

Voting Behaviour and Welfare Schemes in Uttar Pradesh: A Study of 2022 Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly Elections

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Abstract

Welfare is an endeavour that aids those who are underprivileged and who are unable to take care of themselves without the assistance of others, who can be a single person, a group of people, an organisation, or the government. The article presents two significant contributions. Firstly, that a certain level of welfare policies in accordance with the provisions of the constitution of India advances voting behaviour, provided the beneficiaries were benefited. Secondly, it elucidates on the perception that issue of anti-incumbency can be dealt with adjustments to welfarism. The world's social welfare schemes are going through some intriguing times. Cuts to welfare are often marketed as "reforms" due to budgetary management goals. Governments are often under pressure to provide assistance to those who deserve it. It is crucial to identify the qualified beneficiary and the right amount of these distributions which in turn influences the voting pattern.

Keywords Welfare, Policies, State, Governance, Voting, Elections

Introduction

The idea of public welfare idea holds that each member of society has some degree of responsibility for the rest of society. By its very essence, public welfare is connected to people and their needs. The part IV of the constitution of India, from article 36 to 51 describes the Directive Principles of State Policy. The article 38 added by the 44th amendment, mentions about the role of state in promoting, advancing welfare of the people, to ensure political order and protection of the social and political order. Whereas the article 39 directs the state to provide equal opportunities to its citizen. The Uttar Pradesh (UP) government led by

the CM Yogi Adityanath follows rather walks shoulder to shoulder in implanting the schemes of public welfare. More than 50 policies have been announced by the UP-state government in the accordance with the policies of central government. The success of governance is reflected in the voting behaviour of the voters, which was quite clear in the 2022 UP-state election results, where the BJP won by landslide victory

India has embraced the welfare state concept and is completely dedicated to achieving it. The Constitution amply demonstrates this. The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth is one of the fundamental rights contained in Part-III. This applies not only to state action but also to access to stores, restaurants, hotels, and places of public entertainment, as well as the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, and other facilities.

Towards a Welfare State

The welfare state, or the notion that pursuing welfare, supporting welfare, or guaranteeing at least a minimal level of welfare is or should be the duty of the state, has long been the backdrop for economic, political, and philosophical study of the concept of welfare. By using a number of measures to address economic and social misery, Social Security provides protection to society's members. The idea of social security attempts to provide protections, particularly for families and people. It primarily aims to provide income and health. The major area of concern is protection against old age, unemployment, illness, invalidity, job injuries, maternity, or loss of a member who is the only source of income. Therefore, the primary goal of Social Security is to provide protection and assistance to society's members against these unforeseen circumstances that put them at danger of social and economic instability. An approach to lessen inequality and poverty is via social security. Additionally, it encourages inclusive development by raising productivity. Today, social security programmes are seen as the most effective and crucial instrument for safeguarding the weaker and less organised segments of society. In evolved capitalist democracies, welfare states are categorised into three ideal types: liberal, conservative, and social democratic, according to Gosta Esping-Andersen's tripolar welfare regime methodology. According to Esping-Andersen, a country's commitment to social equality and the decommodification of citizens' livelihoods, as well as the interaction between the state, market, and family—the three institutions in charge of providing resources for subsistence—determine the nature of a welfare state. Liberal welfare states typically have lower levels of

decommodification, more reliance on the market, means-tested and targeted programmes, and are largely represented by low or residual levels of welfare state development, in contrast to social democratic welfare states, which are characterised by higher levels of decommodification, more comprehensive welfare provisions, and a greater commitment to social equality. While highly developed, conservative welfare states show a stronger commitment to maintaining old social structures and a far less commitment to social equality. The foundation of a welfare state ensures that everyone has an equal chance to succeed, an equitable share of the wealth, and a sense of civic obligation, particularly those who are unable to secure even the most basic necessities for a decent life for themselves.

According to this concept, the state is accountable to each and every one of its inhabitants. Through grants, pensions, and other benefits, it safeguards the health and well-being of persons who need financial or social assistance. Two ideas have emerged in recent years to address the gaps in developing country conceptions about social policies: “Confucianism” and “welfare developmentalism.” Both strategies concentrate largely on social policy in the countries of East and Southeast Asia. Confucianism places a strong focus on principles like patriarchy, filial piety, respect for education, filial piety, filial piety, and the importance of the family and kinship relationships in understanding welfare states in the East Asian neighbourhood. According to welfare developmentalism, those countries’ national development plans include the creation of welfare states in that area. It is still unclear, however, if similar strategies apply to other developing-world countries.

Paul R. Brass who has worked extensively on U.P elections, elaborates that the elections in Uttar Pradesh are at the interplay of caste, class and the diversity of political parties in a heterogenous society. He writes that the electoral issues in Uttar Pradesh have a national character as they play an important role in national integration and often taken a great scope in the manifesto. The BJP’s “new Welfarerism” platform was prominently featured in the state elections in UP in 2022. Ground reports indicated that the Yogi government, in response to escalating anti-incumbency sentiment, has used welfare programmes like the government-funded brick and mortar homes under the PM Housing scheme, the toilets under Swachh Bharat Mission, the minimum income support for farmers under the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi, the cash grants as COVID assistance, the medical insurance programme under Ayushman Bharat, and the direct cash transfers to women with Jan-Similar initiatives have been implemented by the Centre to assist the

state, including LPG cylinders under the Ujjwala Yojna, electric metres under the Jal Jeevan Yojna, and tap-water connections. The roots of the contemporary welfare state include the creation of hospitals, insurance firms, welfare offices, and educational institutions, among other things. With this approach, the state's government guarantees that every resident of the state maintains a minimal quality of life. It makes sure that individuals have access to resources including healthcare, education, work, and social security.

