



Kinship Linkages and Political Communication: A Case Study of Hardoi Reserved Constituency

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Abstract:

Kinship and family networks have long been regarded as crucial actors in shaping political landscapes in South Asian democracies. Nonetheless, their strategic use as communication devices for political discourse has not been studied in the academic literature. This paper is an attempt to understand how kinship ties and family networks in Indian politics are used as the main channels to communicate with voters and political parties, especially in Hardoi Reserved Parliamentary Constituency in central Uttar Pradesh. From ethnographic observation and qualitative study of the 14th Lok Sabha elections 2004, it was demonstrated that the daughter and daughter-in-law of veteran Dalit leader Late Parmai Lal are in a political rivalry and that the family ties can be used as powerful means of political mobilization and political communication. The paper demonstrates that in Dalit politics family inheritance and lineage claims are contested political narratives and their narratives shape electoral discourse and voter mobilization strategies. The authors argue that in India democratic politics is basically about kinship ties that transcend party ideology and caste identity and that social networks of kinship and family connections are not just social bonds but also complex means of political communication, and this is the way in which elections and party politics are made.

Key Word: Kinship Networks, Family Ties, Political Communication, Electoral Politics, Dalit Politics, Uttar Pradesh, Parliamentary Democracy, Political Dynasties, Women in Politics

INTRODUCTION

In the 14th Lok Sabha Elections 2004 for Hardoi reserved constituency the daughter and the daughter-in-law of veteran Dalit leader of the area late Parmailal were main rivals the daughter in law was the candidate of Samajwadi party, and the daughter was the candidate of B.J.P. Before the marriage of daughter, she in Samajwadi Party. The younger son Lal Bihari of the veteran Dalit leader Parmai Lal was the chief of the block. Lal Bihari was defeated the election of reserved parliamentary constituency, later he died. After the death of Lal Bihari his wife and the daughter-in-law of Parmai Lal Smt. Usha Verma (M.A. English) was became the Block Pramukh of Ahirori. She won the 12th Lok Sabha election for the Hardoi reserved parliamentary constituency. The elder Son of Parmai Lal Vipin Bihari had won many assemble elections and his wife and elder daughter in law of Parmai Lal Smt. Rajeshwari Devi had one the election of District Development Council and she was the president of Hardoi Zila Parishad as the candidate of Samajwadi Party.

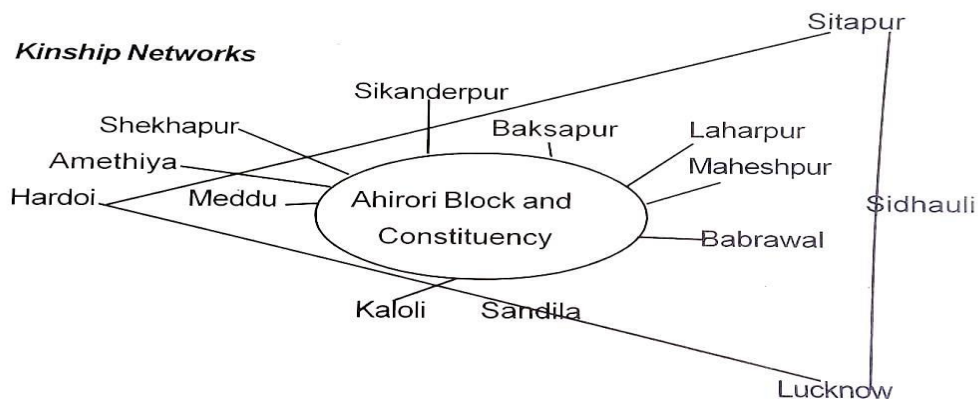
Anita Verma daughter of late Parmai Lal got married in the Barabanki District. After the death of Parmai Lal (Laghu Irrigation Minister) State Govt. of U.P. His wife Smt. Jadurani Devi won the election of M.L.A. for using her family networks and kinship for the election. After the death of Jadurani Devi, the elder daughter-in-law Rajeshwari Devi, won assembly election. But the daughter of late Parmai Lal Anita Verma wanted to became M.L.A. claiming her father's legacy but Samajwadi Party ticket was given to the daughter-in-law and not to the daughter. The daughter had left the Samajwadi party and

joined B.J.P. and she had won the election of Zila Parishad to defeated the daughter-in-law of Parmai Lal by the help of at that time congress leader Naresh Agrawal.

Zila parishad election is the different kind of election. The member of the Zila parishad is elected by the general election of GRAM PANCHAYAT by the general voters. Nineteen blocks in Hardoi district and three members of the Zila Parishad in every block. So total 57 Zila Parishad members were elected by the general voters. 57 members of Zila Parishad, 18 members were Dalit. Out of 57 votes Anita Verma got 40 votes and 17 votes to the Rajeshwari Devi So that ANITA Verma won the election of Zila Parishad.

This led to rise of factionalism in the family and in party as well as ultimately Anita Verma left the Samajwadi Party and joined B.J.P. She became the candidate of B.J.P. and the daughter-in-law uses her family ties and kinship networks as the candidate of Samajwadi Party.

In the 14th Lok Sabha election chamar votes are 15% of the total population, pasi 30%, Thakur 10%, Brahmins 10% and Yadav 7% votes of the total population of the constituency.



Naresh Agrawal joined the Samajwadi Party and a chief B.S.P. Leader Shyam Prakash Joined the Samajwadi Party. The Polarization of votes in one direction for the daughter-in-law as the candidate of Samajwadi Party.

