

**PARTY SYSTEM AND ELECTORAL POLITICS IN
RUSSIA, 1991-2012**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled "Party System and Electoral Politics in Russia, 1991-2012" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Chairperson, CRCAS

Prof. Sanjay Kumar Pandey

Supervisor

Dedicated to
My late Dadi

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Shashi Kant Pandey

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------|---|
| AP | Agrarian Party |
| CDP | Constitutional Democratic Party |
| CFC | Central Election Commission |
| CPRF | Communist party of Russian federation |
| CPSU | Communist Party of Soviet Union |
| FA | Federal Assembly |
| FAR | Fatherland-All Russia |
| FC | Federal Council |
| IRGD | Inter Region Group of Deputies |
| JR | Just Russia |
| KANU | Kenya African national Union |
| LDPR | Liberal Democratic Party of Russia |
| NEP | New Economic Policy |
| NRB | New Russian Barometer |
| OHR | Our Home is Russia |
| OP | Octobrist Party |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| PR | Proportional Representation |
| RCP | Russian Communist Party |
| RF | Russian Federation |
| RPRF | Republication Party of Russian Federation |

| | |
|-------|--|
| RSDLP | Russian Social Democratic Labour Party |
| RSFSR | Russian Socialist Federation of Soviet Republics |
| RUH | Russian Unity and Harmony |
| SMD | Single Member District |
| STV | Single Transferable Vote |
| UP | Unity Party |
| UR | United Russia |
| URDP | United Russian Democratic Party |
| URF | Union of Right Forces |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |

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Chapter I

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

INTRODUCTION

Political Parties are central and essential component of democracy. They are important for operating democracy and electoral politics would be incomplete without their role. Elections constitute the process which provides citizens an opportunity to choose their representatives, both those who would form the government and the ones who sit in opposition. Elections are major pillar of democracy that facilitates an inclusive and stable politics.

The political system of Tsarist Russia can be characterized as unrestrained despotism. No representative institution of any kind existed until 1864. In fact until 1905 Political Parties and trade unions were illegal. Hence Political Parties existed only as underground associations. Before 1905, the Tsar was the supreme political authority. The Decembrists were the first in the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia. They wanted to overthrow the monarchy and set up a strong centralized republican government as a necessary means for achieving social reform. At the end of nineteenth century, Marxism began to make impact in Russia.

The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was formed in 1898 with the aim of uniting the diverse revolutionary groups and organizations into one unified party. In 1903 the Party split into two groups the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. Vladimir Lenin and Julius Martov were two main leaders of the party. The collapse of all authority in March 1917 contained within it the seeds of future development. It was followed by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution based on Marxism- Leninism. In 1918, Bolsheviks came into being as Russian Communist Party and in 1920 the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine joined the RCP. Later the party was renamed as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1952.

The organizational structure of the Communist Party of Soviet Union was based on the principle of 'Democratic Centralism' that was discussed by Lenin in his book 'What is to be Done?' (1902). In the subsequent decades things were not smooth for Soviet Union. It faced many challenges in the emerging national and international arena. Under the new General Secretary of

central committee Mikhail Gorbachev Soviet system faced challenges which forced him to go for reform programme in the party and the state. Soviet Union had become economically fragile. Mikhail Gorbachev's reform programme became famous as 'perestroika' (restructuring) an economic reform and 'glasnost' (openness) denotes transparency in government (Gorbachev 1987:12). Gorbachev's politics, intended merely as internal reform of the centralized government of the union, triggered a process whereby many of the constituent republics asserted political independence and eventually general elections in these republics produced elected regional leaders who could challenge Moscow's authority. Boris Yeltsin was elected president of the largest of the constituent republic Russia.

After the Soviet dissolution Russia emerged as the successor. After seventy three years of one party rule, it is really difficult to establish a smoothly functioning multi-party system. In 1990 an amendment to article six of the Soviet constitution ended the dominant position of communist party of Soviet Union in all walks of Soviet life. In 1993 with the adoption of new constitution multiparty system was accepted and elections were declared a method through which people can express their wishes. The new constitution adopted a model whereby the Russian Federation elected by popular vote a head of state the president, for a maximum of two four year terms, and since 2008 for a maximum of two six year terms. The new constitution guaranteed broad powers to the President and a much diminished role for the legislature.

The president nominates the Prime Minister and appoints of key officials. The right to veto state Duma legislation is granted to the President and in extreme circumstances he has the right to dissolve it (article 109), if the President's nomination for the post of Prime Minister is rejected thrice by the Duma then it is deemed to have been dissolved. The President has a direct control over the power ministers, security, defence, home and foreign affairs. And a bicameral legislature, called the Federal Assembly (*Federalnoye Sobraniye*). The State Duma (*Gosudarstvennaya Duma*), the lower house, has 450 members. From 1993 - 2008 it was elected for four years' term, since 2008 it has a five years' term. All the members were elected by proportional representation. The Federation Council (*Sovyet Federatsii*) has 166 members: two delegates assigned for each republic and region.

Since the fall of the USSR, between 1993 and 1999, the Communist party of Russian Federation (CPRF) was the only party which had a nationwide existence, ideological affiliation and clear programme. The ideological evolution of the CPRF after 1994 marked a shift from orthodox Marxism towards socialist democracy and partial nationalism. CPRF received 11.6, 22.3 and 24.3% of votes in respectively 1993, 1995 and 1999 Duma elections. Another significant party Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) is known as the leading nationalist party. It was formed in 1991 with the avowed goal of popular mobilization through the articulation of ultra-nationalist ideology.

LDPR received 21.4, 11.2 and 6% of votes in 1993, 1995 and 1999 Duma elections respectively. The strength of LDPR has declined considerably. Yabloko party is led by economist Grigori Yavlinsky who has a commitment to economic reform. In the 1993, 1995 and 1999 Duma elections party received 7.3, 6.9 and 5.9% of votes respectively. Woman of Russia party is based on the soviet era Committee of Soviet Woman. Its programme points out ‘without women there is no democracy’, in the first three Duma elections party received 7.6, 4.6 and 2.0% votes respectively. Unity Party can be placed under the category of political right. Party believes in a free society. It participated in 1999 Duma election and got 23.3% vote. Fatherland-All Russia Party came to the scene just before the 1999 Duma election, and has been described as ‘ad-hoc’ party. It favoured a ‘society oriented market economy’, and received 13.3% vote in 1999 Duma election.

The United Russia is seen as a conservative political party and also as the largest party in the country since 1999. In December 2001 through a merger of the Unity and Fatherland-All Russia parties the United Russia Party was founded. This party is self identified as the “Russian Conservative” Party and it is associated with the President Vladimir Putin. From the very beginning United Russia has been the dominant political party in Russia. Four parties which passed the 5% threshold in 2003 Duma elections were: United Russia with 37.5% of the vote, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation with 12.6%, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia with 11.45% and Rodin with 9%. United Russia won Duma State election of December

2007 with 64.3% of votes, which equalled 315 seats in the State Duma. Other parties to pass the 5% threshold and win seats in the State Duma were: The Communist Party of the Russian Federation, which won 11.57% of the vote and 57 seats, The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, which won 8.14% of the vote and 40 seats; and Fair Russia, which won 7.74% of the vote and 38 seats. United Russia again won Duma Elections in December 2011 with 49.32% of the vote, which equalled 238 seats in the State Duma. Other parties results were: The Communist Party of the Russian Federation won 19.19% of the vote and 92 seats, A just Russia won 13.24 % of the vote and 64 seats and LDPR won 11.67% of the vote and 56 seats.

Since his election in the year 2000 Putin has emerged as charismatic leader in Russian politics and an undisputed leader of the United Russia Party. There have been other leaders in the past such as Lenin, Stalin, Gorbachev and Yeltsin kind who had varying degrees of popular appeal and some may be considered as heroic personality. However Putin phenomenon differs markedly from its Soviet predecessors, because it does not exist primarily as a result of official coercion. Notwithstanding the fact that under Putin, Russian state has progressively restricted the freedom of press, rights of assembly and prerogatives of NGOs, it does not possess the kind of control over the lives of individual citizens that typified late soviet society. Putin represents that nostalgia of Russian people who aspires for a strong Russia of the past and a future great Russia. This clearly shows how personalities in the recent years are more important in winning election than party labels or programmes. Moreover the electoral system has been manipulated by Russia's leaders to ensure maintenance of the status quo. The proposed study would focus on the development of the electoral system in Russia, with particular emphasis on the Political Parties from 1991 to 2012. It is an attempt to examine the prospects of democracy and parliamentary system in Russia.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

While political system of Russia was in transition phase wide variety of scholarly work has been produced around the world over on the process and nature of the transition. The present study seeks to look at three major themes of literature, firstly the theoretical part focusing on political

parties and electoral politics, secondly, political parties and party system in Russia and lastly the literature analysing the electoral politics in Russia.