As a result, a sizable group of individuals, known as "LabharthiVarg," are now the recipients of the PM Kisan Nidhi and PM Ujjwala Yojana, which together have 3.9 crore beneficiaries in the state. A welfare state offers its citizens two ways to participate in the growth process. The first category includes those who take part in politics as a society's representation and those who are managed by these representatives. The two participating classes combine to form the society. The administrators look out for individuals who are less fortunate and unable to compete with others. The Yogi administration introduced new programmes to provide free food grains, COVID relief cash handouts, as well as grants for children's school uniforms and books. Here, the JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) trinity has been utilised successfully to close government funding gaps and guarantee that funds are distributed quickly, particularly to make up for the COVID second wave mishandling while keeping the elections in mind. Voting behaviour is influenced by several factors, including caste, class, community, ethnicity, language, ideology, political wave, and religion. These factors are used by political parties to attract people and win the election. Regardless of preference or ideology, all political party representatives employ these factors to win over people. These factors also influence how voters cast their ballots. Understanding the role of welfare schemes requires to access the electoral behaviour of voters in the U.P state elections, according to the data available, three major factors might have influenced the voting pattern in Uttar Pradesh. These are Role of leadership, Policy initiatives and Governance. Political socialisation in Uttar Pradesh is largely based on cultural, employment and law & order issue.

Role of Leadership

This phenomenal shift started with the 2014 Lok Sabha election results where the BJP swept 71 seats leaving other parties trundling, then again in 2017 state assembly elections of Uttar Pradesh and finally in the 2022 state assembly results. Yogi Adityanath emerged as a household

name and popular among all the age groups of voters and citizen, the zero-tolerance policy towards violence and any fringe element has gained him popular support among the masses.

Growth has been and must remain inclusive, in line with the deeply held ideals and principles of democracy and the rule of law, which the Indian Constitution requires the government to uphold. It is hoped that India would no longer suffer from the ills of hunger, illiteracy, and poverty in the future. In light of this context, inclusivity is a crucial problem. It is critical that the disadvantaged groups in society participate in decision-making. The CM Adityanath Yogi led government has been working on various schemes and programmes pertaining to Old Age Pension to support the senior citizens, Family Benefit, scholarship Pre-Matric (Class 9-10) and Post Matric which would increase the student ratio and would curb the dropout rate. Other important schemes are also under operation such as the Operation of Government Schools based on Ashram pattern, Uttar Pradesh Parents and Senior Citizen Feeding and operation of Old Age Homes, Financial assistance in condition of Torture and Harassment, Operation of Pre-examination Training centres, Operation of hostels, Mukhya Mantri Samuhik Vivah Yojna to help the needy families and youth.

Governance

“The sine qua non of democratic governance is a process that continuously increases the number of people in the group of “we/us” against the “they/them”. If the number of people in the first category does not increase, the essence of democratic governance is weakened—the grammar of democratic governance must subserve the demos so that democracy remains popular with the people.” Which clearly reflects in the vote share of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Vidhan Sabha Election Result March 2022.

Governance plays a significant role in the execution of the schemes and policies initiated; thus, the Yogi government has worked on the efficiency and deliverance of the officials and welfare policies respectively which was quite popular in the election trends supporting the second term of Yogi led BJP government in the state.

Conclusion

Welfare schemes are the promises made by government that no one should fall below the basic human level of existence in life, it ensures that despite their eligibility each person should get a dignified life, free

from injustices and inequalities prevalent in the society. These schemes are not entirely electoral in nature, which is visible in the policies and schemes initiated by the Uttar Pradesh state government led by C.M Yogi Adityanath of BJP. The increase in the funds from 3cr to 5cr of MLA Local Area Development Fund on 31 May 2022, the plan aims to establish assets for public use, build infrastructure based on local needs, and eliminate regional development disparities.

Niraja Gopal Jayalin “The gentle Levithan: welfare and the Indian state” claims the Indian state as interventionist and developmentalist state rather than welfare state according to the western notion. Niraja also mentions Nozick’s views on welfare state as the redistributions offered by the welfare state are against individual rights and at par with forced labour. Other questions which arise about the welfare state is that how it balances the demands of a heterogenous society, as Merrein believes that the concept of welfare state was designed for the homogenous society which was manageable because of the similar interests, but to meet the expectations of different strata of society with huge heterogeneity is a challenge. Nancy Fraser in “After the family Wage: Gender Equity and the welfare state” points out the root causes of crisis in the welfare state such as global economic trends, issue of migrants and weakening of trade unions and collapse of socialism. Despite all the given perspective the welfare state and governance in Uttar Pradesh has been appreciated by the voters as was shown in the election result trend. The government led by Yogi Adityanath has paved the way for developmental politics and welfare of all, through various schemes and policies of the state government in alignment with central government policies.

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