

A Report on

**DEMOCRACY IN 21ST CENTURY:RISE OR
DECLINE**

(28th October 2020 to 22nd December 2020)

By

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Under

TheRise Internship Programme - TRIP

An online internship programme

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Samanneeta Chakraborty

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the online internship under TheRise Internship Programme (TRIP) has been completed by Mr./Ms. SAMANEETA CHAKRABORTY on the topic “Democracy in the 21st century: Rise or Decline” during 28th October 2020 to 22nd December 2020. This report has been prepared on the basis of the work carried out by me under the supervision of the Consultant-TRIP, TheRise.co.in.

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ABSTRACT

Today the meaning of democracy – always a contested concept – and the broad public identification with its values and practices are being challenged in profound ways. New economic disparities, pressures to circumscribe certain rights, and unprecedented tension between democratic representation and technocratic governance, where elites pursue economic and functional imperatives, are weakening democracy's societal roots. At the same time, various forms of illiberal democracy or authoritarianism induce many to think that they can perform better than classic liberal democracies. With new technologies reshaping the dynamics of political persuasion to emphasize individual empowerment and mobilization, political life is becoming privatized.

Key words: *Democracy, Electioneering, Authoritarianism, Politics*

WORK PLAN

Objective: “Democracy in 21st century: Rise or Decline”

Work Plan: Weekly Work Plan for each week starting from Monday to Friday will be as follows. The guidance can be sought on email any number of times. The intern has to communicate the progress of work done on each working day by email in minimum 25 words by 7.00 PM. There will be a weekly discussion with the intern as per the schedule notified on email.

Week 1: -Searching and reading the available literature and statistics pertaining to the broader objective of transformations in democracy in view of elections, voting, canvassing, star campaigning, mobilization of masses, etc.

Week 2: -Compiling and writing the study made for use in the final internship report
-Writing and submitting an article (upto 1000 words) giving insights into the paradigm shift in electioneering in present democracy.

Week 3: -Searching and reading the available literature and statistics pertaining to the broader objective of transformations in democracy in view of freedom of speech, role of media, and respect for basic human rights.

Week 4: -Compiling and writing the study made for use in the final internship report
-Writing and submitting an article (upto 1000 words) focusing on the basic human rights, role of media, and freedom of speech in present democracy.

Week 5: -Searching and reading the available literature and statistics pertaining to the broader objective of transformations in democracy in view of civil liberties and judicial systems.

Week 6: -Compiling and writing the study made for use in the final internship report

-Writing and submitting an article (upto 1000 words) focusing on the civil liberties and judicial systems.

Week 7: -Searching and reading the available literature and statistics pertaining to the broader objective of transformations in democracy in view of opposition politics, political parties, financing of political parties, arresting misconducts of opposition leaders,

Week 8: -Writing and submitting an article (upto 1000 words) focusing on the opposition politics, political parties, financing of political parties, arresting misconducts of opposition leaders, etc.

-Compiling the study for final report writing as per the prescribed format and its submission for issue of the internship completion certificate

STUDY OF DEMOCRACY IN 21ST CENTURY IN INDIA

Week 1 – Electioneering:

- What is electioneering?
- The mobilization of masses in context of the 2014 and 2019 elections
- How the television led to the success of the ruling party
- The history of political advertising
- How freebies helped in the gathering of vote
- How far have the resolutions promised by the ruling government succeeded.

Week 4- Freedom of speech, role of media and basic human rights:

- What is the UAPA Act and how has it been used by the ruling party to silent dissent?
- How has the role of media and censorship restricted in the present scenario?
- Why has violence increased against journalists?
- What does the implementation of Press and Registration Act mean for independent journalism in a democracy ?
- How has Human Rights Violations occurred in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir?

Week 6- Civil liberties and judicial systems:-

- How must the newly acted three Farm Laws and the Citizenship Amendment Bill be perceived as the violation of civil liberties?

Week 8- Financing of political parties. Misconduct of opposition leaders:

- How has misconduct used as a pretence to attack at opposition leaders?
- What is the role of misconduct in the victory of political parties?
- What is corporate funding and the history?
- How is corporate funding relevant in a democracy?

