

POLITICS AS “POPULAR CULTURE” & ITS DIGITAL MANIFESTATION: AN INDIAN STATE ELECTION & A FEW TWITTER #HASHTAG TRENDS

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Abstract

Within the dilemma and debate over popular culture and the shift in perspective between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries when “popular” meant being seen from the point of view of people rather than from those seeking favour or power over them (Strinati, 1995), this paper intends to use both ‘culture industry’ of Adorno and Hall’s approach to understand the popular culture in the context of Indian politics. With the notion of making a phenomenon “popular”, mass media contributes its share not only for creating consent but, also at points accommodating dissent within the framework of popular culture. Hence, politics, as a process and phenomena, has been able to enter the mainstream societal discourse as popular culture, and different forms of media have further facilitated the notion of “popular” within the politics of consent vs. dissent.

Keywords: *twitter, popular culture, media, politics, Bihar, India, Hashtag.*

1. INTRODUCTION

While establishing the idea of politics as a popular culture, it is pertinent to comprehend the term popular culture theoretically and practically. Metamorphosing the term, the word “popular” can be understood and explained in multiple ways. Ranging from the daily use of the word “popular” to its sociological, anthropological and communication explanations, everything in life is defined in terms of the relativists’ approach of “popular”. In fact, essential questions or happenings like what we eat, where we live, what we do, what we study, which job we are doing to who we are, the word “popular” exists in our day to day lives and has more meanings than its theoretical explanations. There might be different connotations of the word, positive and negative, but one cannot condone the fact that every human act is trapped between the ideas of popular vs. unpopular. However, multiple

interpretations of popular vs. unpopular do not necessarily convey that all unpopular acts or degrees of unpopularity have negative connotations. Likewise, while being popular, at times, is considered as mass acceptance; not being in the trap of popularity might be taken as niche, rare or something not socially acceptable.

Practically, a layman’s explanations of the word “popular” seem to be much positivist in notion and that being within the operative spheres of popularity can be considered as conformist. Therefore, it is obvious now that the idea and acceptance of the notion of “popular” is always seen in the ‘positivists’ paradigm’ with the functionalistic approach to social existence.

Nevertheless, within every function and functional prerequisites (Parsons) of society, there always exists an inherent power structure, that not only defines the existence of the functional pre-requisites but, also decides the functioning of those pre-requisites. The power structure in question is the key for us to explain the notion of popular in the idea of “popular culture”. Popular culture, unlike the word popular, has varied meanings and deep connotations in the paradigm of structuration of power. Anything that is considered as a popular culture goes beyond the simple explanation of a phenomena accepted by the mass or being practiced by a certain segment of population. The term has drawn multiple attentions from different schools of thoughts and theories ranging from the functionalists or positivists’ paradigm to Marxism & political economy approaches to the idea of culture industry & Frankfurt school.

This paper will mostly use the Frankfurt School & Culture Industry and Marxism & Political-economic approach to explain

“popular culture” and study the same in the context of politics as popular culture in the framework of new media in India today. While defining popular culture, there have been debates on drawing popular culture parallel with high culture or mass culture. However, various literatures suggest the distinction between high or learned culture, mass culture & popular culture and bring-forth the question of distinctiveness of popular culture in the context of any social order.

If we attempt to examine the notion of popular culture historically, two major contrasting implications associated with it between eighteenth centuries and nineteenth centuries have been clearly noted by Williams (1976). Firstly, popular meant ‘being seen from the point of the people rather than from those seeking favour or power over them. However, the contrasting approach, according to Williams says, that popular culture was not identified by the people but by others. It also carried two older senses: inferior kind of work (such as popular literature, popular press as distinguished from quality press), and the works that deliberately wins favour (popular journalism as distinguished from democratic journalism or popular entertainment) and are liked by many people. Lastly, the most recent sense of popular culture, which is made by the people for themselves and is essentially different from the ones mentioned before. “It is often displaced to the past as folk culture but it is also an important modern emphasis” (Williams 1976:199 as cited in Strinati, 2004).

2. MAJOR CONCERNS OF POPULAR CULTURE

As rightly observed and described by (Strinati, 2004) there are three major themes emerging from the above discussed ideas about “popular” and “popular culture” and how the idea of “popular culture” is being percolated within society with multiple interpretations.