Political Parties and Electoral politics:

Political Parties are most important for democratic societies. They constitute one of the basic elements of democratic institutional apparatus. Political Parties are essential for the effective working of modern democratic states. Duverger (1972) defined parties as having “their primary goal the conquest of power or a share in its exercise” and drawing “their support from a broad base in contrast to pressure groups which represent a limited number with a particular or private interest”. Elections constitute the process which provides citizens an opportunity to choose their representative.

Political parties in a democratic system should have three important characteristics according to Sartori (1976) firstly, within the broad spectrum of ideological unity it tolerates permits and accepts the existence of groups as parts of the whole; secondly, all political parties accept each other as competing parties in the struggle for power, together they constitute the party system, thirdly, each political party stands committed to uphold the interests of the whole community i.e. the national interests, and it is because of this feature that the party system works as a shared field of activity. But political parties are also sectional i.e. they have different mass bases and ideologies. Some may represent particular region, ethnic groups or social groups. Their perceptions of national interest also differ. As such partnership, separation, participation in decision making, unity in diversity and national interests are common characteristics of all the parties.

In the last few decades the question of intra party democracy has become quite important especially in liberal democracies. In this context Ostrogorski (1902) argued that the development of political parties reduces role of citizens in the state’s affairs and the representation of individuals interest had lost out to the growing influence of the party machine and control exerted by a caucus of senior party figures. Another work on the internal party democracy is by Michel (1911) in the form of the ‘iron law of oligarchy’ or as he puts it ‘he who says

organization says oligarchy'. For Michel this explains the inevitable failure of democratic socialism and indeed exploded the myth of political democracy.

The emergence of political parties in the modern world is closely linked to the rise of constitutionalism and representative government. Parties today are found under almost all forms of government, in socialist and third world states as well as advanced liberal democracies, but their origin are essentially western. La Palombara and Weiner (1966) explain wherever the political party emerged it appears to perform some common function in a wide variety of political system at various stage of social, political and economic development. These functions are primarily representation, elite formation and recruitment, goal formation, interest articulation, aggregation, socialization and mobilization.

According to Duverger (1972) the functioning of political parties involves the role of several 'inner circles' that may be termed caucuses, cells, branches, militia etc, it is their meaningful role that enables us to distinguish between democratic, fascist and communist variants of political party. He is of the view that a political party is not a community but a collection of communities, a union of small groups, dispersed throughout the country and linked by co-ordinate institution. He talks about the two types of parties, cadre parties and mass parties; the Communist Party of Soviet Union, the Nazi Party in Germany, the Chinese Communist Party were cadre parties and a mass party is one that believes in the principle of election to get popular legitimacy. Kirchheimer (1966) talked about catch-all parties. The best example of catch all parties is in the USA in the form of The Republicans and Democrats. Another way of defining parties' types is on the basis of their ideological orientation.

Political parties carry out a wide range of functions and also handle the complex interrelationships between and among parties which are crucial in structuring the way political system works in practice. This network of relationship is called a party system. The historical development of party system was considered in an essay by Lipset and Rokken (1967). Their

basic approach was to identify the major changes in western societies which created enduring political division and then provided a framework within which parties could form and develop. The task of establishing a comprehensive typology of party system was undertaken by Sartori (1976) who analyzes party system on the basis of number of parties. He further develops a new theory which is based on the relevance of parties in the political system in terms of formation of government and in particular whether their size gives them the prospect of winning or at least sharing, government power. Sartori calls these bases as “rules for counting” and broadens the criteria of counting of parties on the basis of numbers. Parties can be broadly divided into three categories: one party system, two party system and multi party system.

The one party system is one where political competition between political parties is either non-existent, or is not very effective. The countries committed to certain ideologies such as Marxism or fascism do not allow the existence of any opposition party. In this context Johari (2011) argues that such parties try to absorb all other groups and the political opposition, or in the extreme case suppress all opposition groups which are regarded as counter revolutionary or subversive of regime as forces dividing the national will. When we talk about two party system, there are two competitive parties. None of these is more stable or powerful than the other on a permanent basis. Duverger (1972) argues that the two party system corresponds to the two fold nature of opinion in society.

We can say that the two party systems have two sub categories, i.e. distinct and indistinct. In distinct party system, policies and programme are well defined, example Great Britain. On the other hand in indistinct two party system there are hardly major differences in the policies such as American parties. In this context Dahl (1967) says they have ideological similarity and but conflict on issues. Multi party system exists in those political systems in which the competition for power is between more than two political parties. It is difficult to say anything about the number of parties. In this sort of system coalition politics is also a major feature. In this regard Riker (1962) says that if no party receives the majority of seats, than a number of parties have to form a coalition. India, France, Italy and Switzerland are some of examples of this system.

The central political institution in representative democracies are the electoral systems. Their primary job is to convert votes into seats and structure the choices facing voters. The behaviour of political parties also gets affected by the electoral systems. Emmons, (1993) explains how various political organizations came into being and ultimately coalesce into parties. In regard to elections, the role of these political groups is studied along with the election campaigning and electoral process itself. Norris (1997) analyses numerous type of electoral systems. Electoral systems can be divided into three main categories: Single member majoritarian, proportional representation and mixed system. Mitchell and Gallagher (2005) describe different electoral systems, supporters of the current electoral system and those who are in opposition to it, those who benefit and those who lose, after considering the question of electoral reform and thoroughly reviewing the current debate on it. They highlight the electoral systems that work well and those which do not. These are the issues that were relevant to the normative debates around the electoral systems.

Political parties and Party system in Russia:

There is a need to study the historical background of Russian politics to understand the evolution and development of politics and electoral politics in Russia. There was a large increase in the size of the urban working and bourgeoisie class due to Russia's industrial development in the 1890's, this gave rise to a dynamic political atmosphere and the development of the parties. In this context Fainsod (1969) maintains that the nobility and the wealthy bourgeoisie were too afraid to take a stance in the political scene, therefore working class and peasants were the first to establish political parties. There were frequent strikes and agrarian disorders due to factors such as high taxes, land hunger, abysmal living and working conditions. In 1883 the "Father of Russian Marxism", George Plekhanov founded the first Russian Marxist Group. Revolutionary activities gained momentum as the discontent against the Tsar continued to mount. There was a need to unite the diverse revolutionary groups and organizations into one unified Party, therefore in 1898 the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was formed.

Christopher (2005) has highlighted the split in the Social Democratic Labour Party into two groups: the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in the second Congress that took place in 1903. Vladimir Lenin, one of the main leaders of the Bolsheviks wanted to have an immediate proletariat Revolution. On the other hand Julius Markov, one of the main leaders of the Mensheviks, felt that there must be a bourgeoisie Revolution before the proletariat revolts since capitalism was still absent in Russia.

In the wake of Russia's debacle in the 1905 war with the Japan, a revolution broke out spontaneously. After The Revolution of 1905, many new political parties emerged. In this regard Carr (1950) mentions the Constitutional Democratic Party as a liberal party. The members of the party commonly known as the Kadets, were mainly supported by professors and lawyers. In 1906 during the First State Duma elections, the Kadets received 30% of the seats and allied with the Trudoviks, forming a majority. The Octoberist Party founded in October 1905, was a non-revolutionary centrist party. They emphasized the need for a parliament (Duma) and its control over government. In the 1906 elections the Octoberist party and other groups associated with it did not do well as the Kadets. Schapiro (1979) argues that in Feb and Oct 1917 two changes took place: first; the autocracy collapsed and the provisional government was formed and second the Bolsheviks came to power. Bolsheviks were in favour of a new state in Russia based on the Marxist philosophy. In 1918, Bolsheviks became Russian Communist Party and in 1920 the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine joined the RCP. Later the party was renamed as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1952.

