivekananda rejuvenate the Indian masses and showed them a new path. They changed the perspective of the whole world towards Indian culture. They enlightened the masses to shed the shackles of slavery. Indian independence movement was not only a physical battle but also a psychological one and these great saints played a very important role in making the Indians mentally strong.

### **Post-Independence**

Post-independence era also experienced the similar pattern as far as youth participation in political and social life is concerned. Student politics in university campuses has given many great leaders to this country. It became the budding ground for future politicians. Despite many critics it can't be negated that students stood up at times when government tried to uproot the democratic set up. In early 70s, when Indian democracy was gagged and muzzled by the government in power, student fought back. The Nav Nirman Andolan<sup>3</sup> which started from Gujarat engulfed the whole country and became the national movement in the name of Total revolution "sampurna Kranti" under the leadership of great Jaiprakash popularly known as JP. This forced Indira Gandhi to declare emergency. All big stalwarts like JP, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lal Krishna Advani, Mehta were put behind bars. Student's leaders like Arun Jaitley, Lalu Prasad Yadav were arrested and thrown into jails for 19 months. When election was held in 1977, Congress Party under the leadership of Indira Gandhi wiped out from north India and Janata Party formed the government at the centre and curbed India saw the ray of hope for democracy and freedom<sup>4</sup>.

Sadly, this energy was misused in early 90s when political class threw the younger generation in the fire of caste and religion based politics to satisfy their political lust. Youth immolated themselves in the guise of social injustice<sup>5</sup>. Political parties formed on the caste lines have blood of these youths on their hand. The most regrettable thing was the rise

of these political leaders to power corridor where they reached by walking on the corpse of these innocent youths and they are proudly thumping their chest for this inhuman act. The seeds of divide which they showed beared fruit and individually they captured political power but the scar remained forever. This created a gap among the people which can never be filled<sup>6</sup>.

These events brought some leaders to the forefront who became devils for Indian democracy. State after state started going in backward direction. Development took the back seat and criminal activities became the order of the day. The condition became so worst that the Supreme Court was forced to call Bihar a *jugleraj*<sup>7</sup>. Bihar witnessed unimaginable social and political crimes which were never heard before. Booth capturing and role of muscle power became indispensable to politics. Despite this harsh criticism Lalu Yadav continuously won three elections. His reign of terror came to end when K. J. Rao became the observer for Bihar election in 2005. Paramilitary forces were deployed to conduct free and fair election<sup>8</sup>. The story of Uttar Pradesh is not different, where Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party ruled the state alternatively for more than two decades by instigating caste and religious sentiment which sent it in the list of backward states. Election after election were fought on caste and religious lines. Only thing which echoed in voter's ear was his caste and religion.

At central government, the era of coalition government was started. Formation of government and participation and share in the ministerial birth became so important that parties sacrificed policies in national interest to remain in government. The concept of aaya-ram and gaya-ram was started when leader with his party started switching sides overnight<sup>9</sup>. Policy including foreign policy was changing with the change of ministers. It was not only hampering developmental aspect of the country but also its image at international level. Within ten years, world's largest democracy saw five general elections. No government except Narasimha Rao's minority government survived for more than 2 years. The only reason for this political anarchy was Indian National Congress (INC). Firstly, they withdrew support mid-way from every government which was formed with the outside support of Congress party, be it Ch. Charan Singh, H. D. Devegowda or Indra Kumar Gujral. Secondly, to defeat a no-confidence motion moved in the Lok Sabha against the minority government of P. V. Narasimha Rao, they purchased the vote of the parliamentarian from Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and this country saw the lowest level of politics in the form of JMM Bribery Scandal, 1993.<sup>10</sup>It institutionalized the corruption in India. This

episode not only created a negative perception in the mind of common people of this country towards politics and politician but also a feeling that if a parliamentary vote can be purchased in broad day light that to in the temple of democracy then anything can be purchased. This degraded the image of world's largest democracy at international fora. Some recovery was made during Vajpayee era, when the whole world saw a PM resigning from his post as his party fall short of majority mark just by one member. Who can forget the prophetic words of PM Vajpayee "Governments will come and go, parties will born and disappear. Above it all, the country must stay shining, its democracy must remain immortal"<sup>11</sup>. He was the statesman politician who attracted numerous youths toward politics. A politician having no enemy and won even the heart of opposition appealed common people the most who had seen politics a place of bitter enmity. Sadly, he couldn't form the government after 2004 general election. Bhartiya Janata Party got only four seats less than the Congress Party but INC successfully stitched the coalition by the name of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) to form government at centre. Then next ten years remained the years of corruption at highest level. In the words of notable jurist Fali S Nariman, if history is "the sum total of things that could have been avoided, it was the years when corruption got fully institutionalized in India". UPA1 saw Cash-for-vote scam to save the government after withdrawal of support by CPI(M) against signing of Nuclear deal with USA. UPA2 was become so corrupt that every second day one or other corruption issue rocked the national politics<sup>12</sup>. The level of corruption was so grave that the apex court of this country intervened time and again and cancelled various deal. It cancelled coal allocation of 280 blocks, cancelled spectrum allocation and many more. The magnanimity of corruption can be understood from the fact that it runs into lacks of crores. The unbearable corruption level forced a veteran Gandhian Anna Hazare to come on street in the national capital and the movement spread throughout the country<sup>13</sup>.

