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New Emerging Concept in Politics: A study of Concept of Incumbency and Anti-Incumbency

jadgeep kaur

Abstract:

The concept of incumbency and anti-incumbency have become a catchword in the elections since scrutiny of elections has become quite pervasive and broad. Electoral issues have every now and then come to dominate among all the issues of elections. The phenomenon of incumbency and anti-incumbency have come to dominate every election all over the world and voter's perception is now examined and the phenomenon of incumbency and anti-incumbency are tested. What is important to note that, incumbency and anti-incumbency both are factor based concept which is proven to be right or wrong with the outcome of the result. Political parties have to go through these tested analogies and they are being tagged with whatever outcome result produces, if they are elected they have defeated anti-incumbency and if not they have been thrown because of anti-incumbency. Note to mention that, both incumbency and anti-incumbency caries a whole lot of conditions with them to be proven in either case. Pro-Incumbency in elections goes to show that people have reposted their faith in the work government has done during its tenure and people believe they do not need to have changed in those strategies under which they benefited along. When voters align themselves with the work of the government done for them by electing them again and again, generally is it believed that pro-incumbency is there and government of the day have the favor of the masses.

Key Words: Incumbency, Anti-Incumbency, Election, Political Parties and Government

Democratic accountability in electoral terms relies upon the principle of the ability of citizens to reward and punish politicians in elections. Under this normative model of electoral democracy, positive performance is rewarded, and government of the day again gets a term to continue in the office with the aspiration of continuing the work it has been doing. What determines the chances that a party contesting elections that it will win?. A frequently cited reason and one that is considered to be the most important is the incumbency status of the party. The incumbency advantage refers to the effect of being in office for a Member of Parliament (MP) or Member of State Legislative Assembly (MLA), on the chances of winning the subsequent election.

'Incumbency', and it's opposite, 'anti-incumbency', are among the most frequently used all-purpose catchwords in the electoral analysis of present electoral democracy. The

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expression of the concept is now the common currency of electoral analysis. They are used as a tool not merely by professional electoral analysists like psephologists and media persons but also by practicing politicians, to explain, the electoral triumphs and failures[1]. By incumbent, we refer to the existing holder of a political office. In politics, election victories or defeats are often analyzed in terms of incumbency or anti-incumbency respectively. What is important to note that, in general, incumbents enjoy structural advantages over challengers during the time of elections. The incumbent often has more name recognition due to their previous work done while remaining in the office. Incumbents also have easier access to financial resources, as well as the government's power that can be indirectly used to boost a campaign.

The term "anti-incumbency" speaks of the other side of the election, which as a factorhas been used primarily in two contexts. First, anti-incumbency is invoked to describe the failure of ruling parties in state assembly elections and national elections, specifically the poor performance of state the parties. In the second context in which anti-incumbency is frequently used to describe the cross effects of state incumbency on national elections. In this application, the performance of state ruling parties in national elections is used to explain the national verdict. Hence, state-level election outcomes, both in the state assembly and national elections, are the focus of the popular anti-incumbency explanation.The assumptions underlying such analyses put simply, are that any political party in office may become non-performing at people's expectations and, consequently, also unpopular over its term of office. Hence, sucha political party faces the disadvantage of having been in power (the incumbency/ anti-incumbency factor) at the time of elections.

1 M. S. Prabhakara, "Necessity, Choice and Behaviour", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 39, No. 21 (May 22-28, 2004), pp. 2083-2084.

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Moving forward, to analyze the concept from the different perspective, it becomes imperative to envisage, the intertwined role and functions of the political parties, the manifestation of electoral structure, mode of functioning of electoral democracy, and what voting behavior have to do with the Incumbency and Anti-Incumbency factors in elections. It is important to note that political parties are the backbone of the representative democracy and over the years they have set the trend of electoral representation. In this representative democracy, factors of incumbency and anti-incumbency have become an indispensable phenomenon.