The Communist Party of Soviet Union was based on the principle of 'Democratic Centralism'. Gill (1994) discusses the challenges that CPSU faced in the emerging national and international arena from Stalin to Brezhnev period. Mikhail Gorbachev's tenure started with new challenges which forced him to go for reform programme in the party and the state. Soviet Union had become economically fragile, Mikhail Gorbachev's reform programme became famous as 'perestroika' (restructuring) an economic reform, and 'glasnost' (openness) denotes transparency in government. Gorbachev's politics, intended merely as internal reform of the centralized government of the union, triggered a process whereby many of the constituent republics asserted

political independence and eventually elections in these republics produced elected regional leaders who could challenge Moscow's authority. Boris Yeltsin was elected president of the largest of the constituent republic Russia.

There is Considerable debate about the party system in Russia, whether the party system in Russia is evolving toward a two party system, or a multiparty system, or some hybrid, and what this evolution implies for parliamentary parties. Remington and Smith, (1995) examine how parties contribute to the decision-making process in the Duma, the organization of leadership, agenda setting, and voting on the floor. They also assess the principal actors that shape the future of parliamentary parties. Wilson (2006) explores the growth of party-system in Russia under President Putin. In this regard, the main focus is on the 2001 law "On political parties" in the context of the 2003 Duma election. During Putin's first term several additional amendments to electoral legislation were considered. The way Electoral Legislation was brought and the conduct of the election campaign are analyzed to make sure that Vladimir Putin has a fair control over the administration of political parties. In Putin's second term the implications of the party-system reforms which is passed are also considered, looking forward to the 2007 Duma election.

From the period of fragmentation and high levels of volatility under Yelstin, to the monopolisation of power under Putin and Medvedev, the problem of institutionalising and nationalising parties in Russia's regions and the development of the party system are examined and traced respectively by Ross (2011). Further, he focuses on the party saturation and non-saturation of regional assemblies. White (2011) explores the problems faced by the opposition political parties in Russia. In order to conceptualize, the way opposition parties operate determines the strategies they adopt and the concept of dominant party systems is used as an analytical framework. Russia's 'Dominant' party of United Russia has a lot of advantages over other parties i.e. access to administrative resources, and the ability to mobilize key socioeconomic groups.

There has been discussion whether Russia's transition to democracy has actually been inhibited by the development of a dysfunctional and extremely unstable party system. Riggs and

Schraeder, (2004) believe that there was an important starting point to understand the woeful state of Russia's contemporary party system i.e. to examine the motivations surrounding the choices made by self-interested political elites. These motivations also have an impact on the structure of the government institution with which the parties interact which helps in creating a political environment that reduces the role of parties. Explanations and theories of party formation and change among the mass public is provided by Miller and Klobucar, which are based on evidence derived from societies with fully developed party systems. Post-Soviet democracies are a newly emerging system and provide a unique opportunity for testing theories describing the development of mass political parties and the rise of party identification. Oates, (2006) discusses the role media has played in the development of the young nascent democracy in Russia. She also examines the Russian political system in an attempt to understand why the media, in particular television, failed to develop as a pillar of civil society and has evolved instead into a mouthpiece of special interests. She also analyses the relationship between politics and media, specifically the development of political parties and candidate image through several elections in the post-Soviet era.

Electoral Politics in Russia:

The disintegration of the USSR in 1991, the very idea of competing political parties and free and fair elections was unknown to the vast majority of citizens of the Russian Federation. The best way to analyse the role played by political parties in a country is their participation and performances in the elections. In the first elections for a president of the RSFSR in 1991 while the USSR was still in existence, Boris Yeltsin emerged victorious. He set up a convention to draft a new constitution, including a new electoral system. In Russia, with the adoption of the new constitution, multiparty system was introduced in 1993 and elections were adopted as a method through which people can express their wishes. Sakwa (2008) analyses the influence of the Russian electoral system in 1993 and 1995 Duma elections played a significant role in determining the nature and prospect of democratic politics in Russia.

White & McAlister (1996) explains that the 1993 constitution itself was adopted in controversial circumstances, there were a few basic principles which were set out: citizens had the right to vote

and to be elected as the organs of state power and local government (article 32), including the State Duma, which was to be elected every five years at a time (articles 96). The term of President was extended in the year 2008 for a maximum of two six year. Six elections for the presidency and parliament have happened since the fall of the USSR in the context of Eurasia Centre (2011) and only once, in 1996, was a second round required. There have been three presidents, with Boris Yeltsin elected in 1991 and 1996, Vladimir Putin in 2000 and 2004 (Yeltsin relinquished power to Putin on the last day of 1999) and Dmitry Medvedev in 2008 and again Putin elected as President in 2012. The candidate of the Communist Party have always come in second, first Nikolay Ryzhkov in 1991, then Gennady Zyuganov in 1996, 2000, 2008 and 2012 and Nikolay Kharitonov in 2004. Only in 1996 there was one candidate who gained more than 10% of the votes (in the first round).

Russian Profile (2011) mentioned that in 1995 and 1999 parliamentary elections Communist Party was the biggest party with 35% and 24%. The other constant participants have been the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), whose support has shifted between 5 and 15% of the votes, and Yabloko, which won 10% of the votes in 1995 and around 5% in the other three elections. Various titles were given to the parties which won more than 10% of the votes in the entire period like Russia's Choice with 16% in 1993; Our Home is Russia with 12% in 1995, the Unity Party of Russia with 23%, the Fatherland-All Russia party with 13% and the People's Deputies Faction party with 15% in 1999. United Russia is an alliance of the Unity Party of Russia and Fatherland - All Russia and it became the biggest party with 38% in 2003. Petrov (2003) argues some important changes were brought to the political landscape and to society as a whole by Putin's regime. The potential impact of all these processes on forthcoming elections and on democratic development in Russia in general is very important and should be understood well.

Democratic governance electoral system's main dimension is to provide a major stimulus for the development of parties and bring them to the centre of the political stage (Riggs & Schraeder 2005) explain the early political agenda of Vladimir Putin included several potentially progressive elements, such as an attempt to restore the nation's political unity after a decade of

authoritarian decentralisation, and an effort to create institutional conditions for a viable party system, the lack of which impeded Russia's democratisation. Further Gill(2006) analyses Russia's electoral authoritarianism restricts the freedoms of association and speech, monopolises the media, and employs unfair electoral practices to an extent that deprives elections of their primary functions of political choice and elite circulation, and reduces them to a mere tool of legitimisation and mobilisation of support.

DEFINITION, RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

Political Party can be defined as a group of like minded people who come together to achieve certain common objectives through acquisition of power. For an effective and well-functioning democracy, free and fair competition between various political parties is a prerequisite.

With the collapse of the Soviet system in the early 1990s, as well as the demise of the one dominant Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Russia adopted the path of liberal democratic reform. Such transitions often do not go smoothly, and Russia's experience has proven no exception. One factor that will help determine the extent to which this transition is successful is the impact of Russia's electoral system on the creation of a party system in Russia. This is because there exists, a close relationship between electoral systems, party systems and the quality and stability of democratic government. As one of the main dimension of democratic governance, electoral systems provide a major stimulus for the development of parties as well as bringing them to the centre of the political stage in a way that people could recognise their democratic aspirations with the parties existing in the political system, unlike in past when masses were supposed to obey what the communist party dictated and commanded.

In addition to, this study will draw attention to the existing research in the field which argues that role of political parties in Russian political system has been limited. Because of the present challenges to Russian political system concerning the inherent flaws in the system, the political system has come under serious criticism from domestic as well as international media and academia. This argument is solidified in view of the alleged electoral fraud in 2011 and 2012 Duma and Presidential elections. In this context, the analysis of democratic system in Russia, which claims to be a multi-party democracy, is the foremost rationale for undertaking this study.

As the above discussion shows the existing literature covers wide variety of issues and subjects relating to the Russian electoral system and democracy. However, there is inadequate focus on the nature of the political parties, party system and their significance for the electoral politics and democracy in Russia. The present study, apart from filling this critical gap would try to cover some of the latest trends in Russian politics since the 2011 Duma and 2012 Presidential elections.

The scope of my research includes multi-party democracy, primarily the major parties that have existed in Russian political system post 1990. Keeping history of Russian political system as a background for political behaviour of the parties, the present study seeks to identify the implications they had on development of multiparty system in Russia. The purpose of the study is to analyse the determinants which might point towards the further diversification and strengthening of the Political and Parliamentary system in Russia. The study will cover the period from 1991, the emergence of post Soviet Russia to 2012 presidential election.