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APPENDIX - I

ELECTIONEERING IN A DEMOCRACY

The Partition of 1947 must be perceived from the lens of a watershed that gave birth to two nation- states, India and Pakistan, the latter which has been believed to be a product of a failed democracy as post- colonial historians would argue. (Jalal, 1995) There was euphoria on the streets on the midnight of 14th August, as India was granted independence from colonial rule which had dominated its historical trajectory from the past 200 years. The Constituent Assembly under Rajendra Prasad had met on 14th August to decide upon the Nation Flag and its Emblem. Yet freedom assumed a myriad of meanings for its masses. Nonetheless, India has not been able to break away from its colonial past as she clutches on to the institutions that the British have left behind. (Bandopadhyay, 2004) The Indian National Congress was in power and the elections were contested by the Kisan Mazdoor Party whose founder was J.B. Kriplani which accused to party of not offering support to the poor. Nehru addressed a rally at Ludhiana whereby he talked of partition violence and hinged on issues such as casteism which he knew would mobilize the masses. He persuaded his voters to say Jai Hind which conveyed his voters that were citizens of this new nation. (Guha, 2002)

The practice of electioneering in a democracy:

Electioneering entails campaigning, persuading voters in favor of a particular candidate, utilizing blogs as a platform to disseminate information about a candidate and even raising funds to materialize election. Rather, it is perceived as an opportunity for candidates to appeal themselves to the electorate and its voters through the usage of interpersonal and mediated communication systems as Olaabajamiji argues. (Ekuweme and Folarin, 2007) These activities have increasingly gained the terminology of pre-election activities which can influence the preference of the electorate. At the end of the day, it is essential that a democracy experiences competition between the candidates which is a form of political pluralism. On the other hand, populism is defined by the unmediated communication between the leaders and its people as well as the imagery of the leader himself. (Sinha, 2017) Electioneering has always been entangled with technology.

The journey from Chief Minister to the Prime Minister:

The landslide victory of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2014 which witnessing the endowing of Narendra Modi with the title of Prime Minister can be vested upon the dominance of social media which have inherently emerged as sites of propagation of ideology and mobilization of public opinion. Through this, the leaders influence the opinion of the audience.

It was in 2001 that he became the Chief Minister of Gujarat whereby he held it for three consecutive terms. Party-voter relationship at that point of time were been redefined due to the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992 and economic liberalization that had made its way in India. He

campaigns as the ‘Hindu Hriday Samrat or the Emperor of Hindu hearts’, thereafter during the state election of 2007, he added ‘Vikas Purush’ or Developmental Man which was championed by the Economic Times and The Times of India.

To his discourse of Hindutva, he harnessed the imagery of Gujarat as one of the Indian states to be on the list of World Bank’s Good Governance. Not only that, during the Mumbai terror attacks of 2008, Modi criticized the UPA government for engaging in friendly relations with Pakistan and argued that he would alter this narrative in the Television show of Aap ki Adalat (The People’s Court) hosted by Rajat Sharma. Arnab Goswami, then an anchor with Republic TV, an English-language television openly propagated his campaign. The owner of Zee TV, Subhash Chandra endorsed Modi. Indeed, in 2014 when Modi was announced as the prime ministerial candidate, this decision was hailed with celebration. By 2012, he became active on Twitter whereby he openly tweeted against and charged the UPA government for corruption. He interacted with Bollywood celebrities which led him to strengthen his voter base. Religious polarization was at the core of his campaign as Amit Shah, the Home Minister stated that if BJP would be voted back in power, he would amend citizenship laws, utilized hate speech, classification and dehumanization to enhance divisiveness. Hindus make up 80% of the electorate and if Modi could persuade them on the basis of caste, class and religion, the end result would be [remaining in power](#). However, the rise of Modi to the position of Prime Minister was only possible through social media which allowed him to [appeal to India’s youth](#).

In 2019, the ruling party succeeded in securing a second term with a full majority yet again. While those on the grass root level political operatives have a direct linkage to voters and mobilize support on the ground, those on social media platforms have gained followers for political parties. The [BJP’s Information Technology](#) is composed of 11 Departments spanning from six zones of Uttar Pradesh. There are 11 members at each district, five belonging from each mandal, two at each ward and lastly five staffers at booth level.

Freebies, illicit funding and gift giving: barrier to fair and just electoral process.

The genesis of political advertising can be traced to 1999 when Rajiv Gandhi hired professional advertorial agencies to propagate his electoral campaign, although it resulted in loss. In addition to that, the advertising team of Modi utilized his childhood images to convey to the audience of his involvement and commitment to the public cause.