In a democracy, citizens of the country participate in political activities to make it successful. It may be the direct or indirect form of representative electoral democracy, depending on the strength of the country's population. Within modern mass society, representative form of democracy is the mode of functioning, since everyone cannot participate directly in the decision-making process. Political parties offer to the citizens the possibility to influence politics and political decisions. They are an important instrument and institution of politics. The one which stands out as the best representative is given an opportunity to represent. It is important to note that, if political promises made by political parties are fulfilled and they aspire to improve on already ongoing work if given another chance, they stand with chances of defeating anti-incumbency. The linking of the chances of political parties coming back to power for consecutive terms, with the mode and function of political parties, makes it a very interesting subject of study. It is interesting to get an idea of the concept of incumbency how it has got great importance in the current electoral analysis?. The outcome of the functioning of the government at the helm decides the concept of incumbency and anti-incumbency.

Modern representative democracy is inconceivable without therole of political parties and mode of operation. Only political parties provide citizens, a platform to express

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themselves permanently and to remain active and act politically. The parties ensure that the citizens are permanently capable to act politically which in return also make them accountable on the part of the voters. They articulate and integrate different interests, visions and opinions. The political parties have to be the voice of broad sections of society, in order to participate successfully in elections. The political parties are the central pillar of a modern mass-based representative democracy. Political parties are a special form of social organization and representation in its core. They should not be confused with associations, federations, and social clubs. Along with political parties, there are other forms of organizations which represent peoples interest. There is a clear contrast between political parties and other forms of associations. Associations, social organizations or citizens' initiatives normally concentrate more on individual and a limited scope of issues, which does not cover wide horizons of the society. In contrast, political parties, are expected to take a stand on all those questions and topics that are related to public order and the organization of society. In the competition of power and influence, political parties compete with each other. For political parties, it becomes imperative that they have the power to enforce political vision to organize society. The inner-party democratic culture which includes, internal discussions and conflicts within, as well as between the parties accompany this contest for ideas and power. This contest of inner-party democratic culture makes parties more legitimate and pro-democratic.

A well-known definition of political parties comes from the American political scientist Antony Downs, who wrote: "A political party is a team of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election"[2]**.** The Italian scholar Giovanni Sartori, defined a party as: "any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections,

2. Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Democracy", New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957, pp. 25.

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and is capable of placing through the election, candidates for public office."[3] What is important to note that, even if these definitions demonstrate some difference in the understanding of political parties, they all emphasize the participation in elections and the interest to gain public offices and mandates as essential elements that characterize political parties. Even though criticism of political parties is easy and always popular, political parties are indispensable for democracy.

Formation of political opinion, representation of people in the legislative domain, elections, and role of political parties are closely connected. Political parties not only strive to participate in the formation of political opinion, but they also aspire to participate in the representation of the people in the legislature. This presumes that parties take part in elections. Parties political contribution, as well as their political weights, are closely tied to elections. The will of the voters is of significant importance for the parties. Typical for parties is their fighting spirit, their readiness for political action and political confrontation and their aspiration to takeover and retain governing power. What is important to note is that the kind of political functional manifestation, and works parties do, strengthens the factors of incumbency. This competition among political parties to make their prospect of being in the power healthy, make their activities beneficial for the people. The constant push to make amendments to the problematic part makes parties strong probable for grabbing any chance coming their way. The environment of competition at large is beneficial to voters, and it has become pertinent for only those parties that participate successfully in this competition. They can obtain posts of political representation. Election victories are the main stimulation forparties to participate in party activities. This makesthe party especially interesting once it is a part of a government. The

3. Giovanni Sartori, "Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

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ultimate benefit of a healthyenvironment from the perspective of the voter is that, stands with the option of having to choose from parties that have been active as opposition when there was an incumbent party in power.

Political parties mostly remain at the center of debates and discussions about there should be political reforms and political change or any other changes for the betterment of the masses. Those interested in politics will mostly find a party that reflects their own perception, may it be a party in government or opposition. Parties in opposition exercise an important function in a democratic system as a "watchdog" of government policy and as a political alternative in the future or say the politics inside the government is a strong threat to the incumbent parties. The opposition may be considered awful, but it is essential for the functioning of democracy and opposite of incumbency that is anti-incumbency. It is important to note that, contrary to interest groups, a party is expected to express itself on all issues relevant to government, say its views on internal and external policies, economic and social policies, environmental and disaster management, etc. Why this has been said, here because, in world politics, it has been broadly accepted that different parties follow their own way to handle or to approach phenomena differently than other parties. In order to meet these requirements, each party has a program, in which it's fundamental positioning in various areas is retained. Furthermore, Hofmeister said that a party should have a consistent organization[4].