OBJECTIVE OF STUDY:

- To discuss how the political parties evolved in Russia.
- To compare the political parties and party system of Soviet Union and Russia.
- To explain the trends and patterns of electoral politics in Russia.
- To analyse the role of political parties in the electoral politics and democracy in Russia.
- To ascertain the role of personalities in the electoral politics of Russia, particularly after the emergence of Vladimir Putin.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The proposed study would attempt to address following research questions:

- How Political parties evolved in Russia?
- What is the difference in the pattern and nature of development of political parties and party system and electoral politics in Soviet Union and Russia?
- What role of political parties play in the electoral process in Russia?
- What are the patterns and trends of election and electoral outcomes in Russia?
- How the political parties influence the functioning of democracy in Russia?
- How the emergence of Vladimir Putin changed the nature of electoral politics in Russia?

HYPOTHESES:

- The concentration of power in the institution of presidency has limited the role of political parties as it is the legislature which provides them scope to influence government formation and policy making.
- The emergence of Vladimir Putin as the leader marked the beginning of charismatic leadership with increasing control over government and media, thereby facilitating the victory of the ruling establishment in all subsequent elections.

RESEARCH METHODS:

The design for the study is Historical, descriptive and analytical. The study would explore the development of political parties, nature of party system and electoral politics in Russia. Analysis of election results and voting pattern would help in understanding the nature of electoral politics in Russia. Here, the attempt would be to collect valuable data from primary as well as secondary sources. The primary sources will include party manifesto, pamphlets, statements, government documents and interviews and the secondary sources will be books, articles in journals and magazines and authentic reports released by various organizations. These relevant literatures cover different areas like political, historical and sociological studies which would provide comprehensive framework for the research.

The analysis of all available primary and secondary sources will be supplemented by information generated through field survey and consultations with academicians and party leaders. Therefore,

a field trip to the Russia would be very helpful. Structured questionnaire based surveys supplemented by in depth open ended interviews with academicians and party leaders will be very useful for a better understanding of the issues involved.

CHAPTERIZATION:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Theoretical Framework

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part give a research design, with significance, objectives, research questions, hypotheses, methodology and a detailed survey of literature. The second part is a theoretical framework on concepts such as political parties, party system and electoral system.

Chapter 2: Political Parties in Russia: A Historical Background

This chapter traces the development of political parties during the Tsarist and the Soviet period. It covers the period from late nineteenth to the nineteen eighties.

Chapter 3: Emergence of Multi Party System in post Soviet Russia

This chapter discusses the emergence of new political groups and ideologies during the last days of the Soviet Union which marked the beginning of a multi party system in Russia.

Chapter 4: Electoral Politics during the Formative Phase, 1993 to 1999

The beginning of multi candidate elections was in 1989 but its nature and significance changed with the adoption of a new democratic constitution in 1993. The nascent electoral politics from 1993 to 1999 is covered in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Electoral Politics in the Era of Charismatic Leadership

With the emergence of Vladimir Putin on the political scene the nature and pattern of political parties, party system and electoral democracy changed with emphasis on the personalities and charisma. This is dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter gives the main findings and the conclusion of the research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Political Parties are central and essential component of Democracy. One could even argue that the true spirit of democracy is alive due to political parties and the political process would be incomplete without their role. Elections constitute the process which provides citizens an opportunity to choose their representatives, both the ones who would sit in government and who would be in opposition. Duverger has defined parties that have "their primary goal the conquest of power or a share in its exercise," and drawing "their support from a broad base" unlike pressure groups, that "represent a limited number with a particular or private interest"(Duverger 1972: 1-2). The evolution of political parties has come to be regarded with the growth of parliamentary system and electoral processes.

Political Parties essentially help the effective working of modern democratic states. Harold J. Laski has pointed out the importance of parties as, "There is no alternative to party government, save democracy in any state of modern times. Government requires leaders, leaders require not an incoherent mob behind them, but an organised following able to canalise the issues for an electorate with a free choice." This notion of Herald J, Laski stands in separation to dictatorship that is nothing but one person's arbitrary rule whereas in democracy, people make free choice of their representatives to govern, on their behalf.

In a Nazi or Fascist dictatorship of Hitler or Mussolini, they may have also led a party, but it is important to note that they did not lead people as a whole but a group of sycophants. The organization they led was not at all a competitive organisation. In simple terms, we can define a political party as an organised partnership based on ideological unity, which considers itself separate from other parties by a specific programme and which actively and constitutionally

participates in politics. Its final aim is to secure political power and use this power for making and implementing authoritative values for the entire society.

Neumann analysed Political Parties on the basis of their ideologies. In his analysis he draw some precious inferences. In his analysis, he points out to the unique factors between democratic and authoritarian parties in a single and acceptable definition. In his conclusions on the parties he noted that the purpose of setting up a party is uniformity within that distinguishes itself from other groups which do not share the same principles as it does. Essentially, each party has partnership within a specific organisation, and separation from others on the basis of its particular programme. These postulations with terms of party are particularly true in case of two or multiparty systems. Where there is one-party system, there one can safely assume that there is total absence of competition and distinct policies and programmes. In fact, many scholars refuse to designate the party, in a single party system, as formal political parties. For them a party must have a second part, or a competitor, which is missing in one-party states.

Therefore, in single party system there is possibility of emergence of absolute authoritarianism and therefore when such a party comes to power or establishes its clutch over the governance of that state or society, it tries hard to maintain its hegemony by using all means at its disposal. However, Neumann believes that even in one party state there exists opposition within the party structure in one form or the other. Even if there is no opposition, the authoritarian party always feels insecure due to fear of possible revolt or opposition. According to Neumann, political party is representative of social interests that acts as bridge or as a link, between the individual and the society. If parties discharge their duties adequately well, then they contribute in making the democratic structure of the state strong. Therefore, whether the democratic form of government is presidential or parliamentary, that can't exist and sustain in the absence of parties.

A Political Party which is democratically elected should have three other important characteristics. First, within the broad spectrum of ideological unity it tolerates permits and accepts the existence of groups as parts of the whole. Secondly, all political parties accept each other as competing parties in the struggle for power. Together they constitute the party system.

Thirdly, each political party stands committed to uphold the interests of the whole community i.e. the national interests, and it is because of this feature that the party system works as a shared field of activity. But political parties are also sectional i.e. they have different mass bases and ideologies. Some may represent particular region, ethnic groups or social groups. Their perceptions of national interest also differ. As such partnership, separation, participation in decision making, unity in diversity and national interests are common characteristics of all the parties (Sartori 1976: 66).

Weiner and La Palombara refer to other essentials of a Political Party: “1-Continuity in organisation whose life span is not dependent upon the life span of current leaders; 2-manifesto and presumably permanent organisation at the local level with regularised communications and other relationships between local and national units; 3- self –conscious determination of leaders at both national and local levels to capture and to hold decision making power alone or in coalition with others not simply to influence the exercise of power, and 4- the concern on the part of the organisation for seeking followers at polls or in some manner striving for popular support”(Weiner and Palombara 1969: 6).

The Marxist perspective of a Political Party and its function is completely different than the notions that have discussed above. Marxist view of the parties is bases on the class angle which puts that political party essentially represents interests. Marxian perspective champions the class struggle and victory of proletariat party that acts as a vanguard of the revolution. According to this view, the party that represents the interests of working classes alone has the right to exist. The bourgeois parties, according to this notion, do not represent true democratic process and that they are particularly exploitative in nature.

Therefore, this notion upholds the view that bourgeois party must be eliminated to create a communist society. According to Lenin the “proletariat has no weapon in the struggle for power except organization” (Sabine 1932: 724). Lenin made his own contribution to the development of Marxism in the twentieth century. If Marx said that the fact of exploitation at the hands of bourgeoisie would force the working class to develop the necessary consciousness that would act

as the force to take them to the path of a revolution, Lenin modified the idea by adding that an organization of the proletariat would play a crucial part in arousing class consciousness and thereby creating a revolution.

The Communist Party is organised on the principle of 'democratic centralism'. It means two things. First, the party is a hierarchy in which members of the higher rank are elected by those of the lower ranks. Moreover all units have intra-party democracy whereby the members may discuss and debate matters at their organizational level and also elect and remove their office bearers. Second, the lower units are bound to follow the decrees given by higher unit with the result that power is centred at the top. A very small band of the arch leader and his most trusted followers constitute a clique that holds unlimited and absolute power. A critic may, therefore point out that "the communist type organization is in fact a structure of vertical centralism. Its secret is to sever horizontal communication lines, and especially descending ones. No democratic party has been able or shown as yet the desire, to go that far" (Sartori 1976: 96).

