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### **Electoral Violence in India- Some Truths**

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#### **Abstract:**

*Nowadays, electoral violence has become a significant concern for Indian political leaders. Its sporadic outbursts on the eve of elections have devastating effects on the landscape of Indian politics. As violent eruptions engulf, the democratic order and the power that justifies democratic governance is severely distorted. The range of actions that connect people with their rulers is threatened. Unleashed force and unbridled violence control every situational outcome, undermining the reality of democratic power. In this context, it is important for Indian leaders to address the subversive outcomes of electoral violence, which damages the flame of the largest democracy in the world. This paper aims to reveal the root causes of electoral violence and its connection with the poor governance of the country. To protect the democratic environment from the massive destruction caused by electoral violence, several solutions are suggested. Content analysis methods are used for this purpose. The main findings of this article are that electoral violence is an outcome of poor governance, and the rulers of Indian democracy also bear some responsibility as they have not effectively utilized federal mechanisms, which could have potential in resolving this issue. The vulnerability of inter-sectoral activities also has cross-cutting effects on electoral violence that may produce positive results in addressing it.*

**Keywords: Electoral violence, Indian democracy, violent eruption, disruption, poor governance.**

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**I. Introduction:** In contemporary India, democracy faces a serious threat due to the outbreak of electoral violence. Electoral violence, spreading on the eve of both Assembly and Parliament elections, has tarnished the electoral process. However, it continues to persist even after elections (Birch and Muchlinski, 2020) damaging the democratic environment and distorting democratic rules. By challenging democratic institutions, it undermines the democratic value system. Electoral violence manifests itself within a specific region (Subramanian,2021). It is nothing but a situational outcome (Abebiyi,2021) where threat and fear demonstrate the very roles and goals of electoral politics. By manipulating public sentiment, it controls the democratic mechanism undemocratically. Through the use of force, it promotes the interests of a select few over others. Mutual

disrespect, excessive lust for power, distrust, miscommunication, distortion of facts, and deviation from democratic values contribute to electoral violence. Though it takes different forms through various actions, its objective remains the same: to seize power through force and fear. Threats, destruction, and devastation pervade everywhere. The power of the people seems to become obsolete, and their rights in democratic affairs are eroded. Tension, frustration, and disappointment grip the minds of the people to the extent that they have gradually lost faith in the present electoral system. Such detachment of the people raises questions about the legitimacy (Wilkinson,2006) of the electoral system in contemporary India.

India, as the largest democracy in the world, has always been concerned about this problem. Although Indian scholars, politicians, policymakers, bureaucrats, and social workers have examined this problem from different angles and offered various suggestions, they share common goal: finding an effective solution to the problem. In the Indian context, electoral violence refers to a situation, in which violent measures are taken to influence electoral outcomes (Hoglund,2009), mainly, targeting political opponents. However, its widespread effects significantly impact the democratic selection process through which rulers are chosen (Sudduth and Gallop,2023). By preventing citizens from exercising their choice through the use of force, it undermines their democratic rights, essential for the survival of any democratic system. Electoral violence often manifests as a situational outcome, typically surfacing immediately after the declaration of election results. In present-day India, social media has intentionally changed the dimensions of the concept by incorporating a large number of concepts and contexts within its scope (Olaniran and Williams2020). For example, political violence, voter suppression, ballot tampering, and many others have been used to broaden the understanding of electoral violence. This opens up the scope for an interdisciplinary approach to better understand electoral violence. The criminalization of politics also impacts it(Kumar,2015). Under its influence, electoral violence becomes a tool in the hands of underworld players to pursue their nefarious objectives. In such circumstances, the battle over the ballot loses its significance in public life.

While most investigations on electoral violence primarily focus on the array of problems that cause crises in electoral legitimacy (Kumar,2015, Wilkinson,2006, Kohli.A 1990, Norris.P et al., 2015) they often fail to link it with the broader perspective of electoral democracy. Several research works have shown how the dynamics of electoral violence can alter the very process of Indian democracy (Staniland, 2014, Birch, Daxecker, Hoglund,2020, Harish and Little, 2017, Mukhopadhyay,2022) but have struggled to organize them into a theoretical framework for intensive study. There exists a significant gap between theory and practice in this regard. Additionally, justifying the use of an electoral model that originates from the West poses a challenge.