In the 14th Loc Sabha election daughter clarify that the daughter is the real heir of her father and the other hand daughter-in-law shows that the daughter-in-law is the real heir of her father-in-law and his lineage. Both uses the family ties and kinship networks for the elections but the daughter-in-law had won the election and daughter was defeated. This shows that the daughter-in-law is the real heir of Parma Lal In the 14th Loc Sabha election kinship networks of davit family decided to support the daughter-in-law because daughter had left the party and family tradition and she was the widow. The Uncle of daughter-in-law in Uttaranchal State is a Congress Leader. The daughter was considered the member of family as she was married. At the present time daughter had left the B.J.P. and joined the B.S.P.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand South Asian political landscapes, one needs to understand the relationship between traditional social structures (in South Asian terms kinship and family organization) and contemporary democratic institutions. In the past, for example, Rajni Kothari and others have argued that in India, the 'politics of the people' is inextricably linked to the 'politics of the social order'. In the past, the emphasis on caste hierarchy was given to mass mobilization; however, current research has shown that kinship networks are an even more complicated means to communicate politics. Recent studies on political



dynasties in India have also shown that family lineage is a powerful brand identity. This identity is not only symbolic but also represents a means for voters to feel historical continuity and legitimacy in a turbulent political system. Women in these political families have been a subject of considerable interest and debate. While women often enter politics via the “widowhood effect” or dynastic succession, their ability to remain politically active depends on their ability to influence the family’s existing patronage networks. This paper contributes to this discourse by moving beyond the binary of caste versus class to the point that kinship is an autonomous means of communication that shapes electoral strategy, candidate selection, and voter behavior.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative ethnographic research to investigate the strategic use of family relationships in the Hardoi Reserved Parliamentary Constituency during the 14th Lok Sabha Elections of 2004. The methodology is three-fold: 1) Participant observation was the first part of the study conducted to help map political communication at the campaign stage. We observed local rallies, community meetings, and informal “baithaks” (sitting gatherings), which were types of meetings where political discourse was influenced. By examining the relationship between the supporters of the two main candidates (the daughter and daughter-in-law of Late Parmai Lal), we realized that the family’s grievances were brought into public discourse in the campaign and how those were turned into public campaign rhetoric. Second, the case study is longitudinal and is conducted over the course of four years. By tracing the political history of the Parmai Lal family from the local Zila Parishad elections to the Parliamentary level, the research reconstructs the evolution of factionalism within the family. A longitudinal view allows us to understand how changing political alliances (like the Samajwadi Party to the Bharatiya Janata Party) were communicated to voters from the perspective of family loyalty. Third, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with local voters, party workers, and community leaders. The aim was to understand how the electorate understood the competing claims of “true heirship.” The focus of this study was to understand how voters reconciled their personal relationship with the deceased leader with the public hostility of his surviving female relatives.

DISCUSSION: THE SEMANTICS OF KINSHIP AS POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

The 2004 Hardoi elections is one of the most important examples of kinship networks as a tool of politics. And here, the candidates did not only run on party lines, they campaigned for “legitimacy of inheritance”. The victory of the daughter-in-law Smt. Usha Verma over her daughter Anita Verma is indicative of a critical aspect of Dalit politics in Uttar Pradesh. Both candidates were trying to claim Late Parmai Lal’s legacy but were unable to do so because they were perceived as following the family’s traditional political geography and social arrangements. The daughter-in-law was a continuity for the electorate. In keeping with the Samajwadi Party and keeping the family’s home and power base in the Ahirori Block intact, she successfully communicated that the ‘household’ (the basic unit of the family) was intact. But the daughter's decision to leave the Samajwadi Party and join the BJP was a departure from the family’s political tradition for many voters. In rural Hardoi culture it is often assumed that marriage is a transfer of allegiance so the daughter's attempt to claim her father's legacy while running from a different political party was seen as a ‘credibility gap.’ The people of Hardoi were morally guided by kinship, as is the case with all people of India. They judged the candidates on family values—for instance, the fulfillment of domestic duties and loyalty to the patriarch’s original party, not on the candidate’s own policy proposals. In addition, kinship networks seem to be informal communication channels: When the uncle of the daughter-in-law, a prominent Congress leader, came to support her, there was a chain of influence that crossed family and caste channels and it was more powerful than any top-down party broadcast. This tells us that in Hardoi the “family” is more than a personal matter—it is a political entity that makes the votes flow. And the factionalism between the two women forced voters

to choose sides and made it so that the family's internal dynamics became a public referendum on the legacy of the late leader.

DATA IMPLICATIONS

The results from Hardoi suggest that democratic politics in India is not moving toward a post-kinship era, but rather is increasingly dependent on the strategic management of family stories. When a candidate says she is the "real heir," she is using a communicative shorthand that bypasses policy and ideology and is directly impacting the emotional and social bonds of the electorate. This research shows that political communication in a parliamentary democracy is deeply rooted in the family and that party success is largely a result of a candidate being able to navigate and use these complex kinship networks.

CONCLUSION

The main thesis of the paper is electoral politics and party politics and getting power or political position. Kinship ties use as medium or means of political communication. That is how democratic politics is characterized by Kinship Linkages. General public votes also discuss in talk about family issues and linkages. Voters belonging to the same Kinship and caste are more concerned but other caste voters also take this into account. The researcher has observed this in the election of Loc Sabha 2004. That is how family and kinship became an issue and medium of political discourse. This shows that family and kinship ties are used not only in family politics but also in party politics and electoral politics. It influences political discourse of General Public.

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