Lenin described the Communist Party as the 'vanguard of the revolution' for the working class. It is evident from the text of a resolution adopted at the Congress of Communist International in 1920 that among other things, the Communist party is a part of working class; it's most progressive, most revolutionary and most class-conscious part. "The Communist party is created by means of the selection of the best, most class-conscious, most self-sacrificing and far-sighted workers. The Communist party is the lever of political organization, with the help of which the more progressive part of the working class directs on the right path the whole mass of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat along the right road"(Degras 1956: 28). The Communist Party alone knows what is in the interest of working people. Lenin was of the opinion that the party's position is similar to a military organisation in the proletariat's struggle to secure power and in its maintenance. The party is vanguard of the working people which has a pivotal role in class-consciousness, and is ever ready to make sacrifices in the interest of the proletariat. The Marxist ideology unites the working people and the party, and its organisation makes it all-powerful.

DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The emergence of Political Parties in the modern world is closely linked to the emergence of constitutionalism and representative government. Parties today are found under almost all form of government, and in socialist and third world state as well as advanced liberal democracies, but their origins are essentially western. The western view of the parties associates the development of parties with process of evolution of parliament and with the gradual extension of the franchise. Duverger theorizes the development of parties in three stages: First, the creation of parliamentary groups, Secondly, the organisation of electoral committees, and finally, the establishment of permanent connections two elements (Weiner and Palombara 1969: 29-33).

Duverger pointed out to the fact that the parties were commonly associated with ideologies the in the second half of the twentieth century. Marxian and Leninian view of the parties held them agents that represented class conflicts, but several contemporary scholars like M.I.Ostrogoski, Roberto Michel and Maurice Duverger have put focus on structure of Political Parties. These and other scholars belonging to this tradition of thought emphasized on what parties do rather than what they are. It has become essential for comprehensive study of the parties to analyse their ideologies, social foundations, structures, organisations, and strategies. Political parties can be classified essentially on two bases. One being the structure of parties and other being the Party system.

One cannot ignore other aspects and mutual relations of parties while analysing the structure of parties. Duverger classified focus of parties into two categories based on their structure. The first aspect of this notion about the parties is the internal organization of the party and second one emphasizes on the external organisation. The activities of the legislators themselves shape the internal being of the party. Some striking cases of internally created parties would be conservative and Liberal parties of Great Britain. Externally created parties are those that emerge outside the legislature and invariably challenge the ruling group and demand representation. Such parties are more recent phenomena. Such parties receive their original organisational impetus from such varied sources as trade unions, students, intellectuals, religious organisations, and so on. In the West, the notable examples are the socialist parties that emerged in the late nineteenth century and Christian Democratic Party in the early twentieth century party by

response to the threat of proletarian political movements. Most of the political parties that existed at time of independence and later also in many Asian and African countries are example of the type.

The practice of collection of election funds for candidates, the committees constituted to secure supporters and workers for the victory of candidates are the factors that play a crucial part in the development of the party. Later on members of the legislature holding similar views and belief in similar ideologies came together leading to the birth and growth of political parties. In Britain and other European democracies commonly held ideologies became the important base of the structure of the party but United States has a different experience in the structuring of the party system.

It can be observed that the American political parties do not have clearly distinct ideologies in comparison to the parties in the European countries. The process of selection of presidential candidates has played a significant role in the emergence of different parties in the United States. At the same other activities such as managing their campaign, raising campaign funds and selecting candidates for numerous other electoral offices in the United States also has significant bearing on the evolution parties in the United States. Therefore, it is apt to say that these parties are now even more concerned with electoral processes, rather than ideologies.

In Weiner and La Palombara's view, parties emerge in political system as an outcome of activities of leaders as they seek to win in the elections or maintain political power as they are bound to seek support from the large public. Such a development can take place in two circumstances. First, a change may already have taken place in the attitudes of subjects or citizens towards the authority. Citizens in a particular may believe that they must exercise franchise thereby they must exercise power as citizens they are entitled to. Secondly, even though the public does not actively participate in political life, a section of dominant political elite or aspiring elite may seek to win or maintain power. In such a case, the elites in that particular society or aspiring elites may provoke a non-participant population to act in way that is desired by such a class. This suggests that there must be fundamental conditions which

precede political participation. To put it differently, while the presence of one of the historical crises may act as a catalyst for the organisation of parties, it is quite obvious that parties will not in fact come into being unless a measure of modernisation has already occurred (La Palombara and Weiner 1969: 8-21).

ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The functioning of Political Parties involves the role of several 'inner circles' that may be termed caucuses, cells, branches, militia, etc. Moreover, it is their meaningful role that enables us to distinguish between democratic, fascist and communist variants of political parties. The contribution of Maurice Duverger has an importance of its own in this regard. He is of the view that a political party "is not a community but a collection of communities, a union of small groups, dispersed throughout the country (branches, caucuses, local associations etc.) and linked by co-ordinate institutions (Duverger 1972: 17).

Duverger talks about the following element of a party's organisation (ibid 1972)

Caucus: This unit of the party may be identified as a clique, core committee, coterie etc. This is a very small entity that has a 'limited nature'. The size of a caucus is deliberately kept as small as possible. Its strength does not depend upon the number of its key members but upon the quality they possess. It is, indeed, a group of notabilities chosen because of their influence. Though this unit is small it plays a very crucial part in the decision-making process reaches its and such an intervention may reach to the peak on the eve of elections. Therefore, caucus may be likened with institutional elite. Caucuses can be of 'direct' as well as 'indirect' in nature. The first category are composed of 'notabilities' chosen for their individual qualities and personal influence; the second one (as in the case of Republican and Democratic parties of the united states) are composed of 'experts' in the art of fighting elections.

Branch: It symbolizes to a basic element that is not as centralised in character as that of a caucus. In case of a caucus, it particularly seeks to stay away from the masses but the branch directly engages with masses as it appeals to them and also appreciates its growing proximity

with them. It is by and large an invention of the socialist parties which desire to maintain their intimate touch with the people at large. It is found that the leaders of the socialist parties come to the branch members and talk about their problems and then a free exchange of ideas takes place. An attempt is also made to recruit more and more members with the help of branch organisations. The result is that the branches of a political party become very important in the day to day functioning of the party. Besides, its impact upon the people in general is so abiding that they see in politics a means of bettering their position. In this way, branch system corresponds to the working-class mentality.

Cell: The idea of a cell particularly connects with the fascist and communist parties in which the ‘occupational’ units of the ruling party are spread in every nook and corner of the country. These units of the party structure have a much greater hold on its members than the caucus or a branch. The members of a cell occupy more significance in the party in comparison to the members of a party. There is possibility that the secretary of the party may exercise a stronger influence on the party framework. The party solidarity is also strong, because cell is a unit of about a dozen members or so who know each other intimately. Above all, the cells have an ideological orientation and they are a source of every clandestine action. The entire network of the cells is controlled by the highest unit of the party composed of the ‘real decision-makers at the top’.

Militia: This unit of the party structure has largely to do with one man party or dictators like that the Mussolini’s Fascist party in Italy and Hitler Nazi party in Germany. Even some communist regimes too had a charismatic leader who brought in this feature of the party structure into picture, for example, communist party of China under Mao made another experiment by taking militia as the basis of their party organisation. Mention may be made of Hitler’s storm troopers Mussolini’s shock troops and Mao’s Red Guards. Though the workers of these organisations remain civilians, they are given military training, are mandated to wear certain prescribed uniforms, hold party flags and act on the commands given by the party leaders working under the supreme command of the chief of the organisation. Therefore, such an unit of the party may act as private army of the party in power that may then be utilized to eradicate the enemy of the leader of the party.

Duverger mentions two types of Parties:

Cadre Party

Cadre Party means a 'Party of Notables', dominated by an informal group of leaders who did not see any point in building up a mass organization. The development of such Parties may take place out of parliamentary faction or cliques when the franchise was limited. In recent years, cadre is the word that is now more commonly used (as in communist parties). The cadre, particularly can be identified as trained and professional party members who responsibility is to exhibit a supreme degree of political commitment and doctrinal discipline. Therefore, it can be said that the communist party of the Soviet Union, the Nazi party in Germany, and the Fascist party in Italy, Chinese communist party were the examples of cadre based parties.