The Necessity of Political Parties and Incumbency

Political Party in electoral democratic setup is a necessity and the reason being, society is the manifestation of different opinions, needs, expectations and views over daily issues; likewise,

[4]. Hofmeister and KarstenGrabow, "*Political Parties Functions and Organisation in Democratic Societies*", Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2011, pp. 13-14.

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big questions on the social organization, its norms and procedures also exist. There is no common point in this world, where all converge or divergence and it natural to agree and disagree. The common will of the people or a predetermined common good does not exist. In contrast, in every society, there are rivaling interests that often collide very hard, which is a sign of a healthy democracy plus it also put the incumbent on its toes all the time. It is important to note that, in order to peacefully mediate conflicts, the formation of political views must take place in an open process of debate between a different opinion. For example, we often see before elections, there are debates on multiple issues at different platforms. In The United States of America (USA), Presidential election is the best example of this, where Presidential candidates survive by garnering the support of the public during the process of debate. Their ability to address issues and public support. A minimum of a common conviction is necessary. This is a common sense of democracy. It is based on the principle that each citizen has the right to represent his opinion and conviction in a peaceful competition of minds.

Within the context of democratically managed conflicts of interests, political parties represent particular interests. It is important to note that, when the parties agree to the principles of the democratic constitution then, it is possible to resolve conflicts in society and form political compromises in an appropriate manner. What has come out from all these assumptions is that debate and deliberation is the best way to move forward and rivalry should not be looked at the negative connotation, in the competitive democracy of today's time.

If we take an example of French political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 78) who had given the concept of General Will, claims to resolve the inherent conflict between justice and utility, through the reconciliation of individual moral autonomy and state's use of force, which may not be legitimate necessarily. To put this perspective in the order he says, *each of us should*

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put in common person and his entire power under the supreme direction of the general will[5]. Not only this, but Rousseau also createda vision that, *theory denies the legitimacy of conflicts and defines democracy as the identity of the government and the citizens*. This concept does not accept the plurality of parties. They are not regarded as legitimate, as they would inevitably falsify the 'common will' by their particular behavior. Deviations from the imposed and mandatory common goods are not tolerated by this theory. However, it is obvious that this concept is characteristic of totalitarian states where the diversity of parties is banned and where the 'common will' is defined only by a small ruling elite. Consequently, totalitarian states are identified with Rousseau. It should be noted that even Rousseau could not clarify how this 'common sense' would be discovered and decided. We have to be aware that modern societies are characterized by a diversity of interests and world-views. They need political parties as central instances for the representation of this diversity of interests within the political system[6].

Functional Aspect of Political Parties and Incumbency:

All being said, about parties the fact of the matter is that to participate successfully in the political process and to contribute to the consolidation of democracy, political parties have to demonstrate certain capacities. In Political Science, these capacities are called 'functions'. In modern societies, the process of opinion-building is a polymorphic process and the way to do it has become interesting as well as a daunting task. The mass media, social organizations, associations, citizen's initiatives, religious communities and the modern form of electronic communication via the Internet, SMS, Facebook, Twitter, and throughother forms of the mode of

[5] Peter King, Towards a Theory of the General Will, History of Philosophy Quarterly 4, (1987), pp, 33.
[6]Hofmeister and KarstenGrabow, "*Political Parties Functions and Organisation in Democratic Societies*", Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2011, pp. 14-15.

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communication exercise enormous influence on political opinions and political decisions. Nevertheless, political parties are still the principal agents to aggregate public opinion and represent the same in the political decision-making process. They finally also take the political decisions through their representatives in the legislature and government. By following the work of the political parties, perceiving and evaluating its argumentation during a political debate, citizens can orientate themselves politically through the parties. Furthermore, by engaging with a party, every citizen can exercise some influence on the political decision-making process. Besides its candidates, the political program is the 'merchandise' of a party, which it offers to the voters. The party program fulfills in particular two main functions: on the one hand, they shall articulate the interests of the population (parties as 'organs' of the people) and on the other hand, they orientate and influence the opinions of the citizens. With regard to the party program,the voters can evaluate if the party has sufficient sensibility for societal problems and if they are able to propose adequate suggestions for the resolution of problems and challenges. This is in a way strengthens the concept of incumbency in the horizons of political parties' functional role[7].