Firstly, to attract voters belonging from backward caste and classes, political parties have even distributed laptops; smart phones as well as television sets which they believe have acted as an impetus in their campaigns. It is incumbent upon candidates to distribute gifts to voters which plays a pivotal role in political campaigning. This has shackled the foundation of free and fair elections and has been a major cause in the disruption of the electoral process.

Secondly, electoral spending is rather extravagant, although 2019 elections have been most regarded as the most expensive. It has been argued that an amount of Rs.40- 50 crores have been invested in a Lok Sabha constituency. Most candidates even receive illicit funding through the means of black money. [Multinational corporations donate](#) huge amounts of money so that they can have a stronghold and say in the party's decision making process.

Success of resolutions promised under the Modi Government:

Accordingly, [the party designed seventy five resolutions](#) that it aimed to fulfill that can be categorized into agriculture, youth and education, health, economy and Good Governance.

Under Agriculture, few of its promises can be highlighted:

1. Abrogation of Article 370,
2. Doubling of the farmer's income by 2022,
3. Completion of irrigation projects, water connectivity for all villages and digitization of land records.

On the other hand, these points under youth and education deserve immense attention, namely:

1. The increase number of seats in premier engineering, management and law institutes,
2. All secondary schools to be brought under Operation Digital Board and
3. Investment of 1.1 Lakh crore in higher education through the mechanism of Revitalising of Infrastructure and Systems in Education or RISE. These were the foundation to his visionary of India.

In comparison, these were the issues raised pertaining to health and economy:

1. Under Ayushman Bharat, 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres are to be established,
2. Founding of 75 paramedical colleges,
3. Increasing children facilities by threefold,
4. Reduction of the malnutrition level,
5. Improving Gross Domestic Product's share from the manufacturing sector,
6. Exports will be doubled,
7. Reduction of taxes.

However, when one analyzes the success of these promises, limitations can only be drawn. The unemployment rate has only increased with Covid-19 accentuating this situation whereas the Gross Domestic Product has experienced a contraction under the BJP led government. On the other hand, in terms of security, attacks have risen on India, whether it is Pulwama or Ladakh to cite as examples. [Women's safety is a harping problem which has deteriorated under this government.](#) Justice has been a long lost cause which the opposition government has been accusing the ruling government of. During 2015, 9,511 cases had been registered which rose steadily to 9,839 by 2016 and 11,370 in 2017 as cited in National Crime Records Bureau.

The Election Commission has equally been complicit in the BJP's political campaigns. It has been blamed for supporting Narendra Modi and not charging them when code of conduct had been violated. The Commission had barred the usage of armed forces on adverts whereas the BJP featured posters of the Wing Commander, Abhinandan Varthaman which was not questioned at all. Even it cleared speeches whereby Modi commented that Rahul Gandhi was contesting from [Wayanad because of minority politics.](#)

Electioneering during Bihar elections:

[The 2020 Bihar Elections witnessed the intensification of electioneering in the first phase.](#) Rallies were held in Dehri and Bhagalpur as Nitish Kumar and Prime Minister Modi addressed the people.

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APPENDIX - II

FREEDOM OF SPEECH: A PRIVILEGE IN TODAY'S DEMOCRACY

Article 19 of the Constitution guarantees every citizen of freedom of speech and expression which is the cornerstone of a democracy. However, recent trends have emerged which seems to question the direction of our democracy. It is indeed true that dissent under the Central Government is held to be against national interest and mechanisms have deployed to silence any voice that rises against it. On the hand other hand, books which engage in criticism of the Government is banned. Even the ban on Salman Rushdie's book, 'The Satanic Verses' by the Rajiv Gandhi led Government only highlights what constitutes freedom of speech. Rohinton Mistry's 'Such a Long Journey' has evoked the themes of marginalization, otherness and anxiety that is experienced by the community as they attempt to preserve their own customs as well as culture. The theme of Otherness is pertinent in the postmodern fiction whereby the Parsees have been inscribed this nomenclature. The book had been critical of Shiv Sena's policies which has been one of the reasons for the outburst of removing this from the syllabus. Rather, it cannot be denied that books have always fallen prey to the forces of communalism which has only expanded during the 21st century. [Recently, Facebook had not felt the necessity to question or take charge against the posts by the right wing party which propagated hate speech and anti-Muslim rhetoric.](#)

