Political Branding In India

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Abstract
The political parties, in the near future, shall have to plan their political marketing in a more responsive, accountable and professional manner. Voters make electoral choices analogous to commercial brand typology to choose among the available choices based on trust. Election results are evident of the fact that voters are continuously switching parties due to lack of trust in any one political party. Purpose of this paper is to identify the possible reasons of decline in trust and the role of trust in making electoral choices. Specifically, this paper investigates three core questions: a. what are the reasons for candidates' decline in trust? b. what are the key factors that will help to regain and strengthen the lost trust? c. what a candidate can do or should do to improve his/her trust among voters? A study sample has been drawn from the Bihar District, where voters have a long history of selecting different political candidates over and over again since 1990.

Keywords: Political Parties, Voter Trust, Political Cynicism, India

Introduction
The application of mainstream marketing principles to political parties, candidates and elections has been practiced for close to a century (Wring 1997) and the first mention of political marketing in academic literature dates back to the 1960s and 1970s (Kilter and Levy 1969, McGinnis 1969, Nomo 1973, Shame 1973). The 1990s saw a flurry of research articles on many facets of political marketing, starting with research drawing parallels between mainstream marketing (of soaps, services and not for profit marketing) and political marketing (Kilter and Levy 1969, Maryland 2003), studying the application of disciplines within marketing such as advertising and marketing research (Niffenegger 1989), direct marketing, segmentation (Smith and Hirst 2001), relationship marketing, marketing orientation (O'Cass 2001), positioning (Harrop 1990, Schoenwald 1987) and public relations to politics. Generally speaking, consumer lives are highly influenced by brands these days.

There is reason to believe that even the way voters choose political parties has similarities to how they make their choices about brands (Reeves et al, 2006). Drawing on

commercial marketing analogies, an election can be seen as the moment of sale: the point of choice, where voters employ the knowledge they have about a candidate or political party and make their choice (Aaker, 1991; Gundlach and Murphy, 1993, and Keller, 1993). It is a well-established fact that there is a positive relationship between political trust and voter turnout (Shaffer, 1981) and knowledge and interest about political parties than ever before. Unfortunately, political awareness has added to the voters' cynicism which has caused a miserable decline in the level of trust that they (voters) have in political brands (Lantieri and Chiagouris, 2009).

Extant literature indicates that political trust has very strong influence on the electoral behavior. This behavior results in two kinds of extreme reaction towards the political candidates. On the one side of the spectrum, high level of trust shows that voters are fully confident and have faith in the political candidates. On the other side, the low level of trust reflects that voters have no or very weak confidence in the political figures and they tend to develop a very negative perception about them. The dissatisfied voters may behave in different ways to show their reaction toward political parties in general and the political candidate, in specific, as a consequence. Possibly, they use their option and simply do not vote for them that result in the decline in vote turnover (Hetherington 1999). May be, the voters make their choice to vote for the opponent not because of their trust; rather they do so just in the reaction (Pauwels, 2010) or there might be a possibility that voters do not cast their votes at all (Rydgren 2007).

Research in the area of the application of branding to politics (candidates and parties) has been relatively scant with a few notable exceptions (Reeves et al 2006, Needham 2006, White and de Chernatony 2002) though the importance of branding in politics has been recognized for a long time now. Brand and image building have been recognized as fundamental tasks in the management of political parties (Kavanagh 1995, Egan 1999) and politicians understand that image (a.k.a. brand) is a better predictor of voting behavior than facts like candidate or party ideology or policy (McGinness 1969). In fact, party image and the message perceived by the consumer compete with information on policy and image is found to be more relevant than policy (Beresford 1998). Egan (1999) asserts that 'what appears to win elections and maintain party popularity is the careful management of image over time'. Hence the stimulus (imagery) value of political party communication is more important than the information value as opposed to conventional product brands (Reid 1988).

Brand image is composed of the network of associations that the brand has in the mind of the consumer (Keller 1993). Brand image along with brand awareness make up the basis of customer-based brand equity (Aaker 1991, Keller 2003). Strong brands leverage their brand equity by extending the brand name to other products like extending the Nike brand from sneakers to tee shirts, sports equipment, time-wear and eye-wear. Not only does the new product benefit from the awareness the brand enjoys, it also gains from the transfer of the set of associations of the parent brand (Quelch and Kenny 1994).