Oppositional parties in representative democracy have an important place, and they are supposed to take a pro-active role in the functioning of democracy. Opposition parties are supposed to take a stand on important issues and put tough questions to the ruling party, control it and put up constructive alternatives. This function is of great significance for democracy because without opposition a government tends to drift towards complacency and presumptuousness and fails to search for alternatives. Anti-incumbency is there to provide, the ultimate support against the government if any to opposition parties to put the government in power on its toes. By fulfilling these functions, political parties are providing important services for the democratically

[7]Ibid., 16-17

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organized society. The quality of the 'delivery' that is, the way they comply with their functions contributes decisively to the reputation and the potential of the political parties[8].

The Impact of Incumbency and Anti-Incumbency on Voters Turnout:

Elections beingthe manifestation of multiple factors envisages many roles for political parties, whether parties in power or challenger. Certainly one of the most important among them is, how parties affect voters to be part of either going with the incumbency or against the incumbency?. In the electoral process, having an incumbent party at the electoral race could affect turnout through a multiple of channels. Firstly, the incumbent party, due to the so-called incumbency advantage or disadvantage, can reduce or increase the degree of political competition and as a consequence, voters might be lessor more inclined to participate in the polls. Since electoral competition depends on voter's turnout, it's important that there should always be efforts or ways to make voters inclined towards participation in elections. This would be an indirect effect, since the electoral turnout is influenced through the changes that, incumbent brings in electoral competition. Electoral turnout may also be influenced through more direct channels. First of all, maintaining a constant level of political competition. Elections in which one or more incumbents run for re-election are typically characterized by higher availability of information, and citizens had the opportunity to observe the past performance of incumbent candidates even if imperfectly. The increase in the availability of information aboutparties or candidates' performance during their tenure, can lead to ambiguous effects on turnout. On the one hand, if the incumbent has been a good politician in the past, voters may want to support him/her and cast their vote. On the other hand, if he/she has not performed in the past, citizens may decide to cast their vote in favor of a new candidate in order to punish the incumbent. It may lead to an increase in voter's turnout,

[8]Ibid., 16-17

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or voters may not find any incentive to go to the polls, leading to a lower turnout. An additional direct channel through which incumbency can affect turnout is related to the fact that incumbent politicians are able to use their power and resources to obtain 'exchange votes' leading, in this way, to an increase in political participation. This type of relationship based on the log-rolling usually characterizes the poorest areas of a country and could be stronger in the presence of an incumbent running for re-election. One of the trends, which has spread all over the world is feedback from the public on the functioning of government. In the present world throughout the whole year, through different agencies, we find the feedback of the people on the government role. In recent times we have seen people expressing their opinion all over the world on important matters. The recent phenomena of, Referendum on Brexit in the United Kingdom, Referendum in Greece, and the Columbia Peace Agreement Referendum are some of the biggest issues of recent times which provided people an opportunity to cast their vote[9].

In a democratic setup voters evaluate, where the candidates or parties stand on different issues. Their recommendation to solve emerging problems and steps they are going to take if voted to power have become accepted wisdom in theories of elections. The measures of the relative positioning of voters and parties are now common in empirical analyses of elections. There is also a long tradition in political science of emphasizing whether or not candidates or parties are actually offering voters choices (rather than echoes) on issues. If we consider voters motivated by only two factors: the state of the economy and a policy issue, which remain the most dominant topic in most of the countries. If voters are asked to choose between two parties that offer identical positions on the policy issue but, have different records on the economy, then it seems clear that any empirical investigation of voter behavior could not reveal that voters use the

[9]Alberto De Benedetto, Maria De Paola, *"The Impact of Incumbency on Turnout: Evidence from Italian Municipalities*", Discussion Paper No. 7612 September 2013, PP,1-2.

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policy issue to choose between the two parties. Voters have no way to reveal their preferences about the policy issue, so in this example, voters cannot use the policy issue in their decisions and must resort to alternative selection criteria. If they are going to vote, they must choose from among the available parties, using information about the economic differences between the parties (in this example). Testing this theory requires two steps. First, we must be able to distinguish issues on which the parties differ substantially from issues on which the parties offer very similar positions. Second, we must also observe how heavily voters weight each issue[10].

