



# POLITICAL DEFECTION AND DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the present paper, the politics of Defection is playing havoc with Indian Democracy. Representatives elected by the people change their political parties to topple the government. Frequent changing of political parties for political gains has weakened Indian democracy making it impossible to establish democratic values in the political fabric of the society or the article attempts to study the phenomenon of party defection to understand the impact it may have on political parties. Before 1967, there was no serious problem of political party dominance in India. This was because at that time the Indian National Congress was the only political party that enjoyed the confidence of people. The phrase Aaya Ram Gaya Ram gained popularity in Indian politics in 1967 when Gayalal, a Haryana MLA, changed his party three times in a single day. The anti defection law seeks to prevent political defection that may be due to remuneration or other similar considerations. The present anti-defection law was passed by the parliament in the year 1985 by the 52<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional Amendment which added the tenth schedule to the Constitution.

**KEYWORDS:** Political Defection, Indian Democracy, Neharuvian View.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In India before 1967, there was no serious problem of Political defections. It was because at that time Indian National Congress was the only political party which enjoyed confidence of masses. It the parties were towering personalities like Jawahar Lal Neharu, Sardar Patel, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Rafi Ashmad Kidwai and host of others. Entry in the party at that time was considered a matter of prestige and members of party enjoyed certain benefits and concessions in public life. Therefore, till that time everyone wanted to join the party and as such there was no question of leaving the party and question of defection, therefore did not arise. It was only after the fourth General Election when Congress lost heavily both at the center states that many legislatures elected on party ticket started leaving that. There were no defections till then. Another reason being that in other political parties there was no dynamic leadership which could inspire the confidence of the masses and no whom people could pin their political career. Defection politics in India started after Fourth Generation Election held in 1967 and thereafter it continued to draw serious attention of the people. Prior to this there were also political defections when person like Dr. Raghu Vira. Ashok Mehta and T. Prakhasam left their parties. But at that time problem was not really serious because such instances were few and far between. The cases being very few because only ripples but not storms, it was however, after 1967 that in many states Congress did not come to power and thus had no clear majority. The opposition parties had ample opportunities to from their government and thus both the side. Allegations were mad that the legislature changed very frequently their allegation and in Haryana, it is said that a legislators change his allegation thrice in a day. Between March December, 1967 out to total membership

of about 3450 state, legislators about 320 changed their loyalties. Leaving aside the state of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Nagaland, the problem of defection was almost everywhere, in some states being very serious. Between March 1967 and March 1970 in some states the members who left their political parties and joined other parties, the position was as under:<sup>i</sup> This does not mean that in other states/ union Territories there was no problem of defection. All this mean is that there it was comparatively less. The position in respect of other states/ union territories was whereas party members. Defected in large number in many states, the independents also did not lag behind. During this period of 3 years are many as 327 independents legislators in the states legislature their position in each state was:

The parliament was also not free from defections. During this period 148 party and four independent members here also defected.<sup>ii</sup> This politics of defection or what was then began to be called as that of 'Aaya Ram Gaya Ram' and seemed playing such a prominent role that in many states, governments survived and went out of power on the activities and attitudes of these political turn costs. To quote few examples, these were the governments of Charan Singh and T. P. G.N Singh in M.P; Rao Brinder Singh in Haryana; Gurnam Singh, Prakash Singh, Badal and Lachman Singh Gill in Punjab ; M.P; Sinha B.P Mandal Daroga Rai and Kapoori Thakur in Bihar and E.S.M. Namoodaripad in Kerala. This politics of turn coat created a lot convenience to the bureaucracy and that in a way very strong and powerful. There were frequent falls of government resulting in political instability and delays in decision making process at political level. In addition to this there was no continuity in policies, because each government which come to power followed its own policies, many a time undoing the work of previous government. This state's affairs country and Congress party led by Smt. Indra Gandhi swept the polls not only at the center but also in many turn coat politician began to think in term joining this Congress. But in between there was an important happening. In 1996 Congress party got completely split. Many senior Congress men formed one group which began to be called syndicate Congress (O). The group which did not see eye with the policies and program of the Prime Minister and the way in which government was function. Those who remain with Prime Minister began to be called Congress (N). This technically either of the group can be stated to have defected from the party. In 1971 general election were held for parliament and 1972 some of the states went to the polls. As a result of this election the Congress party received a huge mandate under the leadership of Smt. Indira Gandhi for some time it appeared as if there would be no defections, because the turn coat would not feel attracted to go there was no possibility of exit from Congress. Opposition member could join Congress, but this process of political defection continued. But this process of defection continued. In November, 1972 former Orissa chief Minister Baiju Patnaik revived this Utkal Congress. In November, 1973 he persuaded industries Minister of Smt. Nandni satpathy Government to resign, who joined Patnaik's newly founded paragati Party with his supported this reduced Nandani satpathy's government to minority resulting in its downfall. Though patnaik claimed that he was in a position to form alternative government, yet Governor recommended dissolution the House. Thus defection politics in the states resulted in the down fall of one other wise stable government. The same drama was staged in Manipur where 10 MLAs belonging to ruling United Legislature party defection and formed a new group and joined hands with Congress and CIP. He claimed to have a majority in the house but the Governor still decided to dissolve the house. Defection drama was again played in Bihar also where 15 Bihar MLAs belonging to non-Congress parties decided to join the Congress. The politics of defection was seen once again. In that state election were held in February, 1974 were Manipur people's party and Manipur Hills union jointly come out with a majorities in the Assembly But just after 4 months the later party decided to leave the progressives joined the Democratic front after the government resigned and the government fell, lacking a majority. In 1973 Pondicherry also faced the problem of instability created by defections left the ruling DMK and joined All India Anna Governor, who on his advice recommended dissolution of the House. President's rule was imposed in the state in January 1974. In March, 1975 several MLAs defected from ruling United Democratic Front and Joined Nagaland National Organization, thus resulting in the fall of Front government. This provided opportunities to National organization to form government. But the new government had remained in power for hardly 10 days when again there were defection, reducing it to a minority. There was so much of instability, that Government L.P. Singh had no other option but to dissolve the Assembly. In 1975 international emergency was declares throughout the country and with many opposition leaders were put behind the bars. There was a reduced political activity and nobody dared to join any opposition party. The result was that the state of emergency continued for 19 months, but there was no defection.

## OBJECTIVES:

- To analyze the historical and political background of political defection in India.
- To explore the factors responsible for political party switching, including ideological shifts, personal interactions.
- Assessing the impact of political party switching on democratic stability, including effects on the balance of power, policy making, and political trust.

## DEFECTION POLITICS AFTER EMERGENCY

In 1977 emergency was lifted and opposition leaders who were in jails were released. Political activity becomes brisk in the country and with that process of defection again started. It may be pointed out here that at the time of every general election there are always political defection because many aspirants for party tickets who do not get ticket from their party leave that and try to find their fortune with other parties. Sixth general election was however, being held in the country under peculiar circumstance. It was rumored that many old Congressmen and leader will not get party tickets and be asked to provide berth to the younger ones. On February 2, 1977 veteran Congress leader Jagjiwan Ram left the organization and formed a new political party; Congress for Democracy. He was joined among others by the H.N Bahuguna, Smt. Nandani Satpath, K. R Ganesh, D.N. Tiwary, Raj Mangal Pandey and many others important Congress leaders. Spate of registrations continued and many old Congress MPs and MLAs either resigned or were expelled by the Congress and joining the newly formed Janta Party, in office Jagjiwan Ram had merged his newly found Congress for Democracy. Janta Party remained in power for 29 months and was on hot bed of internal differences and the process of defection again started. Though each constituent unit was leaving the party one day by one, yet it was calming that it had not defect and thereafter they were followed by some of the socialist, resulting in the fall of government. Congress for Democracy also did not remain undivided. H.N. Bahuguna and his supporters defected and joined Charan Singh, Raj Narayan axis. Bahuguna was offered ministerial berth in the caretaker Charan Singh government. In this government which remained in office for about 6 months there were again defections from one party to other. In the mean time in Congress party there was no smooth sailing. 80 MPs felt dissatisfied with policies of Smt. Indra Gandhi or otherwise and left the party, with Swaran Singh as their president. About 89 MPs who had now remained with Smt. Indra Gandhi again saw a split when one time her strong supporter Dev Raj Urs decided to part company with her many old Congress leaders who had left Mrs. Gandhi's group and thus again defected. During the course of election and time that intervened in between, there were defections in parties. H.N Bahuguna who had left Congress (N), joined CFD. Again come back to Congress (I) led by Smt. Indra Gandhi, along with his supporters. He was offered the job of secretary general in the party. Defection drama continued even after the elections. Jagjiwan Ram who was elected on Janta Party ticket, left the party formed a new party called Janta (J) and then joined Congress party led by Dev Raj Urs. Erstwhile Jan Sangh group decided to leave the party, as the Janta party could not solve difficult issue of dual membership. MPs and MLAs belonging to this party left it to form a new political party called Bharatiya Janta Party.