‘The first concern, what or who determines the popular culture. Where does popular culture come from? Does this emerge from the people themselves as an autonomous expression of their interests and

modes of experience, or is it imposed from above by those in position of power as a type of social control? Does popular culture rise up from the people ‘below’, or does it sink down from elites ‘on high’, or is it rather a question of an interaction between the two? The second concern is regarding the influence of commercialization and industrialization upon popular culture. And the third concern is the ideological role of popular culture. Is popular culture there to indoctrinate people to get them to accept and adhere to the ideas and values which ensure the continued dominance of those in more privileged position who thus exercise power over them? Or is it about rebellion and opposition to the prevailing social order? (Strinati, 2004, Pp 2-3)’

While these are some of the key questions and concerns raised for the prevalent notion of popular culture, the idea of mass culture can be determined approaching the industrial manifestation of mass production marketed for profit to mass consumers. In this case, neither the mass consumer nor the mass culture remains in the discourses of popular culture, which is actually a social manifestation.

3. THEORETICAL EXPLANATION OF POPULAR CULTURE

Though multiple theories have attempted to explain the notion of popular culture, we endeavor to understand popular culture in two major theoretical lenses. First is the Marxism & Political-Economic framework and second is the Culture Industry & Frankfurt School.

a) Marxism and Political-Economy of “popular culture”

The idea of Marxism & Political Economy of popular culture involves the Marxian ideology associated with the works of Althusser and the concept of hegemony derived from the works of Gramsci. To start with the Marxian ideas of ideology which in turn led to the explanation of popular culture stemmed from the major theory of commodity fetishism, Marx argues that the dominant ideas in any society are drawn up, distributed and imposed by the ruling class to secure and perpetuate its rule (Strinati, 2004). In the earlier discussion, Marx had argued that (1932), “the ideas of ruling class are, in every age,

the ruling ideas: i.e. the class, which is dominating material forces in society and at the same time, dominates the intellectual force". The dominant material & intellectual force creates the supremacy of its own which not only is followed by the common people of the society but also in turn becomes a trap for the mass. So, popular culture is nothing but the predominant ideas of the ruling class, which is being produced and spread by the ruling class or its intellectual representatives, and they dominate the consciousness and actions of those who are outside the ruling class. The ruling class constructs and circulates ideas which secure its power because they dominate the minds of the working class (Marx, 1932). In this broader theoretical framework, popular culture is not an autonomous or spontaneous activity of the people being accepted by a segment of population over a period of time; rather, it is given to them by the power agencies to continue the influence and domination of power over the mass.

b) Ideology, Althusser and popular culture

Developed on Marxist theories, Althusser (1971) argued that people lose their individuality and become subjects based on the ideological view. This is nothing but the imaginary relationship between individuals to their real conditions of existence. This ideology is circulated by the power agencies in a very covert manner and helps construct people's identity which seems to be a very spontaneous process of adopting any ideological values and identifying their own views in those lines. As a part of popular culture, we have accepted certain facts and phenomena of life as our own, but as stated above, Althusser argues that these are covertly given to us to not only influence our decision making process but also making us own our decision making process. For him, there are several ideological agencies in society that reinforce our beliefs & values and endorse the notion called popular culture. These include religion, education, mass media and the popular culture itself.

c) Hegemony, Gramsci and popular culture

Based on the Marxian analysis of class and class structure, Gramsci developed the framework of political power. While agreeing to Marxian approach of class which seizes the material power and also the ideological power so that the

control of the society remains in the hands of the ruling class, Gramsci's major argument is that the superstructure maintains the class relationship and that the dominance is executed by the mechanism of the hegemony of the state and of the civil society (Gramsci,). For him, hegemony is nothing but the other face of the power, the face of the domain of consciousness and the reproduction of ideology. The consent of the subordinate class to the domination of the ruling class in terms of accepting the values, culture and life, covertly or overtly, has manifested into multiple types of popular culture.

d) Culture industry, Frankfurt school and popular culture

For the pioneers of the Frankfurt school and Adorno, Community Fetishism is a theory of how cultural forms can secure the continuing social, political, economic and ideological domination of capitalism (Striniti, 2004, 50). By defining the concept of 'culture industry', he has clearly distinguished the same from the mass culture. As masses bear some responsibility for the culture they consume; in case of mass culture, this is only determined by the preference of the masses. However, in case of culture industry, culture is only imposed upon the masses and prepares them to welcome it without realizing the imposition (Adorno). By highlighting the example of music and role of mass media, Frankfurt school's attempt is to maintain a distinction between false and true needs. By false need, they mean by all popular cultural products of capitalism through the mass media are imposed upon the mass and met by the culture industry. However, true or real needs for freedom, happiness and utopia are suppressed by culture industry. Though this has been criticized by many but, the contribution of mass media for mass production of cultural goods, including various human needs represents the popular culture manifested in different societies.