However, the fear of persecution looms the minds of activists who attempt to criticize the [Government and are thereafter labeled as terrorists. The implementation of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act or UAPA was first passed in 1967 to designate organizations that harnessed criminal activities as unlawful. During 2004, this was amended which redefined terrorism as a crime and declare and organizations were banned on these grounds. On the other hand, this had been reintroduced by Amit Shah, the Home Minister which will allow the Government to declare individual as perpetrators of terrorism as well.](#) Fear lurks among its citizens if they ever question the Government's decisions. However, [freedom of speech is a privilege and luxury to a few only. A recent instance can be taken of Arnab Goswami, the Editor in Chief of Republic TV who had been arrested on the charges of suicide. However, he had been granted bail whereas Amish Devgan was registered under a FIR for hurting religious sentiments of the community, soon after the investigation was also suspended.](#)

Censorship of the media: a warning sign for democracy.

The nomenclature of censorship is derived from the Greek word, 'censur' which means to examine, analyze or hold a certain opinion. This entails the prohibition by an institution which brings the censored object under its purview. Attack on journalists have only exacerbated under the ruling government as attacks on journalist have occurred between the period 2014-2019 alone. Violence has dominated this scenario as this creates fear in their minds. India has ranked

136 out of 180 countries by Reporters without Borders. [Adding to that, many are charged under UAPA, offence of sedition under Section 12A and defamation under Section 500 of the Indian Penal Code.](#) On the other hand, India ranked 140th on the World Press Freedom Index. Self-censorship is an emerging issue that is fraught in the Indian media. [In addition to that, the Modi government amended the Press and Registration Books Act of 1867 which would bring news website under regulation. 26% of the foreign investments were drastically reduced and were subjected to an official approval.](#) In most of the cases, the public are misinformed because they must not propound the truth if it threatens the authorities.

Human Rights Violations under the Central Government:

The echo of the Bangladesh Liberation War resonates in the abrogation of Article 370 as torture as a tool has been subsequently encroached upon Kashmir by the Central Government led Indian Armed Forces to oppress the voices of its citizens. The rapes of Kashmiri women in 1990 by the Indian Armed forces still haunts the Valley as Indian Judiciary as done nothing for their justice. Yet, the narration of history has been altered by the Bharatiya Janata Party on 5th August, 2019 with the scrapping of Article 370 and 35A after which it was designated as an Union Territory, namely Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, as the former has now ceased to be a state. A complete shutdown of internet services was announced by the Central Government. Armed forces were also deployed to keep Jammu and Kashmir under supervision. Human Rights violations have occurred throughout when innocent boys have been detained in jail, believing them to be [militants](#) linked to Pakistan's terrorist forces. Protests have been silenced and freedom of speech prohibited. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have stressed that the highest numbers of shutdown have occurred in India. Civilians have been killed in encounter by the Indian Armed Forces. Fear has been instilled in Kashmir and increasingly been used as a tool. Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti were detained under the Public Safety Act as they were believed to be obstacles to the Security of the State. Crimes against humanity have occurred in Kashmir as has been pointed out by the Human Rights Watch (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights , 2019). Bharatiya Janta Party had clearly stated that this action would result in uplifting the economy, although the lockdown that J&K has been under since a year, proves another.

Conclusion:

Indian Democracy in the 21st century has witnessed violation of Human Rights to the utmost by introduction of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act and the Public Safety Act. Not only that, freedom of speech that had been guaranteed to all its citizens is increasingly emerging as a luxury.