This article makes an effort to reveal the causes and consequences of electoral violence on Indian democracy. A thorough study has been conducted to connect these causes and consequences with the poor governing process and to find the interlink between them. The

present researcher also intends to shed light on the situations in which electoral violence can arise. Taking situational outcomes into account, this research work attempts to suggest a few solutions that may help tackle this problem in a rational way. Content analysis methods have been used for this purpose.

**II. Electoral violence- Major Causes:** There is no single cause for the growth of electoral violence; numerous causes lay behind it. For an effective discussion, it is important to categorize them. In this context, the main causes of electoral violence can be divided into four categories: (1) Physical, (2) Psychological, (3) Social, and (4) Institutional. Details of each category are given below:

- 1. Physical:** Physical causes are mainly constituted by the lack of resources, manpower, infrastructural inadequacy, and other related issues that may accelerate the growth of electoral violence in India. For example, if the government does not have adequate funds for the upcoming election, the possibility of black money being invested in the conduct of electoral activities will be increase. It definitely jeopardizes the fairness of the electoral process (Kapur and Vaishnav,2018). Similarly, the free and fair election process can be hampered by the shortage of staff required for election purposes. In all these events, electoral violence can erupt either due to the demand for free and fair elections or as an instrument of political goons to manage the electoral interests of a specific group of people in the absence of proper requirements. Lack of infrastructural adequacy(Berenschot,2020) also severely affects the election process, thereby causing political backlash and preparing the ground for electoral violence.
- 2. Psychological:** Psychological factors imbue emotional support in the minds of common people by exploiting their feelings. Various measures have been taken to justify the causes of electoral violence. Misleading common people is one of them, appearing as a main reason behind electoral violence. People are misled in several ways. Firstly, they are mobilized through a wrong political line(McCauley,2006); a distorted form of political ideology is used to this end. Secondly, provocative measures are employed to shift people's interest from genuine problems(Wilkinson,2006). Thirdly, wrong political interpretations are used (Birch, Daxecker and Høglund,2020) to address a series of problems, confusing people and pushing them away from reality. Fourthly, public sentiment is often used to justify a popular stance, regardless of its ethical implications. Sentimental judgments cannot accurately predict the reality of the political world, thus misleading common people to a large extent.
- 3. Social:** Social factors sometimes cause disruption in the existing social order, paving the way for electoral violence. In a broader spectrum, long-term social objectives may not address the specific needs of the poor. Feeling socially deprived (Emmanuel and Onyige,2019) they seek to manage political power in their favour by getting elected and claiming seats for themselves. Denial of these aspirations can lead to violent outbreaks engulfing entire regions. Moreover, they may form their own political parties to compete in elections against the established political order(Alam,2004), which also

surfaces tensions among different groups of people. Such tensions reach new heights, especially in the eve of elections, particularly during the submission of nomination papers. Candidates of newly formed parties are sometimes prevented from submitting nomination papers(Kumar,2015), which can cause violent outbreaks in the sphere of electoral politics.

- 4. Institutional:** Institutional causes of electoral violence have become more prominent in the present age, manifesting with a number of factors. Poor institutional infrastructure, lack of institutional communication, inadequate interaction between various institutions, institutional rigidity, lack of institutional unity, poor institutional coordination, and degraded leadership quality are possible reasons responsible for the emergence of electoral violence. Due to these factors, the institutional support base for free and fair elections has eroded. In the absence of proper institutional mechanisms, sharp antagonism between mutually opposed interests pervades everywhere. When such antagonism reaches its culmination point, it promotes violence in the sphere of electoral politics.

**III. Is electoral violence an outcome of poor governability? :** It is important to discuss how electoral violence is related to poor governability. Many scholars intend to justify it as a consequence of poor governability, suggesting that electoral violence is an outcome of the government's inability to manage governmental affairs efficiently(Rose,1979). In any democratic country, the government has the responsibility to shape people's choices in tune with the greater interest of democracy. By providing a large number of alternatives, policymakers promote a diverse range of interests. Thus, a powerful mechanism of coordination is highly needed. If institutions fail to provide such a mechanism or cannot settle the relationship between structure, process, and functions, it could become fatal for their very existence. Mismatch in tuning between function and functionaries also affects procedural outcomes, resulting in electoral violence with subversive overtones.