4. MASS MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE

Through the process of cultural industry or otherwise, mass media has played a crucial role not only in recognizing but also creating the

notion of popular culture at different points of time. Like the mass production of goods in the factory, cultural goods have been produced through the culture industry leading to the manufacturing of popular culture in society. The popular culture of culture industry leads to the passivity in the mass society as these phenomena are well accepted and practiced by the members of the society. As Adorno argues, consumption of easy pleasure of popular culture provided by the mass media makes people docile and obedient to the existing power structure of capitalism.

a) Digital manifestation of popular culture and social media

Taking further the argument of mass media production of popular culture, social media has given a new perspective to the mass as well as the producers of culture industry. This is the medium where agencies of power always remain invisible and the notion of empowerment prevails among the consumers of mass media. When traditional forms of mass media overtly contribute for the building of popular culture, the new forms of mass media (social media), covertly contribute for a new form of popular culture. Unlike the older form of popular culture of Adorno, where the mass media was always seen as the representative of the agencies of power and mass was considered as a docile audience, the new social media is more deceptive in nature. In case of social media, a notional agency of power is given to the mass audience which drives them to participate and contribute in the making of popular culture. Here audience becomes the willing victim of the agencies of power, where they not only become the part of the popular culture but also contribute for the making of the same. Social media covertly shapes the new popular culture through its digital manifestation.

b) Politics as popular culture

The duality, whether popular culture is a spontaneous activity born out of the mass practices or a process given to masses, holds true in case of the new age digital media and creation of new popular culture. This work as a two edged sword, where the mass feels empowered and contributes to the new mass media in the process of making the popular culture which is further

shaped by the agencies of power. To justify the argument, this paper has attempted to consider politics as new form of popular culture in the age of social media. In a democracy like India, politics is not only a process but also consolidation of multiple events, integral to citizens' lives. Everyone wants to participate and be heard to contribute in the political process. This process was previously constrained by the traditional form of media, where communication was mostly linear and one sided. Citizens' participation was limited to offline discussion forums constrained by limited space and time. However, the offline political discussion and participation used to get shaped by the traditional forms of mass media, which are more overt in nature. With the emergence of the new social media, citizens' participation has gone through a drastic shift. These social media forums have not only given them a space to express their opinions but, also presented them an active agency to participate in the new form of popular culture. Making of popular culture in new media always gets extended from the physical space of media discourses and actively ensures its presence in the online space. Likewise, politics as the popular culture in online discourse seeks its basic formation in the physical space and extends to the virtual space where multiple types of popular culture of physical space engage with each other on certain physical events or activities.

5. PRESENT STUDY

The debate over "popular" and "culture", has always led to the subjective explanation of individual and social practices. However, the question w.r.t. "popular for whom, by whom and of whom", has always remained wavering in between the triangulation of structure, power and capital be it through the traditional presentation or online social media forums. This may be the reason why, as Hall (1981) has rightly said, the study of popular culture oscillates widely between the two alternative poles of the dialectic- containment and resistance. Within the dilemma and debate over popular culture, and shift in perspectives between eighteenth and nineteenth century where "popular" meant being seen from the point of view of the

people rather than from those seeking favour or power over them (Striniti, 1995), this paper intends to use both 'culture industry' of Adorno and Hall's approach to understand popular culture in the context of Indian politics. With the notion of making a phenomenon "popular", mass media contributes its share not only for creating consent but, also at points accommodating dissent within the framework of popular culture. Hence, politics, as a process and phenomena, has been able to enter the mainstream societal discourse as a popular culture and different forms of media have further facilitated the notion of "popular" within the politics of consent & dissent.

6. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Within the broader framework of politics as popular culture, this paper is an attempt to answer the key question under one broader objective:

- » To explore the digital manifestation of popular culture in the context of politics and Indian state election

7. RESEARCH QUESTION

This paper is an attempt to answer the key question of:

- » How politics as a popular culture manifests in digital space while accommodating consent and dissent or multiple forms of popular culture?

8. RESEARCH UNIVERSE

To answer the question, Bihar¹ state-elections² (2015) in India have been selected to explore as to how politics as a popular culture has manifested through the trending tweets with popular hashtags. Three major hashtags namely, #BiharResults, #BiharVerdict and #Bihar Polls have been selected for the analysis of politics as popular culture during an important state election. All the tweets hash-tagged under #BiharResults #BiharVerdict #BiharPolls on the day of result declaration (08/11/2015) have been manually collected for the purpose of analysis.

a) Method of data analysis

As a method of data analysis, sociological discourse analysis is adopted to analyze all the hash-tagged tweets within the above mentioned framework. Firstly, the textual analysis of politics as popular culture has been done to characterize the nature of popular culture; secondly, contextual analysis has been done to understand politics as popular culture as a singular discourse and finally, to address the question raised through the paper, a sociological thematic analysis of the selected tweets has been done to understand the digital media manifestation of politics as popular culture between the containment and resistance. For the purpose of the study, a thematic discourse analysis has also been conducted with all the collected data. The data is divided under four broader themes or four different forms of popular culture present in today's political space of India: namely 'mainstream narrative' (which defined by the country's major political narrative), 'state narrative' (defined by political narrative of the previous government of the state), 'consent narrative' (defined by accepting the election verdict as people's mandate for effective governance) and 'dissent narrative' (broadly defined as sharp criticism of the election result and attempt to prove anything against the mainstream political popular culture as threat to nation).

9. ELECTION AS THE MASTER EVENT OF 'DEMOCRACY'

As the paper has attempted to understand politics as popular culture through social media participation, a state election (province election of a federal state) has been selected to study the nature of popular culture. Politics, as we know, is a major issue for debates and discussion across all strata of citizens in Indian democracy and everyone also takes a conscious effort to participate in the process of election. Although earlier, these discussions and participation used to be prevalent in physical space but with the increasing penetration of social media mostly in urban space, this has increasingly becoming a phenomenon to participate in the master event

of democracy through the online presence. However, through the paper we are arguing that this natural shift has not only strengthened the nature of politics as popular culture in physical space but, multiple type of popular culture are also getting directly engaged to anchor the macro objective of politics as 'culture industry' represented through the popular culture of society.

10. CONTEXTUAL DISCOURSE OF BIHAR POLITICS

Bihar is a state (province) under the federal government of India with its own legislative assembly. The members of its legislative assembly are directly elected by the citizens of the states in every five years to form the government of the state headed by the Chief Minister along with other ministers. However, the state election which happened recently during October-November 2015 holds a special position in India's new political narrative which broadly comes from the present political party in power (Bharatiya Janata Party) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Post the central election of 2014, India has witnessed a new wave of politics wherein a new form of popular culture has emerged. This form of popular culture in India is now being considered as the only alternative form of politics required for the growth and development of the country and is driven by social media, which is covert in nature. And, who all criticizes the present form of politics is seen as anti-nationals and any dissent to the present government is systematically rejected by the so-called progressive active citizens both in physical and virtual space. This is in fact a classic example for the political-economic framework of Althusser and Gramsci where both the ruling class and intellectual mass come together to form a new ideology of political popular culture of India.

Post 2014 central election, the ruling political party has been winning election in different states of the country, barring the few. This has also been re-endorsing the mainstream political culture and re-affirming the present leadership. In this context, Bihar state election becomes more important as it was perceived as an election

which was a contest between state (province) level leadership vs. the central leadership, gearing the online social media discussion on politics as popular culture. To explore the presence of multiple political popular cultures, twitter hashtag tweets were analyzed, which were collected on the day of Bihar election result declaration and were directly related to the Bihar Election result.