Moreover the extension can help the brand to cater to newer segments that are difficult to attract with the parent brand. Also, the equity of the parent brand may increases with the success of the extension (Aaker 1997). Brand extensions as a strategy has never been

adopted in political marketing. However, we believe that some breakaway factions of national political parties in India have used brand naming strategies (copycat branding) similar to sub-brands and this may function like a brand extension of the political party.

Literature Review

Trust is the main binding force in strengthening the relationship between the political leaders and the voters. The fundamental objective of marketing is to develop an intensive bond between the brand and its consumer, and the trust plays the most significant role in building this bond (Hiscock, 2001). Indeed, it is the consumer, who plays significant role building trust. However, trust in politics is continuously declining. The intensity of trust falls between two extremes of high to low (Miller, 1974). The unresponsiveness of government institutions and political leaders are the powerful factors behind the shift in political trust (Miller et al. 1980). Of late, the voters have matured enough to judge the apparent differences between what the politicians actually deliver vis-à-vis their promises precisely before and after the election campaigns. Based on the literature search, from the domains of Psychology, Political Science and Political Marketing, the political trust can be categorized into three specific dimensions (Schiffman et al., 2008): (1) trust in government form; (2) political cynicism; and (3) incumbent trust. These dimensions of political trust can be further elaborated to build the strong understanding of political trust.

The 'form of government' or 'regime-based-trust' provides the strong basis for enhancement in the level of trust. The stability of trust in political system or form of government is dependent on the running policies of the government. If the government is successful in implementing the better form of government then the degree of trust in the political system will be fairly better and stable (Sherman and Schiffman, 2002). The second dimension of political trust is political cynicism. Information and awareness age has empowered the consumers or voters to evaluate products with more cynical eyes. This kind of evaluation results in the distrust of the products. In fact, political cynicism is commonly known as the political distrust (Barber, 1983). Although, this political cynicism is continuously piling up the distrust among voters, it is increasing the political involvement or engagement of voters at the same time.

Incumbent trust, the official termed as "officeholder" or "incumbent" has direct interaction with the public trust. These officials are actually the frontline facilitator of the government policies and provision of services. This interaction results in the fluctuation of the political trust as service providers play key role in it (Kotler et al., 2009). Incumbent trust is based on relationship between the citizens and an incumbent and is purely dependent on the actions of government officials (Levi and Stoker, 2000). However, it is also dependent on the citizens, how they perceive the service of officeholder against their preset expectations (Craig et al., 1990).

The scope of this paper is to investigate the contributing factors pertaining to the relationship of political leaders and their voters primarily based on trust. According to Easton (1975) political trust can be divided into two dimensions. First one is based on the perception about the responsiveness of the administration in power. Secondly, it is based on the perception about the responsiveness of the system itself. The negative perception or belief of public in political candidates is due to their unresponsiveness to implement

their promised agendas and strategies (Miller et al. 1980). This is because of the fact that in the election campaigns voters attaches their expectations with the political leaders, not with the political system. When the leaders fail to meet their commitments and voters' expectation, the electorates are dissatisfied with political candidates and they intentionally vote them out in the future elections (Dalton, 2006). Thus political distrust or political cynicism takes deeper roots.

Brands in Politics
Political parties get launched as a result of social and political developments, when certain sections of society feel that they have to approach certain social and political questions around which they gather support or they seek to defend in the face of opposition. Thus, political parties have histories, traditions and philosophies, which when combined with party names and symbols, create and strengthen their position and image in their voter audiences (White and de Chernatony 2002). For example, in India the Congress Party associates (and so do their supporters) itself with leading India to its independence from the British Raj. Also, in recent times new parties have emerged in India either as a result of social developments (like the Shiv Sena party emerged in Maharashtra to protect the interests of native Marathis in Mumbai) or as a result of political developments (like the Nationalist Congress Party was formed as a breakaway faction of the Indian National Congress in protest of the party leadership being taken over by a person of foreign origin, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi). Similarly a lot of breakaway factions were formed from the Indian National Congress over a variety of political developments and some new (i.e. not breakaway factions) congress parties were also formed as a result of social developments or regional aspirations.

Research Methodology
As this research is primarily focused to explore the possible reasons that are vital in the trust building, a qualitative research approach has been selected. This approach provides basis to explore the complex issues and phenomena involved therein. The Political trust is a complex issue and needs to be probed closely. In-depth semi-structured interview instrument has been used to collect the required information for the purpose of this study. The reason to use semi-structured interview instrument is to provide freedom to respondents to share their intellectual opinion along with input on the key structured issues relevant to the topic.

