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POST ELECTION VIOLENCE

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INTRODUCTION :

*“Violence is the last Refuge of the Incompetent – Issac Asimov”*¹ This Quote by Issac Asimov sums up the idea of my blog . This particular subject has got the much needed attention from past few years. The election system was established to ensure the democracy in the country , but the post election violence sometimes raises the question ‘ Do we really need an election?’. The reason being the resources, money and efforts made by everybody and the promises made by candidates ,takes back seat after the wave of post election violence. Can it be called blind rage ? , can we try to minimize the impact of post election violence ? What are the steps we can take to minimize the loss , and maximize the calm post election environment .

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE Post Election Violence is not a new concept . The first recorded incident of Post-Election Violence was The Late Roman Republic in 100 BCE during the consular election 99 BCE. Gaius Servilius Glaucia ran for the consul & when his defeat became clear, his armed supporter openly assassinated his successful rival Antonius Orator and launched violent street purges. This forced Senate to issue final decree to suppress the post election violence . Between 1832 to 1914 the Election in United Kingdoms were violent because of the oral & open voting system. For example 15000 people riot in Barnsley in 1868. During the same period United States also faced some instance of post election violence like New Orleans Election Riot .

The first post election incident in India occurred in second general election in 1951-1952. But the one that changed the voting process was in 1957 Rachiyahi village in district of Bihar . The initial reason for the post election violence was ideological , the rise

¹ Issac Asimov Russian -American Author

muscle power. The parties started hiring local goons for the post poll retaliatory violence. After that the reasons and the ways of the post election violence were evolved.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND POST ELECTION VIOLENCE? :

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power... against oneself, another person, or a group, that results in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation.² Meaning when someone uses physical force with the intention of causing extensive harm to someone anytime is known as violence. But Post-election violence occurs when political actors use violence to influence the outcome of an election after voting has taken place³. Meaning that the result of the election is the sole reason for the this type of violence . The difference in these two type of violence is the timing and the political reasons. All post-election violence are violence but not all violence is post election violence .

REASON FOR POST ELECTION VIOLENCE : There are various reasons for post election violence. Reasons like Disputed results & lack of trust on Election Commission , identity politics, unemployment and sometimes greed of money and blind trust . the external instigation is also one of the biggest reasons for the post-election violence

electoral violence is: “employed to affect electoral outcomes”⁴. The sole reason for these riots and violence is to change the outcome or affect the outcome of the elections. In election campaigns most of the parties tell people or certain targeted community that they will face injustice ,unfairness, biased if the other party wins which makes people afraid and blind. The quote I quoted in introduction⁵ says that the violence is the outcome or shield of the losing party to hide their incompetence . People blinded by identity politics, greed, unemployment never question the lost party that why did you loose ? . if someone loses the election then the election is rigged . that is what makes the post election violence unreasonable .

WHAT CAN MAKE IT STOP : With the history over centuries there is not a single action which will prevent . There is no absolute surety that the precautionary measures taken by ECI ⁶or by the Parties involved in the election will stop this violence which causes mass

² Definition of violence given by World Health organization.

³ United Nations Development Program

⁴ Haid 2010. Electoral Violence in Comparative Perspective by GIGA

⁵ Quote by Issac Asimov

⁶ Election Commission Of India

casualties and unstable environment in the area . Also to prevent the post election violence parties have to work throughout their campaign like building trust , keeping the counting of votes more transparent etc. for the long term changes parties should try to run their parties on their effective development than targeting certain communities etc.

The ECI gets the authority⁷ to construct and create the law that ensures the justice and protects democracy. The set of rule laid by ECI can be called as Election Law . The RP Act 1951⁸ is directly used by ECI . But the Post Election Violence comes under Criminal Law or BNS⁹ . Crimes like Rioting with deadly weapons¹⁰ , Attempt to Murder¹¹ , Voluntarily causing harm¹² , Voluntarily causing hurt by weapons & Mischief Causing damages¹³ these are the punishable offence under the BNS ranging the punishment from 1year to 5 years in jail and penalties and fines upto Rs. 20,000/-

CONCLUSION : The post Election violence is violence which targets particular people causing them great harm which disrupts the peace of society, creates havoc, causes people to lose their life their future because of the simple incompetence of the people who cant accept their loss and shift in the change of powers this is very dangerous and it should be stopped and should be acted upon immediately to save the lives of hundreds of innocent people .

⁷ Article 324 of Indian Constitution

⁸ Representation of People Act 1951

⁹ Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023

¹⁰ Section 1991&1992 of BNS

¹¹ Section 109 of BNS

¹² Section 115(1) of BNS

¹³ Section 115(2) & Section 324 of BNS