## **General Election 2014**

Rising inflation, job crisis, falling growth rate, unimaginable corruption, pile of black money, indecisiveness in the policy making, lack of strong leader, leadership crisis in the government<sup>14</sup>, all made country impatient for government change and fortunately they found a leader having proven track record as the CM of Gujarat and gave him the key to run the government. Fed up with coalition and compromised politics, people of this country elected first non-congress government with full majority and first government after 1984<sup>15</sup>. The man behind this magnificent

victory was Narendra Modi, then CM of Gujarat. A person who rose to power centre from a very humble background, became the ideal of youth voters. They left behind every identity and voted in the favour of development of India. They did something which was alien to earlier generation. Politician used to play different cards to divide people and secure their vote banks. Unfortunately, masses were also dancing on the tune of their political masters but this time, they remained unfazed and voted with single goal to bring Modi at the helm of affairs. The main slogan “AbkiBaar, Modi Sarkar<sup>16</sup>” and “ChaloHaalatBadle, Desh Ki Sarkar Badle<sup>17</sup>” caught the attention of voters who gave BJP a thumping and resounding victory. Despite not having adequate number in Council of States (Rajya Sabha), government passed many landmark legislations and took very bold and brave decision. Demonetization to curb black money and terrorist activities, Goods and Services Tax (GST) to end the menace of tax evasion, Triple Talaq Bill to bring equality in the society and take the half population of Muslims i.e. Muslim women at par with their male counterparts, Surgical strike and air strike to prove that despite believing the principle of non-violence, India won't think even a second to protect its borders. The biggest achievement of PM Modi was the change of image of the country at global platform. World started taking India seriously and on various occasions India left an everlasting impact. The personal relation of PM Modi with powerful global leaders boosted India's reputation and position. Stable government at the centre gave hope to the investors and thus India became one of the popular destinations for the investment. FDI and foreign reserve reached to a new height. Skill India to enhance the capability of youth, Start Up India to utilize the talent of young entrepreneur, Mudra Yojna to finance the defunded young population without any collateral, fueled the business environment in the country. Ujjwala Scheme to connect every household with LPG Connection, Jan Dhan Account to bring everyone to banking system, DBT to transfer the subsidy directly in the account of beneficiary and eradicate the chain of middle men, Neem Coated Urea to prevent misuse of Urea and prevent its black-marketing, were the people centric steps taken by the government which brought it closer to the common masses. Against this backdrop, general election 2019 came<sup>18</sup>.

## **General Election 2019**

Bhartiya Janata Party was in this election with its tried and tested face of incumbent PM Narendra Modi and everything was revolving around him. Like 2014 election it was fought in presidential style with main slogan of “Phir Ek Baar, Modi Sarkar<sup>19</sup>”. The trust in the government

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was so high that after 1971 for the first time under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, government returned back to the power surprisingly with more seats<sup>20</sup>. On the one hand political analyst were predicting a fractured mandate but just opposite to it BJP crossed the magical figure of 300 on its own. Since start of its political campaign, BJP focused more on 84 million first time voters and youths which eventually bore result. The role of youth can be understood from the fact that it has changed the fortune of political parties in almost every election. In 1999 election youth support base for BJP and Congress was 26 and 27 percent respectively which changed to 34 and 18 percent in 2014 election. To woo this segment, government launched various programs including Digital India. The unwavering focus of Prime Minister Modi and Bhartiya Janata Party on these voters increased their political awareness as well their participation in political process. Their turnout on voting day higher than the national average<sup>21</sup>. How they voted and changed the fate of political party, we can understand this phenomenon with a table<sup>22</sup>.

S. No.	Age Group	Vote share of BJP	Vote share of Congress
1.	18-25	44	26
2.	26-35	46	26
3.	36-50	46	27
4.	Student	43	24
5.	Professional	54	19

\*Figures are in percentage.

Even Dalit youths who were earlier believed to be a Congress voter, turned towards BJP. The analysis of data clearly establishes the fact that youth surpassed all social and political boundaries to vote for the country's development. They broke all the barrier which political parties put on them for their political gain, in the national interest.

### Conclusion

The landslide victory of PM Modi and BJP would not have been possible without getting tremendous pan India support from young voter. The churning of sea produced nectar as this campaign achieved the unachievable. Ten years before, no one could have thought of an election without caste and religion as a main factor. Sole agenda of growth,

development and nationalism took the front seat and guided the election. It was rightly pointed out by PM Modi that 21<sup>st</sup> century is the Asian century and India will play a major role due to its vast youth population. Fortunately, youth took this responsibility to eradicate all these menaces. Now they have successfully proved that India's election can't be dominated by caste and religious issues but by developmental issues. I hope that this trend will continue in the years to come and help India in forming a division free country and becoming a global superpower.

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