A sample of 30 respondents was selected for this study, based on pre-defined selection criteria. To be eligible for this study, the respondent should have well established and a recognized political fame in Bihar district and must have participated in last six general elections since 1988. It was quite difficult to find respondents who satisfy the aforementioned criteria. Therefore, initial respondents were selected then a snowball sample method was used to find out the desired number of respondents according to pre-defined criteria. Snowball is a nonprobability sampling technique used to identify members of desired population through initial respondents. It is commonly used when it is difficult to identify members of the desired population (Saunders et al., 2007). This method facilitated the respondents to provide responses to the long-term changes in the politics of Bihar District, where the electoral behavior has changed considerably.

The respondents were informed in advance to be interviewed on the issue of political trust.

This was considered necessary to ensure that they are able to map their minds in order to provide the relevant and required information. Interviews were conducted at their residences and offices and it lasted 30-40 minutes. All the responses were recorded with the permission of respondents. The recorded interviews were then transcribed to conclude the respondents' point of views.

Results

After conducting interviews, the audio tapes and interview notes were analyzed to extract the opinions of all the respondents. Statements having common approach and contents were placed under one category. In this way, the most important reasons were categorized and views of respondents placed under these categories. This approach provides a summary of the results based on views and inputs provided by the respondents. The results of the interviews with political experts reveal that the trust of voters is continuously waning due to a number of reasons. The highlighted reasons have been described under different headings having common belief or opinion.

Voters' discrimination In Indian politics, the most powerful voters (e.g., business associations, professional associations, and the dominant families or voters, etc.) have attached their loyalties with a single political party. No matter, who the candidate is, they will only vote for the party in power. Once the political party or political candidate is in power, they start extracting benefits for their loyalties with the party. This situation gives rise to the voter's discrimination. The dominating voters start oppressing the opposition parties and their supporters. The political experts have exposed a number of events in which the political candidates have benefited their powerful voters only.

Protecting the rights of few voters leads to damaging the rights of an overwhelming majority of other voters. This reflects political candidates' vision that they are focusing on short term outcomes by scarifying the long-term benefits. Eventually, these kinds of events result in winning the devotions of only few voters and loosing the devotion of majority of voters. This negative attitude of the political figures and treating the voters discriminatively creates the sense of distrust and frustration among voters. Almost all the respondents were of the view that this is the prime reason, why the voters keep on changing their affiliations and electoral choices in every election.

Too high expectations, too low fulfillments According to the marketing principles, expectations and promises attached with the product should be achievable because if product fails to meet the expectations of the consumers, they become disappointed. If the product successfully meets the stated expectations and promises, the consumers are satisfied and when it exceeds the expectations, the consumers are rather delighted (Kotler et al., 2009). All the respondents highlighted that majority of the candidates fail to meet the pre-election stated expectation and promises. However, the significant discrepancy between their stated expectations and their fulfillment/implementation results in the decline of the voter's trust. During the election campaign, candidates make promises to fulfill all of their voters' needs and requirements including development of infrastructure, supply of electricity and gas, job opportunities, business uplifts, social welfare, security and protection, economic development and fair treatment of law enforcing agencies. But after winning the election, the elected members either do not give attention

to these expectations or at least they are determined to meet the expectations, but they face a lot of hurdles from the opposing parties or circumstances. Sometimes, they even fail to arrange the required resources to meet the expectations. This failure results in the disappointment among the voters and creates a distrust-fissure in their relationship with candidate.

Weak mutual relationship This was the common understanding of the respondents that the trust-development depends on the candidates' ability to sense the prevailing requirements of the voters. This is possible only by having frequent interaction with their voters and by keeping them on board. Unfortunately, the elected candidates change their priorities and have a very low contact profile with voters. They always prefer bridging this relationship gap via some government official or personal assistants. These officials always manipulate the information and resources and keep the candidates informed that all is going ok. On the other hand, the citizens want to see their elected candidates among them on different occasions. Citizens have to wait for a long time to even meet them. This interaction gap deepens the frustration of the voters and they tend to be more distrustful over time.