The Electoral Advantage to Incumbent Political Parties

Incumbency and its effect on contesting political parties in elections is an important phenomenon. There is a strong correlation between the incumbency and the strengthening of parties in power. It is a common perception that, the parties that remain in the power for consecutive terms, supposed to have strengthened their roots from the bottom. What incumbency does to parties in power is that it provides the required nutrition for political setup to make it grow bigger. From managing with a small number of resources, it widens its base for a larger share. This is also the first step towards stepping into big shoes. The effects of incumbency make political parties strong since it is supposed to strengthen the vote share. It is important to note that, in India from 1952-1967, at the state level, Indian National Congress has been voted to power in most of the states for consecutive terms which had to strengthen the party. Similarly, it was the case of the left front in West Bengal and BJD in Odisha which has to strengthen these parties. No doubt of late left parties in West Bengal have been dislodged but history is with them for making West Bengal as their stronghold. What is important to note that, it is not one-way

[10]R. Michael Alvarez and Jonathan Nagler, "Party System Compactness: Measurement and Consequences", *Political Analysis*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2004), pp. 46-47.

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phenomena. If we see in the reverse case, when anti-incumbency replaces incumbency, it leads to the weakening of parties at the cost of emerging parties, which stand to replace it. Nonetheless, there is a straight correlation between the performance of parties and popularizing it and non-performing and thrown out from the favor by voters.

The perception thatincumbent political parties carry an advantage in subsequent elections, solely because they are incumbent,and it has been an active area of research in electoral politics. In the interest of ensuring a healthy democracy, an important issue for guiding public policy is to understand, how this incumbency effect translates into increased vote share orthe increased probability of winning. Democracy throws many challenges in society, which is the manifestation of innumerable aspirations of the masses. In a democratic set up there has to be a particular way for issues to enter the legislative arena and manageable solution to the same. The incumbent ruling party being in the office has more exposure to connect with the people, convey to the people and also converge with them on their issues. Out of all these how the incumbent exactly benefitted being in the office, needs to be examined, to come at a meaningful conclusion. It is important to note that, simply being in the office, always helpsthe incumbent to win the elections cannot be the case. Parties in power have to have resources at their disposal. The important thing is accountability comes with that in the form of how to best use the resources available plus, pushing towards more production of the same for continuous sustainability. An unaccounted incumbent, howsoever the benefits he may derive from his office, will be challenged strongly by the challenger. In that case, a challenger will have an opportunity to throw incumbent out of the office even at lesser exposure of resources. If we look at world politics, in the recently concluded American Presidential election in 2016, where The Democratic Party had greater resources compare to The Republican Party, still the result was not

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in favor of incumbency. According to Washington Post News Paper, "Clinton's (Hillary of Democratic Party) unsuccessful campaign ($768 million in spending) outspent Trump's (Donaldof Republican Party) successful one ($398 million) by nearly 2 to 1"[11]**.** It is important to note that, availability of resources has to be backed by strong performances of the incumbent government to defeat anti-incumbency in the elections.

The structural Incumbency Advantage to Voters:

In the electoral setup elected representatives when offeringmultiple ranges of welfare services to people in the state probably helps them remain the best choice for voters**.** It is important to note that,being in the office,the incumbent remains at the advantage position, to facilitate the range of services to the people. In the society of a large number of people with the requirement of basic primary needs, people tend to depend on government welfare schemes for the timely benefits. This provides an opportunity for the incumbent to consolidate its position which is available to them. This, in the long run, helps incumbent to shape voters support for themselves and putting its position in terms of support base quite above than challenger. If it does not necessarily benefit, it increases the chances of re-election on the basis of good work. Providing a range of services still might not be enough, for the incumbent to necessarily consolidate their position fully, but without any doubt, it does increase their chances of getting being re-elected.In any democratic set up this is the least can be done while in the office for re-election by the incumbent. It is always challenging to convince new voters, by ruling party but if the incumbent has delivered on their promises to voters and also has maintained a good image of themselves, it does open the possibility for incumbents to have the support of new voters as well. In addition to

[11]https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/04/14/somebody-just-put-a-price-tag-on-the-2016-election-its-a-doozy/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.2f8f471a3e63, accessed on 12/06/18.

