

Succession planning in Politics: A Study in Indian context

¹Dr. Ella Mittal & ²Parvinder Kaur

¹Assistant professor, Department of Basic & Applied sciences, Punjabi university Patiala (India)

²Research scholar, Department of Basic & Applied sciences, Punjabi university Patiala (India)

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 07 September 2018

Keywords

legacy, Political dynasty, Political parties, Succession planning

Corresponding Author

Email: [saini.parvinder80\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:saini.parvinder80[at]gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The present study is about the succession planning in politics. The study traced the dynasty of succession in various political parties. Political parties at central and state level are discussed in order to examine the succession planning among the political families. Politics is considered as business rather than a profession. BJP and regional parties are seen as blaming Congress for family succession as their culture but have also proliferated their families in heading chief positions. Nowadays politics of India is passing through the transition and 'promoting the family' appears to be a consistent part of their life. Leaders need to change their behaviour of selfishness in order to boost the country to grow and prosper without any hindrance of corruption.

1. Introduction

Succession planning is a process of thinking and assuming new incumbent as a successor of the key position in future by replacing the old leader. In politics, new leaders develop by impressing and attracting general public towards them for giving an opportunity to serve and handling the key positions through the mode of elections. Democracy is a system of government in which citizen of the country exercises their power through their elected representatives. As per the constitution of the country, India is a democratic country in which all the citizens have equal rights, duties, and power. The elected member's works on behalf of natives of the country. But as the greed of money and power grow, most people want the chair of Ministry in their own command. Generally, succession planning is done to fill the topmost positions with high calibre and skilled people to successfully run their business or association. But when we talk about the politics major parties are developing and passing their leadership positions to their family members only to limit the power and rule in their hands.

Although the domain of succession planning is well explored by several authors but very few research studies have been conducted related to political succession planning. So, the purpose of this research paper is to trace the dynasty and succession planning of different political parties in India. Tracking of longitudinal events from independence to present era give important clues about the evolution of Indian political system. In this research paper, first some background on succession planning is presented. This is followed by discussion of various political parties involved in family succession planning. In the end findings and concluding remarks are provided.

2. Succession planning

Henry Fayol (1841-1925) was among the first writers to recognize the universal need of succession planning. The principles of management given by him are still widely regarded today. One of his principle indicates the management

responsibility to ensure the 'stability of tenure of personnel'. Fayol believed that key positions would end being occupied by unskilled or ill-prepared people if the need is ignored earlier at proper time (Rothwell 2001).

Succession planning is a process in which leadership positions are scanned and identified to pass those positions to new leaders, who replace the old leaders, when they retire, leave or die. It is a way of filling the key positions that are vacant through systematic evaluation. It also involves developing successors for future chief positions. It is designed to ensure the efficient and effective performance of the employees and ultimately organisation.

3. Definitions of succession planning

According to Oxford advanced American dictionary, "succession planning is the process of training and preparing employees in a company or an organization so that there will always be somebody to replace a senior manager who leaves".

"Succession planning is the process of developing talent to replace executive, leadership or other key employees when they transition to another role, leave the company, are fired, retire or die".

"Succession planning is a continuous process of identifying required competencies, then works to assess, develop, and retain a talent pool of employees, in order to confirm a continuity of leadership for all critical positions".

Effective succession planning needs common vision and shared values. The transparent policies among members of the association, a set of ideologies, drive the business to grow or prosper. Successful succession planning does not allow the members to automatically take the position of leadership without an ability to act so. Skill, calibre, and charisma make an individual to be accepted by others. Leadership fails due to various imperfections such as: aloofness, arrogance, insensitivity, perfectionism, betraying and selfishness (Burke, 2006).

4. Political dynasty and succession planning

The idea of succession planning is not new in the Indian context. Various dynasty businesses such as Ambani, Tata, and Birla's are the few names of famous successors known by the majority of Indians. Similarly, this concept is also followed in Indian political parties and their footsteps on this line are growing over time. Buragohain 2015 claims that politics dynasty still dominates the democracy of India. Indian national congress (INC), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), are major recognized national political parties in India. There are also other few names of regional parties such as Shiv Sena, Samajwadi Party, Janta Dal, Indian National Lok Dal, Aam Aadmi party which rule as per results of the election in the different states. Majority of Indian know about the dynasty of Congress party which was inherited from its president Moti Lal Nehru and Rahul Gandhi as expected successor after Sonia Gandhi. The other parties such as Bhartiya Janta party and regional parties are not different which reflect the democratic dynasty of India as commented by a political commentator putting the US as presidential and Britain as a parliamentary democracy.