Too less choices, too few differences Freedom to choose the best option among available choices always increase the competition among the competing products. To gain competitiveness, firms put all their energy and resources in product differentiation and quality up-gradation. This intense competition not only increases the availability of right products at right price with additional features but also empower the customer. It is widely pointed out by the political experts that there are too limited electoral choices available in the political system in India. Unfortunately, there are no substantial and apparent differences among the tactics of the competing political candidates.

This situation empowers the political candidates with strong belief that in case they failed to be elected this time, it is guaranteed that they would be elected next time. As a result, political candidates are more reluctant to adopt as well as adapt the political strategies that could benefit them in the future. Differences that are not visible and explicit among the competing political candidates always deeply damage the trust of voters. Voters begin to express their distrust in the political candidates as well as their political agenda. An overwhelming majority of the respondents believe that the voters are highly indifferent to the political statements due to this distrust. That is why the political agenda of the candidate most of the time dooms to failure and they fail to attract the people to vote for them.

Party domination It was generally accepted by the respondents that party domination in India makes it harder for political candidates to perform their own way to earn the trust of the voters. Especially, in Indian politics, candidates are supported due to a particular party representation. Once, a political candidate gets the ticket from a particular party, he/she becomes more conspicuous and dominating due to utilization of party platform and logo. It is the ground reality in India that many candidate win election not by their personal trust, support or political abilities, but only because they are representing a powerful political party. In such a scenario, the political candidates play submissive role and obey the political party's directions only. It is quite impossible that the party leaders are aware of problem prevailing in consequences. The generalized strategy of political

parties cannot always pay attention to the specific problems and requirements of the electorates in a particular constituency. The uneven allocation of energy and resources results in the disappointment and frustration of the voters. Distrust among voters is natural outcome of this dissatisfaction and frustration. Therefore, next time around, it takes efforts to win back the trust of the voters. This political inability of candidate, acquired due to the political party domination, is one of the major hurdles in earning the voters trust.

Weak personality During the election, voters elect the most appropriate candidate by having trust and confidence to harvest a better output in future. Unfortunately, each candidate behaves in similar manners by ignoring the voters' interests and promotes their own vested interests. It was the frequent observation by the respondents that candidates lack personal political capabilities to meet the expectations and requirements of the society. They simply fail to utilize their authority in the best interest of citizens. Another very strong and pertinent observation is that candidate only obey or advertize the political interests of the party without focusing on area specific agenda. Generally, they are unsuccessful to politicize the simple future plan and clear messages to the voters.

It is quite difficult for voters to differentiate among these plans. Therefore, candidates cannot project themselves in unique way as they do in developed countries. This situation cannot validate the post-purchase reassurance by letting the voters to assure that their purchase/electoral decision is purely right and without a sense of risk. It also reflects the inability of the political candidates that they are not competent enough to understand the ground realities and to compare the international political scenario. Interpersonal inability disappoints the voters to rely on the political agenda and messages of the candidates that result in the increase of distrust to many folds.

The cynical voters The emerging information age has educated the voters and has increased their political awareness tremendously. Voters' behavior has changed a lot now and they have become mature and aware of their rights. It is generally argued that given the 'mess' in Indian politics, the voters have been more cynical and skeptical about the system. The respondents often observed that voter's cynicism is the strongest single reason for a decline in the level of the trust. Owing to instability in the political system, now voters scrutinize political candidates with a lot more seriousness. The information age has enabled the voters to learn and get more information about political systems and politicians than ever before. Media, in general, and internet, in particular, has empowered the voters to evaluate the practices and agendas of local politicians against the political system and politicians of different nations. In recent times, many voters are more involved in benchmarking as they have access to the global political information. This awareness and criticism has multiplied the cynicism of voters. Indian voters are more socially linked with each other due to extended-family system, caste system, and their professions. Due to this strong social linkage/association, voters tend to spread information more rapidly. As a result of cynicism the voters have tendency to switch their affiliations from one candidate to another.

Implications for Political Candidates
The fundamental and core aim of this study was to determine factors responsible for the political trust deficit in the Bihar and to give recommendations to political candidates so

as to build strong relation with voters based on trust. Especially, in the current scenario when environment of distrust is increasing day by day, it is very hard to repair trust fissure but it can be improved significantly by heeding the actionable points raised in this study. Analysis of the factors and reasons, specified by the political experts in their interviews, can be categorized in seven arguable reasons and may be considered as the major source contributing to a sharp decline in the trust. Purposely, to revamp, maintain or enhance the trust among voters, political candidates need to mediate the factors outlined in this study. Majority of the issues conceptualized in the study are in the control of the political candidates.