H.N Bahuguna who got elected to Lok Sabha on Congress (I) ticket could not adjust himself in the party decided to resign and thus cannot be started to have defected. But some of his supporters both in the Lok Sabha and U.P Assembly defected, to their from a new party and sit as independents. As a result of the election held in 1980, Congress (I) swept the polls. The result was that some of the MPs as well as MLAs in some states decided to join Congress (I). In Haryana after Lok Sabha election, Bhajan Lal who was heading Janta Government in the state en bloc left the party with his supporters and joined Congress (I). He continues to hold Chief Ministership of the state even after defection from the Janta Party. In Himachal Pradesh many supporters of Chief Minister Shanta Kumar, who belonged to erstwhile Janta Party defection and government was reduced to minority. This provided Congress (I) and from government in the states. In this way politics of defection is eating the very roots of our political system. The electorates have started losing faith in their elected representatives who do not know when their elected representative, in whom they had pinned, hopes and to whom they elected on the basis party programmed, will leave the party. This politics of defection result in the fall of government and as such creates political instability in the state. It accelerates process of political de-stabilities and delay in decision at political level became not only unavoidable but a part of the whole process. Horse trading and corruption very much increases are being purchased or

otherwise being offered jobs, so that they are lured to defect from their party. Bureaucracy becomes powerful and strong and takes all decision, in the absence of stable government. All legislature look towards them for getting basis data to counter the attacks of their political opponents.

## THE NEHRUVIAN VIEWPOINTS OF DEMOCRACY

In the word of Pt. Nehru, “our acceptance of these Principles would have been a negation of our well established and oft repeated policy and betrayal of the states who have been condemned to autocratic rule for a much longer period.<sup>iii</sup>” Congress Party showed its concern by saying that, “the complete ignoring of ninety million of people of Indian state and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their rules is a negation of both democracy and self determination.<sup>iv</sup>” Still another drawback of the scheme was that it gave promises only and nothing beyond that. There was nothing which was to be given to the people of Indian immediately. During the course of war the Governor- General was to act in the same autocratic manner. No elected element was introduced. Moreover, the executive council was not responsible to the Assembly. It was just living on promises and hope, which not acceptable to the National Congress. There were also differences about the defense of India. The Congress had made it clear that during the war period defense should be transferred to Indian member. Cripps was however, evasive on this well. In the words of Pt. Nehru, “So far as the present was concerned, the British war cabinet proposal was vague and incomplete except that they made it clear that the Defection of India must remain the sole responsibility of the British Government.<sup>v</sup>” Not only this that the Congress Party rejected it but the proposal was also rejected by Muslim League in spite of the fact the demand of a home hold for Muslim for all particle purposes had been accepted. In a resolution Muslim League said, “The alleged power of the minority in the matter of secession suggested in the document is illusory, as Hindu India will dominated the decision in forever of the all India Union all the province and the Muslims in those provinces, who will exert themselves to the fullest and length for keeping the musclemans tied to the chariot wheel of Hindustan.”<sup>vi</sup>

## CONCLUSION:

From the above description, it is clear that the anti-party law needs to be reconsidered or considered inadequate to safeguard parliamentary democracy. Laws passed under the regime may be contrary to sprit of parliamentary democracy. Party support for the vote of candidates would mean that laws can now be passed as per the wishes of the political party without any dissent. Stability in a democracy should not come at cost of the spirit of democracy which lines in the fair and equitable representation of all different interests in the law making process. The internal mechanisms a coalition management as well as the code conducts of the parties can go a long way in avoiding political defection. It also makes coalition partners accountable to the voters. Just making laws is not the solution to all the evil s of political defection and coalitions. In a democracy governed by the rule of law, the voters are the actions of political parties. It is therefore necessary that the values of democracy be inculcated and political education be imparted to the elite as well as the common people.

## SUGGESTIONS:

Following are some suggestions for future research

- There should be a deciding authority in defection cases.
- The President and Governors should hear defection petitions.
- Parliament should constitution an independent tribunal headed by a retired judge of the higher judiciary to decide defection cases quickly and fairly.
- A political party cannot be dictatorial internally and democratic in its functioning externally.
- Anti-defection law should be valid only for those votes that determine the stability of the government.

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