5. Successors of Nehru's family in Congress

The continuous rule by one family party i.e. Indian national congress can seldom be seen in any country of the world. The history of patriarchy of Nehru/Gandhi family in Indian national congress can be traced back from Moti Lal Nehru, who served as president of the party as by Jawaharlal Nehru, and further successors Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and presently Rahul Gandhi as party's president giving support to his mother Sonia Gandhi. Sonia Gandhi has joined the party in early 1998 after late Sitaram Kesri. But she was unwilling to join the party after the death of Rajiv Gandhi during 1991 in Tamil Nadu. This was the first time when Narshimha Rao, who was not from the dynasty of Nehru/Gandhi family became the prime minister from Congress party and successfully completed his full tenure (Buragohain 2015). Sonia Gandhi never ruled as prime minister of the country due to her own personal reasons. Priyanka Gandhi, sister of Rahul Gandhi limited her interest in politics but considered as more charismatic than his brother.

6. Bhartiya Janta party not barred in Family Successions

In BJP party also sons of the Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan chief ministers are MP's. Dushyant Singh, the son of Vasundhara Raje, who is the CM of Rajasthan is currently representing Dhaulpur as its MP. Brother of Vasundhara Raje, the late Madhavrao Scindia was also a Congress leader, whose son Jyotiraditya Scindia is now the Congress chief whip in the Lok Sabha. Likewise, Abhishek Singh, the son of Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh is also an MP of Lok Sabha.

The Daughters of Late Gopinath Munde, who was deputy chief minister, Pankaja representing as state guardian and minister of rural development, women and child welfare of Maharashtra and Pritam was elected in the bye-election for the seat that was her father's constituency. The daughter of late Pramod Mahajan and niece of late Gopinath Munde, Poonam

Mahajan is also MP. Son of former CM of Himachal Pradesh Prem Kumar Dhumal, Anurag Thakur is an office bearer of BCCI and also an MP. Another leader from BJP and the son of former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, Jayant Sinha is Union minister. The son of Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Pankaj Singh is a BJP state general secretary and MLA of UP.

7. Tracing other Regional or State parties involving in dynasty Successions

There is also family succession in regional or state ruling parties. Shiromani Akali Dal, Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), National Conference, and Biju Janata Dal (BJD), are controlled by family politicians.

Firstly talking about Punjab, the family of former CM Parkash Singh Badal controls Shiromani Akali Dal, and also ruled before Amarinder Singh. Sukhbir Badal, the son of Parkash Singh Badal was the deputy CM of Punjab and his wife, Harsimrat Kaur is also serving as Union Minister for food processing. Amarinder Singh, son of 'Maharaja of Patiala' 'Yadavindra Singh' and his family is also involved in a political dynasty. His wife Parneet Kaur was a Union minister in the UPA government. Their son, Raninder Singh is also a politician from Punjab.

Mulayam Singh Yadav, the founder of the Samajwadi party, a politician from Uttar Pradesh, also controlling family business of politics. Four out of five members of MP's of his party are from his family, including Dimple Yadav, his daughter in Law. Akhilesh Yadav, the Mulayam's Son was the CM of UP for five years, his brother, Shiv Pal Singh Yadav was a senior minister in the state. Cousin of Mulayam's, Ram Gopal Yadav is also in politics.

The chief of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in UP (Uttar Pradesh) is also supporting his nephew Aakash and brother Anand Kumar in politics for their better future.

Another leader from RJD Lalu Prasad Yadav, his wife, sons, daughters all are politicians. His wife Rabri Devi served as Bihar's CM at his place. Tejaswari, his son served as deputy chief minister of Bihar while of his seven daughters Misa Bharti is MP of Rajya Sabha. His another son was a senior minister from the state.

Ram Vilas Paswan, is a Minister in PM Narendra Modi Government, whose brother Ramchandra Paswan and son Chirag Paswan are MPs of Lok Janshakti Party party. Pashupati Paswan his another brother is now a minister in the Bihar government of Nitish Kumar.

Another party in Maharashtra, Shiv Sena was founded about 50 years ago by Bal Thackeray has remained in the control of Thackeray Family. His son Uddhav currently leads the party and his Grandson Aditya also heads the youth wing. His nephew Raj Thackeray also formed a new party 'Maharashtra Navnirman Sena' in 2006 after resigning his uncle's party in 2005.

The supreme and chief person of nationalist congress party Sharad Pawar also heads the political party from Maharashtra. Supriya Sule, his daughter is an MP and his nephew, Ajit Pawar was the former deputy chief minister of Maharashtra, currently serving as an MLA from Baramati assembly segment.

BJD leader and chief minister and leader, Naveen Patnaik, also inherited leadership from his late father and stalwart of the Janta party (Secular), Biju Patnaik in Odisha. Although Naveen was not in the politics before his father's death, even then he joined the politics afterward by taking the legacy of his father and had been accepted in the state for two decades.

The chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mehbooba Mufti, daughter of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, who found the people democratic party i.e. PDP. His father was the former CM. Before mufti, the CM of the state was Omar Abdullah, whose father was the chief of the national conference, and grandfather, Sheikh Abdullah, played a central role in the politics of Jammu and Kashmir.

The son of the former chief minister of Goa, Vishwajeet is also in politics.