The most crucial personal skill for candidates is to have the adequate communication skills, which reflects the ability of the candidate to convey and communicate clear and memorable messages to the voters in an impressive way. Candidate should be able to evaluate the ground realities as well as the ability to handle the global manipulative influences. Further, the candidates should promote themselves as the trustworthy individuals. A candidate should be aspirational and have ability to communicate effectively about their desires and ambitions to convince the voters and to win their trust. Lastly, candidate should have a unique political approach. In addition to their party agenda, they should promote the personal and area specific agenda. By focusing the factual problems and area specific requirements, they will be able to manifest their deep involvement in appraising and solving these problems. Another important issue manifested by the respondents was the ability of the candidate to treat all the voters fairly and impartially. After winning the election, candidates should substantiate that they are not representing a specific group but all the citizen of the area. Above all, candidate should have team-based approach by bringing all the important individuals on the board to find the appropriate solution of the area-specific problems. The previous practice of promising too high and delivering abysmally low should be discouraged. Analysis of circumstances based on facts and figures should be done before launching the election campaigns.

Limitations during the past terms should be conceded and accepted with open heart and the future promises and expectations should be based on actual situations. Once, these factual promises have been finalized, candidate should promote them clearly and objectively and remain affirm to achieve them. Candidate should try their level best to meet the expectations and in case they fail to come up to the expectations of their voters they should face the voters and clarify them regarding the obstacles in way of the achieving the unmet promises. This effort and gesture will ultimately help voters understand the situations and end-up with high level of trust building among the annoyed electorate. Primarily, in the circumstances when there is peak level of trust deficit and when there are difficulties to maintain personal integrity of being honest, there is a strong recommendation by the experts that political candidate should admit mistakes immediately, followed-up by exerting full efforts to bring things back on the right track. Naturally, people are very forgiving and exonerate those who admit mistakes with promise not to repeat them in future. Bridging the gap between voters and the political leaders is the most important factor in restoring the dysfunctional trust of the voters. Winning candidates should actively participate in the community affairs and social activities.

Suggestions made in this section have been vociferously advocated by the respondents from

Bihar, who participated in the study. However, these suggestions are general in nature and may be applied to all parts of the country as the political scenario is identical across India.

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Coalition Governments in India: 1952-1966

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Abstract
Congress Party emerged as the single largest political formation during freedom struggle at the national landscape. Obviously, the Congress obtained substantial majority in the Lok Sabha elections in the first two decades in the post-independence era. However, several regional parties had significant foothold in the provincial politics. As a result, coalition governments were formed in a number of states during 1952-1966. This paper provides an overview of the functioning of coalition governments in the country during the said period.

Keywords: Congress, Coalition Government, Regional Parties, India

Coalition Government in Indian States
Indian Constitution provided for a federal system of governance in the country where the provinces had fairly enough autonomy. While the Congress Party had a nation-wide appeal so far as forming the government at the Centre, people often gave due credence to regional political formations in the governance of their respective provinces. Voting pattern was unusual in the sense that the people who voted for Congress in the Lok Sabha elections would not necessarily vote for the same party in the assembly elections. No wonder, there was fractured verdict in a number of states even when the Congress Party had a clear mandate at the Centre. It is interesting to see how fractured verdict facilitated formation of coalition governments in various parts of the country during 1952-1966.

Coalition Governments in Kerala
Kerala was better known as Travancore-Cochin before provincial reorganization. This state was the first among Indian provinces to have witnessed a coalition government in post-independence era. First general election for legislative assembly was held in 1952. Thanks to a fractured verdict, the Congress formed a coalition government in the state along with Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress in March 1952. The Congress formed the coalition government primarily to prevent imminent political supremacy of Praja Socialist Party and Communist Party in the region. Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress joined the coalition purely based on 'pay off'. The party wanted southern district of Travancore to be included in the Tamil speaking Madras State. In fact, the recognition given to Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress was social more than political (Thomas, 1985).

The Trivandrum District Congress Committee wanted to contest in southern region where Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress was popular Thomas, 1985). Therefore both the partners of

coalition government fielded their candidate. Interestingly, Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress candidate defeated the Congress candidate. The dispute/conflict arose to such an extent that Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress withdrew support just six months after the formation of the coalition government. The first coalition government in any state in post-independence India thus fell abruptly. The assembly was dissolved and fresh election was declared to be held in February 1954.