Mass Party

A mass party is one that believes in the principle of 'election' to get popular legitimacy. It tries to enroll more and more members and act with their support and consultation. The membership is an open affair that is available to everyone who subscribes to its basic policy. Regular subscription is the source of its finances and the vast size of its membership is the stuff of its activity. In this way, mass party technique replaces the capitalist financing of electioneering by democratic financing (Duverger 1972: 33).

CONCEPTUAL BASIS OF PARTY SYSTEM

In the modern times the representative democratic system is responsible for bringing about party system that is considered to be of indispensable nature in every political society. It may be simplistically put that political party in one way or the other "is omnipresent" (La Palombara and Weiner 1969: 3). There is no deniable that the party politics has come to acquire come a universal phenomenon. Today every political structure in the world has evolved into a party system of its own whether it relates to a one-party model or to a bi party model or to a multi-party model. The determinants of the party structure can be said to be of multifold.

It is important to note that these political parties vary from religious and social to economic and political aspects of their formation. For example, certain political parties have their origin grounded in a religious faith like Christian Democrats in Italy and Germany, Komei-to in Japan. Certain political parties in the world trace their allegiance to ethnic or racial basis of connection, for example, Tamil Federal party in Sri Lanka is purely founded on the racial and ethnic character. Even if the determining factors of party structure may vary, they can be classified in three factors depending upon their historical, socio-economic and ideological aspects of formation.

Firstly, historical factors related to party formation have deeper significance in the determination of party structures. Many of the present day Political Parties are conditioned in the modern political processes and their origine presupposes a necessary degree of urbanisation and the evolution of the means of modern day mass communications. The expansion of adult suffrage or of franchise has contributed a great deal to the creation of political parties. The growth in the process of suffrage has led to the organisation of political parties in widening their base among masses. As Ball has rightly noted “arise when historical change occurs and these are not subject to scientific laws. Therefore, the development of parties is more haphazard and uneven than general classification makes apparent. Certainly, “particular changes are necessary such as the need for dominant political elites to seek wider political support, and for a significant change in the political attitudes” (Ball 1978: 102).

Secondly, the political parties also have a great deal of bearing on them by the means of the socio-economic factors. The competition between political parties may be intense or less severe depending upon the economic development of that particular society in which such parties exist. It can safely be assumed that the response to the dynamism of political parties may vary depending upon the urban and rural masses. The variance in relations to the notion of political parties can also be observed in the context of a society in which class conflict is a significant aspect of political process, say for example, competing communist parties. On the other hand, in a liberal democratic state, party with a totalitarian structure may hardly find a congenial place to exist in and flourish, since there is open electoral competition that allays possibilities of all such development. In the context of political party formation, Nationalism and religious divisions may take precedence over those of class in forming the basis of political parties. But ultimately the

disposition and value system rooted in society and political culture developed over a period of time may prove to be of crucial importance in the determination of the type of political parties that evolve in any society.

Thirdly, Socialist and communist parties are formed on the basis of a specific ideology that is based on the notion of class struggle. These parties are called 'leftist' as they strive to bring in the change in the status quo, what they call 'the era of injustice' perpetrated by the class of 'bourgeois' exploiters and oppressors over the 'proletarian' class of the workers and toilers. The 'rightist' parties that trace their ideological lineage in the notion of maintaining the ancient order such as fascist in Italy, Nazis in Germany and Bharatiya Janta Party in India may stand in antithesis to this leftist notion of political party formation. As noted, such parties uphold the perpetuation of the status quo that goes to the advantage of the prevailing ruling class that hails from the rich or established class of the society.

The idea behind the emergence of political parties can be assigned to the notion of performing certain common functions in different political systems at various phases of social, political and economic development. Whatever may the form of government be, viz. a free society or under a totalitarian regime, the function of the organization called the party is expected to gather public opinion and to pass the demands of the constituency to the center of governmental power and decision-makers. The party must articulate to its followers the concept and meaning of the broader community even if the aim of the party leadership is to modify profoundly or even to destroy the broader community and replace it with some other order such as role of the Russian communist Party in the Tsarist Russia. Yet another important function of the party is to carry out political recruitment drive, the selection of the political leadership that is responsible for exercising the power of the state it governs and key in decision making in the larger interest of constituency it represents (La Palombara and Weiner 1969: 12). Political parties perform several important functions in modern political system.

The term representation refers to the capacity of parties to respond to and articulate the views of both members of the party and its voters. These elements are major 'inputting devices' that act as a bridge between the needs and wishes of the society that are essential to the sustenance and

survival of the party and the government it forms. This particular function could be performed in a better manner, in an open and competitive system that compels parties to be receptive to popular preferences. The formation elites and their selection within the party structure are some of the exclusive prerogatives of the parties. The future elites have to go through a long and tiresome process of testing in party offices and on the backbenches before they are placed on the board to the highest executive offices. Parties are equally responsible for providing a training ground to politicians, equipping them with necessary skills of governance that are convenient and suitable to them, imparting them of knowledge and experience, and offering them some form of career structure.

Traditionally political parties have acted as one of the means that have helped societies in setting goals that are inclusive and collective in character. The political parties have to perform this function essentially because, in the process of seeking power, they structure programmes of government through platforms such as conferences, conventions, election manifesto etc. to help itself attract popular support in smooth running of the governance. In the process of deciding upon goals, different parties may carry on with differing perceptions. There need not necessarily be same method applicable all parties of the given society.

Apart from just seeking self-interested political goals, the parties may also help the people to articulate and aggregate their various interests. Parties do facilitate the process of advancing and defending various interests of business houses; labour, religious, ethnic or other groups that form the constituency to these parties. For example, almost every established party has its branches working in the fields of labor unions, farmer unions, social and cultural sectors and in all most all walks of human activity of that concerned society. The UK Labour Party for example, was created by the trade union movement with the aim of achieving working class political representation.

The significant indicator that validifies legitimacy of a party is the share of vote it polls. This exercise proves crucial in identifying whether party that espouses a radical change in the system is gaining ground or the party that upholds the idea of moderate or peaceful changes has edge over the former. Parties are important agent of political education and socialization as they

facilitate this process through the means of internal debate and discussions as well as by campaigning and electoral competition. The party chooses to focus on some of the important issues that are crucial to set the political agenda it espouses. The value system and attitudes that the party chooses to articulate becomes part of the larger political culture of the given political society.

An important element of the competitive interaction between parties is the shape of party systems. It is important to point out to the different characteristics that parties exhibit that also form types of party systems. The party systems are crudely classified as one-party system, two party system and Multi-party system that may be explained in the following manner.

One Party System

This type of the party system can be said to be existing in a given society when there exists only one party. The countries where there exists totalitarianism, or authoritarianism or dictatorship can be said to be one party system. Such system existed in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany or Russian regime during Stalinist era. Such system can be concluded to be existing in present day China. Almost all Fascist or communist regimes exhibited the characteristics such one party system where there existed no opposition at all outside the party structure. Parties other than the ruling party are either constitutionally debarred, or they are crushed by the rulers. This system originated with the establishment of the rule of the Communist Party of the USSR after the Bolshevik Revolution. While the critics deplored the system as authoritarian rule of the Communist Party, the USSR claimed it to be the rule of the working classes or what they termed it as vanguard of proletariats.

This category “is characterised all other groups, trying to absorb the political opposition, or in the extreme case suppressing all opposition groups which are regarded as counter revolutionary or subversive of the regime as forces dividing the national will” (Johari 2011: 273). This principle category has two sub categories- Dictatorial and democratic, the case of a one-party system of the dictatorial model obtains if the party in power allows no other party or group to live or act in opposition to its authority, Fascist Party in Italy (1922-43) and Hitler’s Nazi rule in Germany (1933-45) were typical examples of the dictatorship of one man who led the only party

permitted by him. All other parties were banned and crushed. Their leaders were thrown in the jails or even executed. It's democratic in case the ruling party tolerates the existence of other parties in opposition, Mustafa Kamal Pasha's one-party rule in Turkey was claimed to be democratic.

One party system in terms of its democratic category can be classified in three subcategories viz. 1. one plus party system where the dominant party seldom takes the help of some other party as can be seen in the case of liberal democratic party of Japan until 2009. 2. One dominant party system wherein the party in power is in a position of exercising far more influence than all other parties put together as in case of Indian National Congress before 1967 and in the present times BJP party. 3. One absorbing Party system where one party absorbs all other major and minor political organisations within its fold as in the cases of Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) of Mexico, Kenya African National Union (KANU) of Kenya and National Renovating Alliance of Brazil (ibid: 2011).