The growth of electoral violence mostly depends on such situational outcomes in which, due to poor governability, the structural functionality of governance deviates from its goals(Cheema,2005). Thus, it cannot resolve conflicts between diverse groups of interests and fails to maintain control over the major institutional structures responsible for the manifestation of electoral verdicts. The rulers of Indian democracy, by failing to hold their control over these structures, open up the scope for all evil spirits to manipulate the whole game through the use of force (Ratha and Mahapatra, 2013). This dictates the people's verdicts in an irrational manner, reducing them to mere outcomes of threat-ridden politics. Structural inadequacy also becomes a vital reason for electoral violence (Gupta,2012). Poor governability is an outcome of structural inadequacy, which depends to a great extent on ambiguous electoral norms borrowed from Western electoral systems. This dismissal of the distinctive characteristics of Indian democracy creates a significant gap between the political role and democratic goals of the people (Wilkinson, 2007). As this gap extends, the chance of electoral violence heightens.

The diverse range of actions initially planned by the government of India to manage its electoral affairs could not be set in motion due to the government's inability to govern such diversity in a rational way. What makes a government capable of perceiving the real meaning of diversity is its readiness to accept the distinctive characteristics of each form and sort out the way through which it can be effectively articulated in the diverse range of actions performed by the government. Because of the inefficiency of governing power, the dynamic use of such parameters could not become successful. As a result, either dominant interests privilege in the existing power structure and suppress others by using force and fear (Menon and Nigam,2007), or oppressed peoples are clubbed together to form a group and fight against others to secure their interests (Alam,2004) causing the eruption of violence in the electoral sphere.

If the process of governability fails to achieve the standard goals of governance, it cannot effectively manage the political atmosphere in which voting behaviour is manifested. The variables that actively participate in promoting the goals of democratic interests are disrupted. In this situation, political stability, the essential precondition for the proper manifestation of voting behaviour, is not secure. Thus, the connecting link between people and power, when managed otherwise, produces electoral violence.

**IV. Electoral violence and its consequences:** Electoral violence is a political phenomenon; however, its consequences cannot confine themselves within the ambit of the political sphere. It expands its scope into various socio-economic fields, affecting a large number of structures, processes, people, and places. Through illegitimate means, it alters structural dimensions, leading to procedural changes, especially when the politics of threat undermines the voting behaviour of people and manipulates the roles of 'vox populi' in favour of a particular group interest, dominating in a specific place. Thus, the legitimate roles entrusted to people in a democratic state gradually fade. Additionally, the procedural merit of legitimate institutions also shrinks. Their struggle with the violent outbreaks of vulnerable forces undermines their capacity to use legitimate powers in managing democratic affairs in terms of procedural outcomes. Structural inadequacy leads electoral violence to spread its wings, facilitating the institution of political violence in every single conflict-ridden place and providing a breeding ground for an anti-democratic culture. Therefore, it is important to examine how electoral violence has affected the existing pattern of Indian democracy. In this respect, it is also important to understand the consequences of electoral violence that have been cited in various spheres of Indian democracy, namely:

**(a) Political instability:** Electoral violence promotes political instability (Wilkinson, 2006) in three ways. Firstly, it instigates violence against political institutions, disrupting their regular processes and threatening the political stability of the existing system(Mitra,2017). Secondly, with the unlimited use of force and threats, it destroys the very fabric of the political community. All free spaces for public meetings become dormant(Rajagopal,2001), and political and other essential rights of people are denied. Members of the political community are threatened for their public appearances, and anti-democratic tendencies are encouraged to gain power. In such a situation, it becomes difficult for political authorities to

maintain law and order. Chaos and restlessness in public life are evident everywhere, leading to a decline in political stability. Thirdly, in the face of ruthless menace, all channels of communication between rulers and the ruled come to an end(Mitra,2017). In this situation, networks used for garnering people's support are inactive, causing political instability and security crises in the existing democracy.

**(b) Legitimacy crisis:** Electoral violence delegitimizes the very structure of political authority. Since the government fails to protect the life and property of common people from the violent eruptions, people lose their faith in the government, causing a legitimacy crisis(Gilley,2009). Such a crisis may also culminate when the perpetrators of electoral violence gain people's confidence and mobilize them against the government. For example, Naxalite insurgency can be mentioned in which perpetrators of electoral violence often exploit local grievances and mobilize marginalised communities against the government.