Mamata Banerjee as CM of West Bengal also promoted his nephew Abhishek Banerjee in politics in ruling the Trinamool Congress.

14th Chief Minister of Karnataka from Janta Dal (secular) and 11th Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda also had relations with BJP and Congress. His son H.D. Kumaraswamy, has taken oath as chief minister of Karnataka recently. His another son H.D. Revanna is also active in politics.

In Tamil Nadu, M.G. Ramchandaran passed his legacy and his wife Janaki became the CM after his death. But afterward, Jayalalithaa served as chief minister for six times, inheriting a political legacy.

In down south, Tamil Nadu M. Karunanidhi has served as CM and his SON M.K. Stalin, who is the leader from the opposition and is seen as future CM of the region.

Similar is the story of Andhra Pradesh where Y.S. Rajsekhar Reddy of Congress was the chief minister and was considered as state's strongman. His son Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has left the party after his father's death and floated his Y.S.R. Congress party.

Telangana which is separated from Andhra Pradesh is also a home to another political party. K. Chandrasekhar Rao is the first CM of the state from TRS or Telangana Rashtra Samithi. He is also encouraging his son K.T. Ramo Rao in politics. Kavitha, his daughter is also a Lok Sabha MP.

In southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Led by N. Chandrababu Naidu, who took political legacy from N.T. Rama Rao. His son Lokesh is the rising personality in the state cabinet.

8. Findings

The successors of Gandhi/Nehru's family are managing the Indian National Congress and business of politics since many years. Sonia Gandhi has taken the leadership from Rajiv Gandhi after his death and now given the family legacy to her son Rahul Gandhi, who is not seen as rising star or charismatic personality by the majority of peoples in India, even though he got the chief position from his Mother. In Bhartiya Janata party, the case is not so new. There are many leaders naming few: Vasundhara Raje, Gopinath Munde, Yashwant Sinha, and Prem Kumar Dhumal, who head the political families and promote them in succession of chief positions. Similarly, other regional parties are also going on the footsteps of these two main parties. The Akali Dal in Punjab, Samajwadi party in Uttar Pradesh, Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress party in Maharashtra, Janta party (secular) in Odisha, Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, People Democratic Party or PDP in Jammu and Kashmir, RJD in Bihar, TRS in Telangana and Y.S.R. Congress party In Andhra Pradesh are seen in involving family succession as discussed above. The family of Mulayam Singh Yadav, the Supremo of Samajwadi Party, holds sixty key positions in politics.

Politicians have made the politics as a business which they pass to their family members as their own property, when the need arises or after death. The media, electoral process, campaign process, permission to enter into politics is still tightly controlled by governing political and other military elites (Segal, 1996). Huge money is invested to win a seat in the assembly and after getting a seat own family members are promoted for successions of their leadership positions. As clear from the discussions above that most of the political parties are involved in this culture of family successions. Role of education and skill is no more appear to be existing in handling the key positions. Corruption at the name of chair or promotions in politics can be seen in most of the states or even at the central level.

9. Conclusion

The priority of most of the politicians in India is not to serve the general public, who directly elect the MPs and MLAs and indirectly president and prime minister of the country. Rather quest for chair, power, fame, and money that motivates and bring them in politics. Own family members are promoted while planning the successors of the various parties to limit the legacy of leadership. More than half of the parties are involved in dynasty business as reflected from the discussion part. The qualities of leadership such as education, charisma, a way of communication, physical appearance, Service Moto are not much considered. Even many Indian politicians caught in fake degree scandal (Manoj 2016).

Indian politics is at the stage of transition and appears as promoting the family became a consistent part of their life. People will have to cope with this until the democracy matures. State funding is required that could bring fresh and educated leaders to play a key role at all levels without a family tag. Leaders need to change their behaviour of selfishness in order to boost the country to grow and prosper without any hindrance of corruption.

References

1. Burke, R. J. (2006). Why leaders fail: Exploring the darkside. *International Journal of Manpower*, 27(1), 91-100.
2. Manoj, A. K., Sridharan, D., & Kulandaivel, M. (2016). Politics as a Profession. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 6, 186-190.
3. Minakshi Buragohain (2015). The Impending Succession in Indian Politics: The Inevitability of a Gandhi-Nehru Scion. *International journal of innovative research & development*,4(6), 230-232.
4. Rothwell, W. (2001). *Effective succession planning*. New York: American Management Association.
5. Segal, A. (1996). Can democratic transitions tame political successions?. *Africa Today*, 43(4), 369-384.
6. <https://thewire.in/politics/dynastic-democracy-congress-bjp>
7. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/kumaraswamy-to-take-oath-as-karnataka-chief-minister-at-4-30pm/articleshow/64262566.cms>
8. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/topic/Mayawati>
9. <https://thewire.in/politics/dynastic-democracy-congress-bjp>
10. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalvakuntla_Chandrashekar_Rao#Telangana_Rashtra_Samithi
11. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Presidents_of_the_Indian_National_Congress