According to Maurice Duverger, there can be different forms of one-party regimes. Before the World War II, the Fascist and Communist parties exhibited a strong discipline. On the other hand the only Turkish party, the Republican Party was closer to the traditional parties. In case of one Salazar's Fascists in Portugal, they embraced the ideals of nineteenth century liberals. Its difference with the Mussolini's Fascist Party can be gauged in the fact that it did not have militarily trained youth groups. Secondly, they are dictated to certain ideologies which generally support revolutionary methods, and even encourage violence. Though the fascist and communist parties can be regarded to be the one-party system, there is considerable difference in the ways they function. The communist parties champion the cause of the workers' movements and endeavor to abolish private property, the fascist parties derive their main support base from the rich, wealthy and industrialists. Thirdly, the distinguishing characters can be found in one party system based on their economic policies and level of development. It may emerge in backward societies as the former Russian empire was, or as Tanzania was.

It may even develop in developed and democratic societies also, as in Eastern Europe in post-Second world war period. Besides, the role of a one party may vary. The communist parties become integral part of the state machinery as was the case in the former Soviet Union, or is the case in China today. The Fascist Party, on the other hand was used only as an instrument of governance; it did not become part of the state apparatus. The fascists promote police state, whereas the communists aimed at the 'withering away of the state'. This, however, may never happen.

Two Party System

The modern political systems characterize the existence of two or more competitive parties. If not more, there are at least two parties in existence with most of the modern day political societies. The important thing to be observed in such an arrangement is that none of the two parties are absolutely powerful as in the case of one party system. The power often keeps rotating between them. But at the same, if one party remains in power for a very long period of time and the other remains opposition then it becomes a one party dominant system. In such a case, the two-party system ceases to be a competitive two-party system.

The leaders and scholars of the United Kingdom and the United States consider 'dualism' as the best system. However, such system has remained far from becoming very much popular. In this kind of party system, the two parties constantly try to woo voters for securing majority in the legislature. Both the parties keep on occupying either the treasury benches or sit in the opposition, though this may not always be alternate. Besides, there may be one or smaller parties also in the two-party system. But, the smaller parties neither come to power nor do they normally influence the outcome of elections, though at times smaller parties may associate with one or the other major party.

To simplify the typological explanation further, we may be required to put the two-party systems into two sub categories i.e., distinct and indistinct. In case of the distinct two-party system, two parties follow on with well-defined policies and programmes and clear organisations. Functioning within the party discipline and obeying the leadership is the important hallmark of

this subcategory of the two-party system. Great Britain is the best example of such a two-party system as its party system has well defined organisation, they remain within party discipline, and members of Parliament ordinarily do not defy their leadership. On the other hand, the case of the United States exhibits classic example of indistinct two-party system.

In this case, it's important to highlight the fact that the party system in the US hardly has any major differences in terms of the policies of Major American parties namely, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. As Dahl comments, they have 'ideological similarity and issue conflict' (Dahl 1967: 222). Both the parties the US have very loose discipline in the Congress. Talking about their behavior that they portray in the local elections, one can say that there exists no discipline or no adherence to the party line at national level. Generally, in the two Houses of Congress, members vote of their own choice; they hardly receive, or obey, the party line on bills and other issues.

Therefore, the differences, if any in the two parties is often becomes negated. As the case goes, one various occasions many members of both the parties have voted in favour of a motion, and sometimes, many other members of the same two parties have voted against. As Duverger has pointed out, "Actually, there is a different majority and a different opposition for each issue. It does not follow party lines." In Duverger's opinion, the loose two-party system of the United States is akin to the multi-party system than it being the two-party system of the kind of party system that prevails in Great Britain. The difference can also be inferred in the fact their national organization is flexible and the central control of the party is minimal. Only in case of the presidential election, the party mechanism takes strong pro-leadership stance.

In the conclusion, it can be said that the two-party system in comparison to one party system helps in the strengthening of democracy. Power shifts from one party to the other, keeps the process check and balance in place. The party in power has to be careful about its policies as it has to face election and if it errs the opponent party may make an election issue out of that to malign it image in the electorates. Therefore the party in power has to act in a responsible manner and the other offers constructive opposition. As many scholars have pointed out and the

general observation can also vouch for the fact that this party system is less prone to political instability of the multi-party system, neither does it have a place for authoritarianism as in case of one party system.

Multi-Party System

In this kind of party system, no party is capable of obtaining clear majority in the legislature that may help it form government. There are several countries that have developed a system of having many parties. Technically speaking, the multi-party system connotes to the fact that there are three or more dominant parties competing for the political power. France, Italy and Switzerland are some of the cases in Europe that have this kind multi-party-political system. India presents a classic example of multi-party system as it has over 40 political parties, big or small that represent their constituents in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies. In the absence of clear majority to form the government, which often is a case with multi-party system, two or more parties come together to form the alliance governments. Such governments generally adopt a common minimum that is acceptable each of the alliance partner.

As, such coalition governments and the political parties involved in the government formation do not share common ideology, there is a sort of anarchy in the programme formulation its implementation. As can be seen in Indian case, that the coalition governments always remain instable and may not last long, for example the falling apart of the Janata Party Government headed by Prime Minister Morarji Desai. But there can be example of exceptions also. The Narsimharao government was the first coalition government in India that successfully completed its term of five years. The NDA government headed by PM Vajpayee completed its term successfully despite having many coalition partners on board in the government formation. In a general election, voters have a wide choice of candidates. Many of them may belong to smaller parties committed to regional or sectarian interests. The winning candidates may not necessarily secure even half of the total votes cast. In a multi candidate election, the candidate getting largest number of votes is declared elected, whatever percentage of total votes this may be.

The multi-party system of India has the distinction of having such a large number of parties that, for some time now, it is impossible for any single party to win majority on its own. For almost 60 years after independence (with the exception of 1977-79 and 1999 to 2004 period), Congress Party dominated the Indian political scene. There were indeed several parties in post-independent India, but the Congress was mostly in power both at the Centre and in most of the States.

A more precise taxonomic illustration of party system has been given by Sartori in his study on this subject. The notable feature of his classificatory illustration is that he discovered several sub-varieties within the one party system and then differentiated the two-party and multi-party system on the basis of 'pluralism' and 'atomism'. The basis touchstone of his classification is the fact of real participation in power what the term 'competition' (Sartori 1976: 12).

In the Sartori's analysis, there is no political competition between different political parties, of whatsoever kind at all. The single party has three main varieties of characteristics. The first aspect is that it is monopolistic wherein political power is wielded by one party alone and other political parties don't have any existence as such in such a system. This kind of party structure has three types namely totalitarian, authoritarian and pragmatic. The totalitarian and authoritarian parties reflect different ideological intensities in comparison to that of the one-party pragmatic party as it represents an ideological mentality that's essentially pragmatic in nature. One can equally say that totalitarianism and authoritarianism appear as different points of an ideological scale whose lowest point is called pragmatism (ibid 1976: 223).

One more character of the single party system is that its hegemonic position which means there is no contender to such party to wield political power. In such a system, it may happen that while the survival of other parties may be allowed; only one party counts more than all. The existence of other parties is just for the name sake. The other parties survive like its 'satellites' or assistant entities without posing any challenge to its hold. The hegemonic party does not allow for a formal or otherwise competition for power. The case of a hegemonic party has two sub varieties first ideological and pragmatic.

The ideological base of such a hegemonic party system can be assigned to the parties such as communist party of Russia which were derived on the Marxian school of idea. On the other hand pragmatic base has to do with ruling party which doesn't carry any baggage of ideas with it. Third, predominant party system is another variety of the single party system. Here we find a power arrangement in which one party governs alone without being subjected to rotation as long as it continues to win absolute majority in the election. In this model, one party outdistances all others, for it is significantly stronger than all of them even put together. The case of India, Japan, and Turkey fall in this category.

As Sartori has pointed out two and multi-party systems symbolise the common characteristic of 'polarised pluralism', in which a line of distinction between the parties is drawn. In a biparty system, the two main parties are so dominant that their position remains unhindered from the pressures or tactics the third party or parties. Their influence on the constituents is negligible or minimalist. This comprises the following important conditions: (1) two parties are in a position to compete for the absolute majority of seats, (2) one of the two parties actually succeeds in winning a sufficient parliamentary majority, (3) this party is willing to govern alone and (4) alternation or rotation in power remains a reliable expectation (Sartori 1976: 188).