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APPENDIX - II

CIVIL LIBERTY AND JUDICIARY: WEAKENING OF THE PILLARS OF DEMOCRACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

The Constitution of India was adopted with the aim of establishing a secular, socialist and a democratic republic. Not only that, it is directed towards providing its citizens with social, economic and political justice as well as liberty of thought, faith and freedom of speech. However, the judiciary's pivotal role can be discerned in the 1970s. An Emergency was declared by Indira Gandhi on 24th June, 1975 which was believed by the citizens as a cause of external emergency. After President Fakhruddin Ahmed proclaimed the Emergency, the Indian democracy witnessed a period of instability. In 1971, her party had won the Lok Sabha elections with the majority of votes in Bareilly against Raj Narain. This was challenged in the Allahabad court whereby Raj Narain alleged that she violated the code of conduct as well as utilized bribery to gain her victory. However, on 12th June, Indira Gandhi was held guilty for manipulation of the electorate which eliminated her from holding an elected office for the next six years. The Supreme Court clearly espoused that Mrs. Gandhi could continue to be the Prime Minister until her appeal was heard before the Supreme Court. Nonetheless, she was not allowed to hold the office of a Prime Minister which infuriated her. But, at the end of the day, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Government proves the judiciary's stance. Thereafter, a Public Interest Litigation was adopted which advocated the rights of its citizens, gender justice, accountability of public institutions and rights of workers. This has widened the sphere of justice, although in present times, the judiciary has experienced a weakening.

The violation of civil liberties under the Central Government:

The three debated agricultural bills namely [Farmers' Produce and Trade Commerce \(Promotion and Facilitation\) Bill, 2020](#) and [The Farmers's \(Empowerment and Protection\) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020](#) and the [Essential Commodities \(Amendment\) Bill, 2020](#), with the first two been passed by a voice vote in the Lok Sabha amid opposition. The [Farmers' Produce and Trade Commerce \(Promotion and Facilitation\) Bill, 2020](#) permits farmers to trade outside the markets or mandis as notified under [Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees or AMPCs](#). [Online buying and selling will be facilitated as a result.](#) This constrains the power of the markets and has been governing the sale of crops without the requirement of a contract. As a result, [intra and inter- state trade can be conducted by farmers outside the government - regulated AMPCs](#). Farmers have been opposing the bill on the grounds that prices may experience a low and privatization may occur of the ongoing system. On the other hand, the [The Farmers's \(Empowerment and Protection\) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020](#) bill allows the farmers to sell their commodities at a pre- agreed price. The [latter aims to empower farmers by designing an outline for signing of agreements with agribusinesses, exporters as well as retailers](#). It permits agribusinesses to cultivate land on contract as well. These Bills have been propounded as pro-farmer in nature, yet it is rather important to evaluate their forthcoming. The fear looms that

farmers will not be paid at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) whereas States are opposing it as they believe that they will lose out on the market fees which has been enacting as a source of income for projects such as the construction of roads. [Balbir Singh Rejwal, the President of the Bharatiya Kisan Union , an organization for the Farmers, commented that in the year 2019-2020, Rs. 3, 623 crore was collected fees for rural development in Punjab.](#) However, at present, farmers had been selling their commodities in markets that have been under government regulation that operate under Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees. Amrajit Singh, a farmer stated that these bills can result in a food crisis. [Without paying any tax, corporate companies can now stock agricultural produce and acquire it from anywhere in the country and decide on the prices of this produce. Wheat and paddy are bought at a Minimum Support Price by Government- procurement agencies. The MSP is governed by a price decided by the Government to safeguard famers from market fluctuations.](#)

[Lastly, the Essential \(Commodities\) Amendment Bill seeks to remove restrictions completely on stocking of food produce.](#) The [Central Government can now govern the supply of certain food items](#) in situations such as war or famine. This resonates with the decision of privatization of railways by the Central Government which has led to agitations by Railway Workers a few weeks ago. Trinamool Congress, Shiromani Akali Dal, DMP and BSP are mainly the opposition parties that are protesting against these bills as they argue that they are against the interests of the marginal farmers. Shiromani Akali Dal, an ally of the BJP, voted against the bill and will now decide its course of action with the Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP). The Union Minister of Shiromani Akali Dal, Harismat Kaur Badal has resigned as a sign of protest. [The opposition party has even challenged these bills stating that it had violated Article 14 \(equality\), 15 \(discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth and 21 \(Right to Liberty\). Not only that, the farmers would not have access to farmer courts but rather endows responsibility on the Sub- Divisional District Magistrate.](#)

Citizenship Amendment Bill: Violation of Civil Liberties.

[A citizenship verification process was introduced in 2015, based upon the Supreme Court's Directive.](#) A National Register of Citizens would thereafter be updated which would comprise of those accounted as Indian citizens. To prove this, residents had to provide with official documents which demonstrated that they came to India prior to 1971. At least 1.9 million have been excluded. On the other hand, the Citizenship Amendment Act discriminates between migrant religious groups in terms of citizenship. However, Muslims are clearly put at a disadvantage. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights states that it violates human rights, equality, right to liberty, secularism and religious freedom.