**(c) Erosion of Democratic Values:** Electoral violence challenges the value system of democracy(Verma,2023) by redefining its ethical goals. Under the influence of violent outbreaks, existing democratic values either change or are replaced. The democratic institutions that justified the essentialities of democratic values, also change its characters. In such situations, the role of accepted democratic values undergoes a serious transformation, creating a significant gap between the ethical framework and the non-ethical structure of present democracy.

**(d) Deprivation of People's Democratic Rights:** People cannot enjoy their democratic rights in a state where violent outbreaks prevail everywhere (Chowdhury and Keane,2021). With the unprecedented explosion of a series of violent eruptions, rights like liberty, equality, and other essential constitutionally guaranteed rights become squeezed. In these circumstances, the democratic principles that govern the relational status between rulers and ruled also getting eroded. Existing political authorities cannot protect the life of people and their rights from the onslaught of violent forces. Consequently, the deconstruction of the political space for free political conversation takes place. It diverts people from their goal of becoming true rulers of the democratic order, thus violating the terms and conditions on the basis of which true democratic rights can be obtained.

**(e) Distortion of Social Fabric:** In the face of destructive violent outcomes, the social fabric of the democratic order also becomes eroded (Pedersen, 2002), causing a serious crisis in the existing democratic order. As social networks become obsolete, mutual interaction between society and politics, which is the backbone of any stable political order, starts to weaken. The pernicious effects of violent outbreaks rupture the social fabric in such a way that it cannot manage to produce the desired support base essential for the sustenance of any political society. Hence, political instability prevails everywhere (Mitra,1992). With the rise of violent outbreaks, a series of democratic activities have lost their social values; thus, their appeal to society could not work anymore. Such a poor connection between society and democracy definitely destroys the power equation on the basis of which social fabric can develop.

**(f) Disruption of the Process of Governance:** With the rise of violent outbreaks, a series of democratic activities are suspended (Jaffrelot, 2002). In this situation, the power, that controls the regular process of governance in a democratic country becomes disrupted. All channels of interaction between rulers and ruled, which effectively govern the dimension of the existing pattern of governance are also misled from their real objectives. Failing to control over the whole situation the governance faces hardship in managing its own affairs. This causes a real crisis in governability, as the maximum number of people could not lend their support to such a system.

**V. Mechanisms of Electoral violence:** Electoral violence manifests through the unrestrained power of threat and intimidation, with the primary aim of altering the public's verdict in favour of a political entity or group seeking to attain or retain power. This involves the utilization of violence, threats, and other unconstitutional tactics. It directly or indirectly impacts the existing democratic system, as well as the political and social fabric of society. To leave a lasting impact on the minds of ordinary citizens, several mechanisms have been employed, details of which are provided below.

**(a) Threat Politics:** It is a political strategy devised to coerce opponents into withdrawing from the electoral battlefield (Momen and Markony, 2020). Proponents of threat politics craft their game plan by highlighting factors that are most effective in generating threats in a given situation. The manner in which fear is employed is designed to exert optimal mental pressure on people. Force is utilized to maximize benefits in favour of the game planners.

**(b) Hate Speech:** Targeting rival politicians and opposing political parties, hate speech is a major tool of polarization. Its purpose is to marginalise rival politicians by manipulating public opinion and develops animosity against them. Hate speech sometimes exploits people's sentiments and incites them to engage in violent activities. It plays on the lines of class, caste, region, religion, gender, and other factors to garner support (Sorial, 2015). Words are chosen to ensure the maximum number of people are drawn into this divisive rhetoric. The primary objective of such hate speech is to engender an obsession among people with the broader aspects upon which political violence manifests.

**(c) Engagement of Political Goons:** Political violence is effectively spread through the engagement of political goons, many of whom hail from the underworld with a history of criminal activities (Kumar, 2015). They ruthlessly threaten people and tighten their control over the political landscape through the relentless use of violence, prioritizing the interests of their masters over those of the common people.