11. ANALYSIS OF DATA

As discussed in the methods of data analysis, by adopting the sociological discourse analysis post textual analysis, the tweets were divided into four major discourses in the social media platform namely 'mainstream narrative', 'state narrative', 'consent narrative' and 'dissent narrative'. These narratives correspond to the four major forms of popular culture present throughout the Bihar election process.

a) *Mainstream narrative*

The narrative majorly defined by the country's major political narrative rejects all other existing political narratives. It majorly represents the dominant political ideology coming from the physical space politics of popular culture which is not only an extension of a popular culture formed through the traditional mass media but is also reinforced and strengthened in the social media. For example-

"And good luck to @BJP4India as #Biharresults coming out today.may the saffron flag fly high!!"

"Off on holiday... no connectivity in another 2 hours time. #Biharresults had better show solid early trends. #AbKiBaarModiKiBihar"

"@PrannoyRoyNDTV on #Biharresults: Trend is consistent now, BJP ahead, it will form next government at this rate. <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/live-updates-bihar-election-counting-results-2015-1212337> ..."

"#Bihar results: BJP surges ahead. Latest leads show BJP-led alliance ahead in 34 seats, JDU+RJD+ ahead in 18"

Above mention tweets are coming from the conformists of the 'mainstream narratives' in the early hours of the day of election result count. Most of the tweets are not only "hopeful" but

also full of expectations that the physical space popular culture of politics is going to be confirmed by the state election results. However, as the day proceeds, the election result started showing a different trend, which goes against the mainstream narrative and the tweet manifestations also started changing:

"If **#BJP** wins today in **#Bihar**..its real shame on **@ibnlive** news to show wrong projections on poll **results**.. will get to know in sometime"

"BJP losing due 2 less number of Rahul Gandhi rallies **#Bihar** results"

"Respect **@narendramodiji**, **@AmitShahji**, and all the volunteers, who worked tirelessly for **#Bihar** elections irrespective of the **results**."

"Ruling **#BJP** has conceded defeat in **#Bihar**. Some in Pakistan need to learn a bit from India on accepting electoral **verdicts** & not cry 'rigging'"

When the result started revealing a different story, which is against the mainstream narrative, all the tweets either started defending the popular culture of mainstream narrative or projected the same as a progressive narrative of accepting the failure. Though failure was on the plate of mainstream narrative but, the strong popular culture of mainstream narrative was strengthened by the mass supporters in different tweets.

b) State narrative

This narrative is broadly drawn from the popular culture of politics of the state concerned. This narrative started with a fear of the mainstream narrative but, emerged as one of the strong alternatives of the popular culture of politics during the state election. For example:

"**#Biharresults**.Nitish- We will respect the opposition, Modi- I will vanish the opposition. **@LambaAlka** **@ArvindKejriwal****@SanjayAzadSln**"

"**#BiharVerdict** | Under the able leadership of **@NitishKumar**, we will guide **#Bihar** to development as promised in **polls**: **@laluprasadrjd**"

"Nice to wake up to this: Live: **#Biharpolls** - Grand Alliance set to win Bihar battle [http://](http://www.thehindu.com/elections/bihar2015/article7856397.ece...)

[www.thehindu.com/elections/bihar2015/article7856397.ece ...](http://www.thehindu.com/elections/bihar2015/article7856397.ece...)"

"**#Bihar** exit **polls** prove wrong media pundits who handed win to Nitish-led alliance after only two phases [http://www.firstpost.com/politics/bihar-exit-polls-prove-wrong-media-pundits-who-handed-win-to-nitish-led-alliance-after-only-two-phases-2498770.html ...](http://www.firstpost.com/politics/bihar-exit-polls-prove-wrong-media-pundits-who-handed-win-to-nitish-led-alliance-after-only-two-phases-2498770.html...)"

All these above mentioned tweets reinforce the state narrative of the popular culture of politics during the Bihar election. When the result started showing more favourable conditions for the state leadership, the state narrative started proving wrong to the mainstream narrative through the tweet engagements. For example:

"Modi ji**#bihar**&**#Delhi** results are a clear mandate,u take care of nation,fulfill ur commitments as a PM,don't waste ur time on state **polls**!"