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this, it may also help to increase the vote share of the incumbent. Why the new voters are important because the existing support base of the incumbent may not be enough for them to secure the win in the next election as well. In electoral politics it is always better to increase or widen their support base otherwise, elections are such phenomena, where marginal swings tend to be decisive. To sway a large number of voters in their favor parties can envisage their all policies or decision in order to bring large masses under that structural benefits. The strength of the party over the years, in terms of their vote shares in each election, gives a clear picture of how party stands in the upcoming election and whether or not structural advantage has been with them. In all these perspective of incumbency, the voters stand at an advantageous position to benefit out of structural circumstances.

Electoral Limitation of Incumbency and Advantage to Challenger

If there are many advantages to being incumbent, there are also many limitations to this incumbency factor in elections. Having incumbent office bearer, it is not guaranteed that the party will always take advantage. Many timesthe party falls out of favor from voters and then-incumbent office-bearer loses all the advantages it was possessing till then. Incumbents' vulnerabilities are an advantage for the challenger, to put their chance to be at the helm of ruling the state. It is important to note that, the advantage for the incumbent is a disadvantage for challenger and disadvantage for the incumbent, becomes a talking point for the challenger to mobilize public support in their favor. There is a common perception that incumbents enjoy profound electoral advantages. Most incumbents win by large margins and most may not repeat the same. Over a period of time, these trends have generally pointed to structural factors, which can be grouped into three broad categories.

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1. First, incumbents can use the resources of the office to promote their 'brand' and enhance their name recognition. In their quest to promote themselves, incumbents also exploit the informal resources of office, such as opportunities to make speeches in their constituencies throughout the year. At a minimum, these formal and informal resources help incumbents build up name recognition within their districts, and name recognition has been shown to help incumbents on Election Day[12]. More broadly, these resources may enable incumbents to cultivate an apolitical appeal, one that enables individual incumbents to remain personally popular within their respective districts.
2. Second, incumbents have existing support networks waiting to be tapped when a challenge arises. Incumbents tend to mentally divide their constituency into their weakest and strongest supporters, and then labor vigorously to expand their personal following, eventually resulting in a personal vote[13]**.** When a tough challenge comes along, an incumbent can pull out donor lists, volunteer lists, and mailing lists from previous campaigns to rapidly mobilize her supporters. By contrast, a challenger would need to invest considerable time and energy into identifying and building a relationship with his core constituencies. Because incumbents already have existing support networks, they can generally raise money far more easily than challengers can.

[12]R. Michael Alvarez and Jonathan Nagler. 2004. "Party System Compactness: Measurement and Consequences", *Political Analysis,* Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 46-47.

[13]Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder Jr., and Charles Stewart III. 2000. "Old Voters, New Voters, and the Personal Vote: Using Redistricting to Measure the Incumbency Advantage", *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (January): 17-34.

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3. Third, a challenger scare-off effect enhances any other structural advantages of incumbency[14]. Potential challengers are strategic. The more a potential challenger has to lose by running for office, the less likely he is to run—and the most experienced potential candidates often have the most to lose.

Other things being equal, voters prefer incumbents over challengers. Of course, incumbency might just as easily evoke a negative response from voters. The same emotions that motivate voters to support term limits might also motivate them to oppose incumbents as a general rule. It is important to note that, there has to be certain possessiveness or dis-possessiveness among voters about the incumbent.Alignment of voters with political parties come with the deliverance, developmentalism, charismatic leadership and satisfaction with the incumbent. It is pretty much the case of accountability of political parties and if incumbents stand on their promises made with the people, in return they can be hopeful of getting the support back again.The major component of an incumbent's success is the partisanship of the voters in the district. The minor components are a personal vote increment that incumbents receive by virtue of their positive familiarity to voters and the boost provided by short-term forces.

The Party Identification Component of Voters and Incumbency

Most voters have their preference for one of the parties in the electoral democratic setup and they invoke that preference in choosing among candidates and parties fighting in elections. It ultimately comes down to choosing which party has a better ideology in terms of taking public welfare or the fate of the public welfare forward. People or say voters align themselves with a

[14] Cox, Gary W., and Jonathan N. Katz. 1996. "Why did the Incumbency Advantage in U.S. House Elections Grow?" *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (May): 478-497.