Even in the 1954 election, none of the parties could muster a majority. Devoid of any viable option, the Congress supported a minority government under the leadership of Praja Socialist Party. Coalition constrains ensured that even the smallest political formations had lion share in the government. This coalition government also fell shortly as a consequence of the controversial land reforms legislation. Dissidents of the Praja Socialist Party brought the no confidence motion which was supported by the Congress. Later the Congress Party once again formed a coalition government along with Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress. However, the government again fell due to inherent conflict of interests between the Congress and Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress. In 1956, President's Rule was imposed in the state.

In 1957 general election, none of the political parties got majority. Communist Party of India formed the coalition government with the support independent members. This was the first communist government to assume power via electoral politics. As promised, the Communist-led coalition government brought a number of reforms in the areas of land administration, police administration, education and governance. However, the people affected by interventionist rule of the Communist, engaged in mass agitation supported by the Congress. Scenario was so bad that the state had to go for a mid-term poll in 1960.

The Congress Party emerged the single largest party with 63 seats out of 126 seats of assembly in 1960 election. The Communist Party of India was pushed to second place with 29 seats only. Though the Congress was the largest party, it had coalition with Muslim League and Praja Socialist Party who were their pre-poll allies.

The Congress-Praja Socialist Party coalition did not last long due to the ambition of Congress leaders and dominating nature of the chief minister Pottom Tanna Pillai (from Praja Socialist Party). However, soon he was moved to Punjab as Governor. Congress assumed leadership role in the coalition government. However this coalition government also fell in 1964 due to the following factors:
   a) Pressure to include and exclude the ministers.
   b) Dismissal of administrative officer
   c) Corruption charge leveled against ministers
   d) Dispute over invitation of celebrities.
   e) Mass agitation by communist.
   f) Dissidents in congress party itself.

In September 1964, President's Rule was imposed in the state. In 1965 election again none of the parties were in a position to form the government. The assembly was dissolved even before it met. President's Rule was imposed after dissolution of newly elected legislative assembly, for the first time in the history of independence India.

Coalition Government in Punjab
The then Pepsu state (Now Punjab) too had the taste of coalition government in the very first election of assembly in 1952. The coalition government was formed under the leadership of

Yaun Singh Ranawala. It was the coalition of Akali and other parties. The duration of the government was eleven months only. It was a coalition of non-congress parties.

Coalition Government in Orissa
In 1959, the Congress formed the coalition government in Orissa with the help of Gantantra Parishad Party under the leadership of Dr. Hare Krishna Mehtab. R N Singh Deo was appointed as Deputy Chief Minister. In February 1961, Dr. Mehtab resigned and president rule was proclaimed as none of the leaders came forward to stake the claim to form the government.

Coalition Government in Andhra Pradesh
In undivided Andhra Pradesh, no party had absolute majority in 1953. Of the 140 seats in the state assembly, the Congress had 43, Communist 41, the Kisan Mazdoor Party 20, Krishikar Lok Party 19 others had 17 seats. Tangution Prakasam as chief minister headed the coalition government with his deputy Mr. Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy. Again, in 1955 mid-term election, the united congress had an edge over communist party. In addition, on 28 Mar 1955 another coalition government under the leadership of Bezwada Gopal Reddy was formed.

Conclusion
Political scenario in various states was quite volatile for almost two decades in the post-independence era. In spite of dissidence and regional aspirations of smaller political formations, the Congress emerged stronger thanks to absence of any viable political alternative at the national level. However, opposition within the Congress Party became all the more bulging and finally led to a break up in the party organization in later years.

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A Critique of Right to Development

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Abstract

The United Nations adopted the resolution to declare Right to Development as an inalienable human right on 4 December 1986. The idea was reinforced in 1993 through the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The Right to Development has always been a controversial issue as several developed countries have objected to the declaration of Right to Development on the pretext of (i) perceived defects of the very idea of development as a matter of right; (ii) being contrary to the concepts of economic liberties and entrepreneurship; and (iii) conceptual confusion pertaining to economic, social and cultural rights. On the other hand, the developing countries consider it obligatory on the part of developed countries to contribute whole-heartedly towards formation of new international economic order and they use the declaration as a means to demand a holistic transfer of resources in the form of foreign aid and liquidation of debts from the industrialized countries. This paper provides a critique of the Right to Development in the context of fast emerging global milieu where citizens of the world are concerned about inequity, poverty and environmental degradation.