**(d) Diversion of People's Minds:** Perpetrators of political violence aim to capture people's attention by diverting their focus from real problems. They mislead people about the political world, convincing them that force is the sole solution to every issue. Consequently, political morality, responsibility, and accountability hold no significance to them. By presenting speculative versions of various political problems in a convincing manner, they instil disbelief in the existing political system (Stewart, Smith and Denton, 2012), and attract more individuals to their cause, aiming for greater success in the future.

**(e) Exploitation of Communal and Regional Sentiment:** Perpetrators of electoral violence often employ exploitative measures to achieve their objectives, utilizing both physical and emotional manipulation. Emotional exploitation operates on the basis of both individual and group sentiments. In countries like India, where numerous social groups exist based on caste, class, religion, region, and gender, it's evident that dominant group sentiments will be utilized to garner popular support. Perpetrators of electoral violence strategically play on communal regional, religious, ethnic divisions and other divisions to sway more people to their cause (Cote and Mitchell,2015). They instigate feelings of deprivation among various religious communities, convincing them that failure to join their cause or reject violent measures will make them vulnerable targets of rival communal groups. Such efforts often yield results, as evidenced by the occurrence of communal violence preceding elections.

**(f)Utilization of Social Media:** Social media is employed to propagate fear and animosity (Frohardt,2003) utilizing various video and audio clips to achieve this goal. Content is presented in a manner that maximizes impact.

**(g)Disruption of Communication Channels:** Communication channels commonly used to unite people for the maintenance of peace and harmony in society are being disrupted by the perpetrators of political violence. Force and fear are employed for this purpose, with the main objective being to create psychological pressure by cutting people off from the government's safety zone.

**(h)Sabotage of Popular Initiatives:** Political malfeasance extends its influence by sabotaging popular initiatives from various sectors(Witsoe,2013). It drastically alters the goals of such initiatives and disrupts the space where interaction between popular goals and political roles occurs. Power is wielded to coerce people into aligning with its agenda.

**(i)Tampering with the Governance Process:** Perpetrators of electoral violence employ various means to tamper with the government process(Kumar,2015) to achieve favourable outcomes. They utilize destructive methods such as undermining the democratic process by instilling fear, suppressing voter turnout, and delegitimizing election results. By fostering mistrust among people regarding the effectiveness of governance, they indirectly exert pressure on the mechanisms through which the government builds its support base, leading to instability throughout the country.

It is important to mention that while there are no fixed rules on how and when these tools are used, it is evident from the past that perpetrators of electoral violence seek to maximize their impact on the minds of the common people. For this reason, they select mechanisms with specific applicability to certain areas. However, in some cases, they shift their focus from the mechanism to timing. Any favourable situation provides them an opportunity to exploit people's sentiments to the fullest. Despite this, a lack of communication skills often fails to produce the desired results, leading the perpetrators of electoral violence to lose faith in this method. Nowadays, a shift from non-digital to digital means has made them more powerful players, as they choose to use digital technology to intensify violence in



their daily activities. With their promotion of threat politics, force, fear, and frustration pervade everywhere. In this context, it becomes more difficult for the government to bring the situation under control.

**VI. Electoral violence – how to resist?:** Electoral violence is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, taking various forms. Almost all countries worldwide have experienced it, with actions ranging from intimidation to threats, force to fear, assault to abuse, segregation to seduction, persecution to pervasiveness. Different countries practice violent measures under varying circumstances, aiming to achieve maximum impact. The targets set by the violent miscreants vary over time and place. The intensity of violence, as reflected in violent outbreaks, is not consistent, as it largely depends on different objectives conditioned by situational outcomes. Such a ubiquitous phenomenon can hardly be resisted by applying any simple course of action. Similarly, it is difficult to suggest which set of actions can effectively eradicate it.

Countries from different parts of the world, usually experiencing electoral violence, have connected it with its root causes, thus introducing a wide range of preventive measures, often differing from each other. In the present situation, rapid changes in the political order customize the politicization of the electoral system, making it difficult to remove violent outbreaks from the realm of politics. Therefore, the new strategies adopted by many countries mainly aim to decrease the rate of violent eruptions by altering the contextual situation. Sometimes, detoxification of certain actions may also help resist the destruction caused by electoral violence. Changing the pattern of interaction between various socio-political actors by reshaping the power equation has also proven fruitful in this context. To prevent electoral violence, a number of measures have been taken throughout the world, details of which are given below-