Conclusion:

In the 21st century, India under the rule of the Bharatiya Janata Party has witnessed the violation of civil liberties and weakening of the judiciary. This resonates with the period during the National Emergency under Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister.

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APPENDIX - IV

CORPORATE FUNDING AND MISCONDUCT: TRANSPARENCY IN A DEMOCRACY IS REQUIRED.

In a democracy such as India, freedom of speech is increasingly emerging as a privilege for many. The judiciary, which is a pillar of democracy has witnessed a transformation during the 21st century under the ruling Government which in many ways can be argued as problematic. On the other hand, opposition leaders are targeted in the name of misconduct while they have been demanding for basic rights for the citizens. Dissent is suppressed so that questioning the government for its statures does not arise. Accountability is indeed emerging as a farfetched dream for the media must remain silent because this may lead to loss of life.

On the pretence of misconduct: Opposition leaders hurling at each other.

Jawaharlal Neheru was assured that there was no threat to the dominant party, Congress during his holding of office as a Prime Minister. He had treated the opposition leaders rather very kindly and answered questions which arose from them, the legacy which was continued by Indira Gandhi. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that bribing the middle level leader of an opposition party is pertinent just before any elections. One such example can be cited from the West Bengal elections from 2010 when the ruling Left had accused the opposition of harnessing an atmosphere of terror. The leader of the opposition responded equally in a stark manner and this antagonism was from both the sides equally. (Manor,2011, pp: 436-463)

During 2019 elections, the ruling party had told the opposition leaders to accept defeat as exit polls remarked that they would end up winning a majority. Thereby, leaders of opposition parties had raised how voter fraud could have occurred and how electronic voting machines could be tampered it to change the results. Each opposition leader hurled at the exit polls as they argued that the EVM was unreliable. However, such was the usage of words that the Election Commission was compelled to issue “confidence building” statements. Twitter was utilized as a platform to criticize one opposition leader which only accentuated the hostility between the ruling party and the Congress which have been condemned by political leaders. [On 20th September, the farm bills had been passed in the Parliament which witnessed the emergence of chaos. It was alleged that Congress leaders had threw paper towards the speaker. These leaders had raised voice on an issue that they had deemed wrong as this bill could be disastrous for the farmers. While many tried to highlight the issue of Delhi violence in the Parliament, eventually this was silenced.](#) Not only that, the Congress leaders have been attacked for misconduct and later suspended and have argued that this must be viewed from the lens of revenge politics. [In the present scenario, the West Bengal Elections have emerged as a ground of political mishaps. The leading party of West Bengal, Trinamool Congress has been witnessing its members leaving and joining the ruling party whereby the former is accusing the latter of breaking the party. In addition to that, they have argued that freebies have been distributed to attract the TMC leaders.](#)

It has been argued that defection in politics is an essential part because that has been its nature since its inception. Right now, both the parties have been aiming for minority votes as this would alter the party's perception as a whole.

Financing of political parties.

The genesis of financing of political parties can be traced to the freedom movement. It has been argued that the Birlas had funded the Indian National Congress. In addition to that, it contributed to the poll spending as well. It is no doubt that Congress was the main recipient of donations from companies such as the Tatas and the Birlas. Although, this had been prohibited during the reign of Indira Gandhi who aimed to break this nexus between business and political parties failed. Souvenirs were published to fund these parties. To leverage funding, the Companies Act was legalized which would allow corporate to donate 7.5 per cent, later amended by the Finance Act of 2017.

It has been argued that seven political parties in India received funding in the year 2018-2019 alone. The ruling party, it is estimated had been funded an amount of Rs 1,612.04 crore, whereas Congress accounted for Rs 728.88 crore as stated in the report of Association of Democratic Reforms. Electoral bonds can be defined as monetary which a citizen or a corporate can buy from a bank thereafter to be awarded to a political party which have been in sell from 2017. The share from the electoral bonds, as by this report is believed to be Rs 1960.68 crore during this period. By this, the terminology of “donations from unknown sources” could be defined as earnings which were made available to the national parties either by electoral bonds, coupons as well as contributions from meetings.

While electoral bonds have allowed more space for political funding, political parties must utilize it towards the development of its constituency. Exploitation of EVM must not be allowed as that removes the transparency of conducting the elections in a free and fair manner which is the pillar of democracy.

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