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particular ideology and put their support based on a particular kind of ideology. There are multiple options available for voters to align themselves with prominent among them are left, right or center. Once they do that, the party component comes to the picture in the incumbency factor. Once it has been established that, people align themselves with a particular ideology, it becomes easy for the party to convey their agenda to people. It's been regular phenomena now in elections to increase support base of the party through the campaign of membership. It is exactly this, where party opens its agenda to bring people in their fold. The statistics which are taken into account all over the world after every election is, what has been the voting percentage of the party in the election and how much it has changed since the previous election?. An increase in the vote percentage is a sign of party strengthening its support base and decrease will be an advantage to challenger, since it goes to show that, the incumbent has lost the favor of the previous election and the shift has happened against the incumbent. It is common in Indian elections just before elections, electoral manifesto brought by the party, which charts their proposed plan in the future if they voted to power. This electoral manifesto plays a very important role in the party component perspective of elections. So it may also be proposed that party components have been also the hallmark of strengthening incumbency in the election.

The Personal Vote Component of Incumbency Advantage:

No doubt about this, elections are the manifestation of leadership quality and personality cult culture. People more often, align themselves with the particular personality and favor that candidate in the election. If we can take an example of the recent presidential election in the United States of America, we will find that there was a personal support base of the candidate fighting an election, which was due to particular personality cult culture adopted by the leaders of their kind, with whom people align themselves. The result shows in the elections of 2016 in

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The United States of America, Hillary Clinton of Democrats won the popular votes (48.5 percent) to Trump of Representative (46.4 percent), the widest margin of victory ever by a losing candidate. Trump, with his populist, nationalist campaign, won the Electoral College, scoring 304 votes to Clinton's 227. What made the difference in the Presidential election of The USA is major issues upon which Donald Trump scored big on Hillary. The top two voting issues for Americans, were the economy and terrorism, followed by foreign policy, health care, gun policy, and immigration. Throughout his campaign Presidential candidate of Republic Party, Donald Trump called for building a wall at the Mexican border, ending the corruption and opposing free trade deals. Whereas Clinton's campaign centered on health care, rights for women, minorities and LGBT and fair taxes. It is important to note that, Donald Trump entered the elections with a negative score not having a good image, whereas Hillary came to the scene after taking important positions in the Barack Obama government Secretary of State. The important point here is that the whole election was fought on a slogan called "I'm With Her" vs. "Make America Great Again"[15].

In the history of world politics, there have been many political leaders, when they took charge in their country as the head of government/state, they were in for quite a long period. To name some of them likeJawaharlal Nehru in India, Fidel Castro in Cuba, Sukarno-Suharto in Indonesia,Nelson Mandela in South Africa, and Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh. The reason being, they continued for long was, kind of legacy they came in with, most of the leaders who fought for the independence of their country, from one problem to another and genuinely they wanted to take their country forward. In the changing scenario at the present time in the 21st century, when

[15]https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/us-presidential-election-2016 accessed on 18/06/2018

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there is the fight for power, everything is undermined now at the cost of getting being elected or re-elected. It won't be wrong to say that, earlier when the charismatic leaders like above-mentioned leaders were heading the government, the others were in the contest and still evolving in the form of the challenger. In the changed scenario, the legacy of the past has been neutralized now and it has become more of the merit-based fight in elections.

Moving from party component and personal vote advantage there is also short term component, which also playsan important role in shaping voters towards their decision to support parties they want to support. Some of the factors which run during the peak time of the campaign period or even before is how foreign and domestic policies are doing? its success and failure, how the economy is doing? is there enough growth in the last phase to claim development has come? how the government has done on the corruption figure? is there any big scam unearthed? or how fair government has been during its tenure? how has been the government various policies?. Outcomes of governmental programs create the political environment that defines the short-term forces of the election and shape the retrospective judgments that factor into a voter's decision.

It won't be wrong to say that, these are, rather 'hard' influences (government performance in foreign affairs, the condition of the economy, government various policies and program, etc.) that can be separated from an individual voter's evaluation of them. Individual characteristics such as party identification will regulate the interpretation of 'hard' events but it is the event that constitutes the short-term force that to some degree shapes the response of every- body-albeit some more than others.

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