**(a) Mediating Between Different Interest Groups:** In electoral competition, a number of dominant interests clash with each other over power. Sometimes, a few of them align with each other, posing a significant challenge to the existing power structure. To achieve dominance within the existing power structure, they aggressively attack the ruling party and its supporters, disrupting the political order and seizing power sporadically, thus creating chaos in the political and social spheres. To prevent this, the present rulers of the country take initiatives to mediate between various conflicting political interests using different measures. For example, they resort to interest aggregation to mediate between conflicting political interests. In some cases, the process of integration, which involves eliminating group antagonism to avoid violent outbreaks, is also considered. Mediation can also occur by reducing hostility between conflicting interests (Birch and Muchlinski,2017). In this case, the root causes of hostility are addressed, securing each interest, and to some extent, balancing their activities to achieve more positive results. Accommodating conflicting group interests into the existing political structure also becomes popular in some cases where structural imbalance poses a significant threat to the interests of ruling parties.

**(b) Reconstructing the Existing Power Structure:** Sometimes, a one-sided power structure can facilitate violent interactions between different political groups, creating structural imbalance. In a one-party dominant system, where power flows in a single direction, the voices of opponents are often suppressed, leading to frustration among marginalized political groups. These suppressed groups may unite against the dominant political interest and present themselves as an alternative force through violence and threats. This paves the way for violent conflicts and unrest in the existing political order. To prevent this situation, the ruling political elites of this country have decided to reconstruct the existing power structure to maintain a balance (Kaviraj, 2010) between the political powers of different political parties in a rational manner. Meaningful political interactions between different political groups can only occur when the structural imbalance of a one-sided power structure is rectified. To promote a more flexible political structure for the protection of broader political interests, rigidity must be discouraged.

**(c) Re-directing Conflicting Group Interests:** To prevent political violence on the eve of elections, rulers attempt to redirect conflicting group interests and divert them. In such cases present political rulers reset their political goals in such a way that the conflicting political interests lose their electoral relevancy. Sometimes to reduce the intensity of conflict, political rulers change the vocabulary of political interaction. They may use political rhetoric and re-construct the role of conflicting groups to meet the demands, emerging from the changing political interests. To overcome hostility a new set of conceptual categories has been introduced in the process of mediation. It may dilute the particularistic issues by bifurcating the needs of conflicting groups. These approaches successfully alleviate tensions stemming from electoral battles, thereby exerting positive control over potential outcomes that may lead to electoral violence.

**(d) Providing a Platform for Open Conversation:** To effectively manage conditions that could potentially lead to electoral violence, an open platform for free discussion is essential. Such a platform facilitates free conversations between different political parties, reducing political tensions among various interest groups (Lioy and Valle, 2019). This helps to mitigate the tendency for conflict between mutually opposed interests and decreases the likelihood of violence spreading on the eve of elections.

**(e) Ensuring a Democratic Environment:** To prevent sporadic outbursts of electoral violence, the rulers of this country strategically rely on fostering a democratic environment. This entails considering how to ensure such an environment can prevail in every remote corner of the country. They believe that a democratic environment provides people with the opportunity to enjoy their rights and power by raising political consciousness among them. This reduces the scope of political violence by integrating individuals into an organized political society (Noris, 2012), where every available space for conversation is utilized. Additionally, the civil society has become strengthened, facilitating connections and interactions between various political interests through a parallel setup that operates beyond the jurisdiction of the government. This helps unite people regardless of their class, caste, gender, region, religion, etc. It motivates people not to partake in electoral games played

with the cards of class, caste, gender, religion, region, etc. Furthermore, it resists the pernicious effects of autocratic rulers, thereby reducing the possibility of electoral violence on the battleground of elections.

**(f) Utilizing Social Media:** Social media is also utilized to protect people from the unprecedented outbreak of electoral violence (N. Narasimhamurthy,2014). Since the platform of social media provides a broad spectrum of interaction in different fields of action—cultural, social, political, economic—free conversation between various conflicting interests takes place. Such conversations highlight the sources of problems that disintegrate people, enabling someone to assess how much potential it has to erupt into violence in the future. In this context, one can suggest possible preventive measures by identifying the missing links that may connect two or more conflicting interests, decreasing tension between them, and utilizing all potential measures to transform them peacefully. Furthermore, through social media, the government can inform people about its policies and actions taken to address their problems. It helps the government collect feedback from the people and devise more effective mechanisms for conflict resolution.