Keywords: Right to Development, United Nations, Developing Countries

Introduction

United Nations General Assembly adopted Declaration on the Right to Development (RTD) in 1986. Article 1 of the Declaration sets out the broad intent of RTD: 'The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized. Obviously, RTD integrates all the human rights and fundamental freedoms in a unique way where every right is indivisible and interdependent at the same time.

Development as such has been defined in the RTD declaration as 'a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom. In view of such assertion, it is clear that development implies both the process as well as outcomes. Rights-based approach accounts for development not in terms of human

needs but in terms of responding to the rights of individuals and groups (Salomon & Sengupta, 2003).

RTD envisages the following in order to ensure that all the individuals and peoples on the earth enjoy fruits of development in an equitable manner:

- The human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development. (Article 2-1)
- All human beings have a responsibility for development, individually and collectively, taking into account the need for full respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as their duties to the community, which alone can ensure the free and complete fulfillment of the human being, and they should therefore promote and protect an appropriate political, social and economic order for development. (Article 2-2)
- States have the right and the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom. (Article 2-3)
- States have the primary responsibility for the creation of national and international conditions favourable to the realization of the right to development. (Article 3-1)
- The realization of the right to development requires full respect for the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. (Article 3-2)
- States have the duty to co-operate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development. States should realize their rights and fulfil their duties in such a manner as to promote a new international economic order based on sovereign equality, interdependence, mutual interest and co-operation among all States, as well as to encourage the observance and realization of human rights. (Article 3-3)
- States have the duty to take steps, individually and collectively, to formulate international development policies with a view to facilitating the full realization of the right to development. (Article 4-1)
- Sustained action is required to promote more rapid development of developing countries. As a complement to the efforts of developing countries, effective international co-operation is essential in providing these countries with appropriate means and facilities to foster their comprehensive development. (Article 4-2)
- States shall take resolute steps to eliminate the massive and flagrant violations of the human rights of peoples and human beings affected by situations such as those resulting from apartheid , all forms of racism and racial discrimination, colonialism, foreign domination and occupation, aggression, foreign interference and threats against national sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity, threats of war and refusal to recognize the fundamental right of peoples to self-determination. (Article 5)
- All States should co-operate with a view to promoting, encouraging and strengthening universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without any distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. (Article 6-1)

- All human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent; equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the implementation, promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. (Article 6-2)
- States should take steps to eliminate obstacles to development resulting from failure to observe civil and political rights, as well as economic social and cultural rights. (Article 6-3)
- All States should promote the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security and, to that end, should do their utmost to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control, as well as to ensure that the resources released by effective disarmament measures are used for comprehensive development, in particular that of the developing countries. (Article 7)
- States should undertake, at the national level, all necessary measures for the realization of the right to development and shall ensure, inter alia, equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income. Effective measures should be undertaken to ensure that women have an active role in the development process. Appropriate economic and social reforms should be carried out with a view to eradicating all social injustices. (Article 8-1)
- States should encourage popular participation in all spheres as an important factor in development and in the full realization of all human rights. (Article 8-2)
- All the aspects of the right to development set forth in the present Declaration are indivisible and interdependent and each of them should be considered in the context of the whole. (Article 9-1)
- Nothing in the present Declaration shall be construed as being contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, or as implying that any State, group or person has a right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the violation of the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights. (Article 9-2)
- Steps should be taken to ensure the full exercise and progressive enhancement of the right to development, including the formulation, adoption and implementation of policy, legislative and other measures at the national and international levels. (Article 10)

Indeed, RTD may be construed as the right to a particular process of development that allows the realization of economic, social, and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights and all fundamental freedoms by expanding the capabilities and choices of the individual, more so as entitlements rather than state munificence, charitable gesture of global aid agencies or intervention of international forums (Sengupta, 2000). RTD aims at self-actualization of people in the most dignified way possible while ensuring that no other rights of the human beings are violated or compromised in the process. Interestingly, RTD as such does not provide answers to all the human woes across the globe. Instead, it provides a holistic framework where development has been categorically recognized as a human right and individuals and peoples have been acknowledged as right-holders –as subjects and not as objects of development (Salomon & Sengupta, 2003).