"It is sad that the **@BJP4India**, on a day it loses **#Bihar**, is finding solace that it did well in **#Kerala** civic **polls** (1/2) **#BiharResults**"

"Paradoxes of **@BJP4India** - claims to have largest membership in world lost two successive **polls** in urban & rural India in one year **#Bihar**"

"Disheartened **#BJP** workers left in tears following massive debacle in **#Biharpolls** <http://indiasamvad.co.in/Bihar-Election/Disheartened-BJP-workers-left-in-tears-following-massive-debacle-in-Biharpolls-8267>"

All above tweet narratives speak about the strengthening identity of the popular culture of politics for the state narrative while rejecting the mainstream narrative of the popular culture.

c) Consent narrative

This is one form of popular culture where not only people directly concerned or shown interest to the Bihar election extend their argument to virtual space, but the mass audience also support and applaud the victory of the state leadership and praise the governance of state leadership reflected through the election. For example:

“Congrats to the people of #Bihar#Selife Vs #Self_respectSelf respect won #2015 #Polls#Bjp#Rjd#jdu#Congress@NitishKumar”

“#Biharresults pave way for a national change in politics say Nitish and Lalu#NitishReturns@NitishKumar [http://www.nagpurtoday.in/bihar-results-pave-way-for-a-national-change-in-politics-say-nitish-and-lalu/11081810 ...](http://www.nagpurtoday.in/bihar-results-pave-way-for-a-national-change-in-politics-say-nitish-and-lalu/11081810...)”

“The #Biharresults are gratifying because the rabbleroxing of #Modi&Shah is tragic for the idea of India.”

“@ndtv India has no space for communal politics. #Biharresults has showing intolerance not acceptable@narendramodi@AmitShah”

All above expressions manifested through the tweets are not only accepting the Bihar Election result but also appreciating the way mainstream narrative being rejected on multiple concerns raised by parallel popular culture of politics existing in the democracy of India.

d) Dissent narrative

This is a form of popular culture where those who are not able to accept people’s verdict on Bihar state election try to manifest their anger in the online social platform. They are mostly conformists of mainstream narratives but may not have directly participated in Bihar election process. This is a form of popular culture, which is a threat to the democratic value of the country as corresponding to the same narrative in physical space (those who are most of the time engaged in physical violence and anger), the virtual space also witness their dissent narrative. For example:

“#Bihar results is a blessing in disguise. Ppl who had forgotten Lalu jungle rule will now C it again in full flow. Thy’llrealise mistake soon”

“#Biharresults proves itself that corruption is in the DNA of Indians. Welcome Jungle Raj. #NitishHattrick@TimesNow@ndtv”

“#Bihar election results: Why Nitishould be aware of the fragility of his victory #jobs#money#work #: There... <http://bit.ly/1HmW7hl>”

“#Bihar#results: Bad for Bihar, good for India. Good for @BJP4India, bad for @RSS org#NitishDefeatsModi#NitishHattrick”

Through these tweet expressions, the dissent narrative also rejects the election verdict. This is essentially derived from the mainstream narrative of popular culture of politics.

12. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Through the major four discourses emerged from the collected tweets of the Bihar Election, the paper talks about the extension of the physical space popular culture of politics. However, the major difference is the rise of new social media which is building a new form of ‘culture industry’, where mass consumption of popular culture of politics happens but, without making the audience or mass docile. Although, alternative forms of popular culture come into existence, entering into different forms of engagement, though at times, becomes dirty in terms of usage of abusive words etc. But, that’s how the anger and physical violence get replaced by the virtual dissent.

The paper concluded by answering the major questions being raised on how politics as a popular culture manifests in digital space while accommodating consent and dissent or multiple forms of popular culture? In this particular instance of Bihar state election, new social media offers an alternative space to consolidate the physical space popular culture of politics, where not only one narrative of popular culture but four different narratives simultaneously exist and the identity of the members of those popular culture get strengthened through these engagements. Finally the paper also found that through a slow process of integration, these type of social media virtual forums provide an alternative to ‘popular cultures’ existing in physical space to broaden their scope by going beyond the defined physical space of the popular culture and endorse the value of the agencies of power at the top, which once again brings the docile mass audience by making them willing victims of the structural power agency.

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Endnotes

1. Bihar is a state in East India. It is the 13th largest state, with an area of 94,163 km² and the 3rd largest by population.
2. Part XI(11) of the Indian constitution defines the power distribution between the federal government (the Centre) and the States in India. State elections in India are the elections in which the Indian electorate chooses the members of the Vidhan Sabha (or Legislative/State Assembly). They are held every 5 years and the members of the legislative assembly are called MLA. Recent Bihar election happened in the month of October and November 2015 and result declared on 8th November 2015.