**(g) Introducing E-canvassing:** Present technological developments are prompting governments to be more strategic in utilizing e-initiatives for achieving effective governance. To prevent electoral violence, the present government intends to connect with all sections of the population within a short time frame (N. Narasimhamurthy,2014). Digital platforms are being utilized for this purpose. In order to promote political agendas that may mitigate internal rivalries among different political groups, leading political parties resort to e-campaigning. E-campaigning is conducted in various areas, particularly those affected by conflict. A variety of e-communication channels, such as SMS and email services, phone campaigning, and e-meetings, are employed for this purpose. Through such devices, most political parties collect feedback from different conflict-ridden groups, have them inputted into their chat boxes, blend them with their own political interests, and present them in a new form, thus reducing hostility among different groups of people.

**VII. Conclusion:** Electoral violence is an unavoidable circumstance experienced by nearly every country. Though the nature and degree of electoral violence may vary over time and space, its subversive effects wreak havoc on democratic countries worldwide. Escalating violence during elections or in the post-electoral phase disrupts public life, and the increasing fatalities pose a serious crisis to the democratic sustainability of any country. Over time, the severity of electoral violence intensifies, fuelled in part by technological advancements. The growing political complexity changes its dimensions in ways that lead to irreconcilable ends.

In this context, a new connection should be built between person, process, purpose, and place in terms of power, contest, and context. Such a connection might help reveal the original nature of violence and its different aspects, regardless of its various forms. Several variables governing the situation, on the basis of which such connections may develop, must be identified. It's important to note that in every democratic state, multi-linear

dimensions of power may intersect with various interests, potentially reducing the intensity of conflict between different interest groups. Such processes definitely help check the possibility of violent eruptions.

At times, conscious efforts are made to disperse the support base of interests that may serve as breeding grounds for violent outbreaks. To control electoral violence in transitional political situations, the relationships between diverse political actors should be changed in a desirable way so that none of these actors resort to violence to establish their interests over others.

In India, a diverse political spectrum helps its rulers diffuse the connections that may fuel electoral violence. Indian rulers initially resort to hybridization to address the problem of electoral violence. They mix up more groups of interest in order to promote a unified one with all potential power to dilute reactionary interests. According to them it might have a positive impact in checking the imbalances causing the emergence of electoral violence.

Present political leaders of Indian democracy might depend more on the forces of checks and balances. To remove discrimination based on caste, class, religion, region, and gender, which may cause electoral violence, a new policy of checks and balances has been introduced. In this policy, those interests that have been highly neglected for the past few decades are taken into account. In order to address imbalances between various groups in terms of power and resources, present rulers try to check the concentration of power in the hands of a few group members and promote those interests that have still been excluded from the ambit of power. Such initiatives may reduce the chances of violent conflict arising from the causes of deprivation on the eve of elections.

Though there has always been a chance of violent outbreaks, which may be instigated by dominant elite groups who never agree to transfer power in favour of excluded groups. To prevent such deadly warfare, a number of administrative and electoral reforms have taken place. Reservation of seats for women and backward classes in several democratic representative bodies is an example of this. In order to improve participation, present rulers take various initiatives to spread electoral literacy among citizens. Such initiatives curb unrest in the name of caste, class, region, religion, and so on.

To uproot the root causes of electoral violence, the process of social cohesion also becomes effective. However, due to the lack of interconnectedness between social order and political power, such ventures have not been successful. Though political integration has a limited chance to maintain social cohesion, in most cases, such integration comes under the control of political leaders. Under their leadership, politicization of the process of political integrity takes place, which to some extent misleads the main process and disrupts its connection with social cohesion. To link political integrity with social cohesion, rulers of Indian democracy should develop some connecting links that effectively manage to establish a steady relationship between them. Provision of federalism is also taken into consideration to achieve better results, as such provisions guarantee the limited exercise of power which will definitely check the imbalances responsible for electoral violence.

Lastly, electoral violence is not a cause but the result of the ruination of the present democratic polity. Effective management from the part of government can reduce it. As long as the health of democracy is protected, no violent incident can disrupt its path.

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