Implications of RTD declaration are infinite. Capturing the spirit of the declaration, Sengupta (2002) observed: '…considerations of equity and justice would determine the whole structure of development. For example, poverty has to be reduced by empowering the poor and uplifting the poorest regions. The structure of production has to be adjusted to produce these outcomes through development policies. The aim of the policy should be to achieve this with minimum impact on the other objectives, such as the overall growth of output. But if there is a trade-off, such that growth will be less than the feasible maximum, that will have to be accepted in order to satisfy the concern for equity. This development process has to be participatory. The decisions will have to be taken with the full involvement of the beneficiaries, keeping in mind that if that involves a delay in the process, that delay should be minimized. If a group of destitute or deprived people has to have a minimum standard of well-being, a simple transfer of income through doles or subsidies may not be the right policy. They may actually have to be provided with the opportunity to work, or to be self-employed, which may require generating activities that a simple reliance on the market forces may not be able to ensure'.

Development Compact
Norwegian Foreign Minister, T. Stoltenberg pioneered the concept of Development Compact in 1980s. Noted Indian economist and an independent UN expert expounded the concept further in order to reinforce the implementation of RTD. Development compact envisages a mechanism to bring all the stakeholders together in an operational framework based on mutuality of obligations and shared responsibilities. Sengupta (2002) suggested that the international community must fulfill reciprocal obligation in case the developing countries undertake earnest steps to implement the provisions of the RTD.

The concept of Development Compact has elicited positive response from such international organizations as World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Conference on Trade & Development, International Labour Organization, United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization and United Nations Development Programme. The RTD declaration thus envisions a development paradigm based on stakeholder participation, non-discrimination and equity. By implication, a mechanism should be in place to ascertain the responsibility of the State vis-à-vis the provisions of the Declaration, accountability procedure should be transparent while monitoring procedure should have scope for participation of global actors. The Declaration also legitimizes people's insistence on adoption of appropriate development strategies that conform not only to the Articles of Right to Development but also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

However, the concept of Development Compact is imbued with certain limitations in view of contemporary political scenario. Nwauche & Nwobike (2005) have outlined some of the constraints that impair Development Compact:
- Most donor countries deploy development aid as a tool in their foreign policy. They use aid as a leverage to attain their foreign policy objectives.
- National development programmes may be funded by international agencies/supporting country only if such interventions meet the objectives of donor countries/agencies and international policy prescriptions.
- Linking international human rights obligations with national development programmes will invariably cause significant worries for developing countries which

may not like to open up their territories for inspection of external agencies in lieu of foreign aid.

- There is no accountability mechanism; hence an individual in a developing country cannot claim his/her right to development and entitlements.

Critique

One of the major criticisms of the RTD declaration is the imperfect nature of obligations. The Articles of the Declaration are at best a few policy commitments and not justifiable entitlements of the peoples of the world. The declaration is yet to be converted into a Treaty implying that the commitment of the nations to realize the Right to Development is not legally binding. An individual or an interest group cannot seek any relief from court of law in case the State fails to fulfill any of the commitments given in the Right to Development Declaration. Moreover, international bodies are also not legally bound to honour the commitments enshrined in the Right to Development Declaration. Not a single State in the world has formulated any law to safeguard the entitlements of the people in conformance with Declaration.

Another impediment in realizing the Right to Development is wide-scale disregard to the right of the people to self-determination and their innate right and sovereignty over natural resources. It is compounded by emergence of despotic rules in a number of countries and concentration of economic power in highly industrialized countries. Yet another are of concern is restrictive practices with regards to transfer of technology.

Implementation of the Articles of the Declaration is even more serious issue than enforceability. In absence of any international monitoring mechanism, most of the provisions of the Declaration bite dust in the State secretariats. Resource is another constraint that contribute towards obligation failure vis-à-vis Right to Development on the part of a great number of poor countries. Due to illiteracy and lower level of awareness, a large number of people do not come forward to fight for formulating laws that may guarantee certain entitlements commensurate with the provisions of the Declaration of Right to Development. However, civil society can certainly pressurize the State to create legal framework for implementation of the provisions of the Declaration of Right to Development through mass mobilization, advocacy and consistent campaign. Till such time comes, the Right to development would remain merely a policy paper

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