We come to the point of intense polarism that is the feature of an 'atomised' party system. A multi-party system having a highly fragmented character leads to the existence of highly fluid party politics. Here we find that no party is in a position to cast a noticeable effect on the other. All those parties must be excluded which have almost no place in the bargaining process and thereby represent their structured consolidation. An atomised party is fragmented leader by leader, with very small group revolving around each leader. As such, it "has no significant fractional articulation beyond the face value of all that characterises a political party (ibid 1976: 75).

ELECTORAL SYSTEM: BATTLE FOR POLITICAL POWER

The term electoral system refers to the set of rules responsible for the structuring of how votes are cast at elections for a representative assembly and how these votes are then converted into the seats in that assembly. Electoral systems are the primary institutional mechanism to regulate political competition. Though there are various kinds of electoral system, the three main types namely single majoritarian, proportional representation, and mixed system.

Majoritarian Electoral System

This kind of electoral system is regarded to be the oldest one which can be divided into two categories based on the being plural and having absolute majority (50%) of votes to be elected to power. The idea of being plural is often referred to in the legislative elections in the India, United States and the United Kingdom. In the electoral systems that are prevailing in these countries, the national constituency is divided into territorial single-member districts, and the voter casts a single vote for the candidate of his or her choice. In these electoral systems, the first-past-the-post-election is followed in which he/she becomes the winner who obtains more votes than their counterpart. The drawback of this system is that a candidate with only a handful more votes than the second- or third-place finishers takes office. The party that succeeds in the most districts emerges as the legislative majority and, in parliamentary system form the government.

A second type of majoritarian formula requires an absolute majority requirement which means here in this regard the winner is expected to gain at least 50 percent plus one vote to be declared as winner. For that reason, absolute majority rules are applied in two-round or run-off electoral systems. This case can be best understood with the electoral experience of Russian Presidential election of 1996. In this particular election 78 candidates registered to run for election, of which 17 qualified for nomination. Boris Yeltsin won 35.3percent of the vote in the first round, with Gennadii Zyuganov, the Communist candidate; close behind with 32 percent, and Alexander Lebed third with 14.5 percent of the vote. After the other candidates dropped out, and Lebed swung his supporters behind Yeltsin, the final result was a decisive 53.8 percent for Yeltsin against 40.3 percent for Zyuganov (White, Rose and McAllister 1996).

Proportional Representation (PR)

The concept of proportional representation in voting system is used for the elections of an assembly or council. The term proportional representation denotes that the number of seats won by a party or group of candidates is proportionate to the number of votes received. For example, under a PR voting system if 25% of voters support a particular party then roughly 25% of seats will be won by that party. The concept of proportional representation varies based on the electoral practices followed. Certain methods are solely focused on achieving the proportional representation of different political parties such as party list PR while others permit the voter to choose between individual candidates such as PR single transferable vote (STV). Proportional electoral systems based on Party Lists in multimember constituencies are widespread throughout Europe, and worldwide almost 60 countries use PR.

The principle of PR that the seats in a constituency are divided according to the number of votes cast for party lists, but there are considerable variations in how this is implemented in different systems. In case of Norway, Finland, the Netherlands and Italy, the voters can express preferences by the open method for particular candidates within the given list. Otherwise in the case of Israel, Portugal, Spain and Germany, voters can only select the party through the closed method. Here in this regard, the political party determines the ranking of candidates. Ultimately, the candidates are elected based on the rank order on the party list (Norris 1997: 5).

There is yet another method that utilizes the principle of the single transferable vote (STV). This voting system is designed to achieve proportional representation through the preferential voting. As per the STV, an elector's vote in the beginning is allocated to his or her most preferred candidate, and thereafter candidates are either elected or eliminated. The extra or unused votes are transferred according to the voter's stated preferences. The system minimizes “wasted votes”, provides approximately proportional representation, and enables votes to be explicitly cast for individual candidates rather than for closed party lists. It achieves this by using multi-seat constituencies (voting districts) and by transferring votes to other eligible candidates that would

otherwise be wasted on sure losers or sure winners. Such a method is used in India's upper house i.e. Rajyasbha and in Australia.

Chapter II

Political Parties in Russia: A Historical Background

INTRODUCTION

The political system of Tsarist Russia can be characterized as unrestrained despotism bordering on repression and martial law. No representative institution of any kind existed until 1864. In fact until 1905 Political parties and trade unions were illegal. Hence political parties existed only as underground associations. Before 1905, the Tsar was the supreme political authority. The Decembrists were the first in the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia. They wanted to overthrow the monarchy and set up a strong centralized republican government as a necessary means for achieving social reform. At the end of nineteenth century, Marxism began to make impact in Russia. The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was formed in 1898 with the aim of uniting the diverse revolutionary groups and organizations into one unified party. In 1903 the party split into two groups: the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. Vladimir Lenin and Julius Martov were two main leaders of the party. The collapse of all authority in March 1917 contained within it the seeds of future development.

At the very beginning the party gave a classical performance of its role as ‘guiding Nucleus’ (Schapiro: 1960: 246). It carried out the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. It was the upholder of ideology based on Marxism- Leninism. It was the CPSU which organized and constituted the Soviet state. During the course of its struggle for power, it appropriated the role of working class. The entire functioning of state and society was taken over by CPSU. The CPSU was always considered as a van-guard organization with the duty of leading the masses toward a communist society. It was deliberately kept as a minority organization, as an association of ‘the best element of soviet society’. And admission to it was difficult, protracted and selective during the early decades. Lenin always maintained that the party was the essential instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The programme of party adopted in 1961 replaced the earlier programme of 1919 which stated that party was now the vanguard of entire nation.

The Party structure closely resembled that of the State at all levels from the district upward. The party assumed superior position because it was the directing forces of social revolution. State organs were regarded as one of the 'Transmission belt' between the party and masses. In theory, the communist party was not considered as an alternative to the state organization. This was made amply clear way back in march 1919 at the 8th congress of the party. The party was only to play the leading and guiding role. In practice, the party apparatus controlled all key institutions. In the process the party structure was jelled with the state structure. Unity of thought and tight control made the system inflexible. Hence when the party was criticized and got delegitimized and collapsed, the other institutions fell like bunch of cards and automatically collapsed.

POLITICAL FORMATION IN THE TSARIST PERIOD

Communist Party did not emerge by accident, rather it evolved historically. The history of the revolutionary movement in Russia, of which Social Democracy was an integral part, began with Decembrist revolt (Fainsod 1969: 6). Although this uprising was crushed easily, its political ideas continued to inspire the future revolutionaries. Majority of the Decembrists were 'Jacobin' in politics with more concern for social reform than with liberty. Their goal automatically meant the over throw of autocracy as a necessary means for achieving social reform. The aspirations of the reformers were conditioned by the existence of a large peasant population. On the eve of emancipation of the serfs in 1861, out of the total population of seventy four million, the peasants farmed the overwhelming majority.

The regime of Aleksandra II (1855-81) witnessed the rise of the 'populist movement'. It's main inspiration was Aleksandra Herzen (1812-70). The doctrine of Herzen that Russia could, by virtue of its traditional peasant commune, travel a separate path to socialism, and thus avoid the evils of capitalism, received a more detailed exposition from N.G. Chernyshevsky (1828-89). Chernyshevsky, also known as the father of modern Russian radicalism influenced a generation of revolutionaries including Lenin. "A free and prosperous commune" he believed, 'would provide the basis for the society of the future' (Keep 1976: 245).

The Emancipation Act of 1861 had further strengthened this traditional form of land-tenure, which also included a primitive form of self-government by peasant households. The commune system tended to preserve the peasants as a separate social group. Three features distinguished: first, that within it the peasant had no right to property, but merely a right of user, within the commune and as determined by the commune; second he was restricted in his right to withdraw from the commune; and third, he was subjected to a form of state paternalism, partly due to sentiment and partly to a desire to maintain an efficient system of tax collection (Schapiro 1975: 1).

It was in the 1870's that the populists took the first steps towards creating an organization. They began by taking steps to set up circles for discussion and propaganda among the workers and peasants. These efforts led to the emergence of first Russian revolutionary party, Zemlia I Volia (Land and Liberty) which was founded by M.A. Natanson, A.D. Mikhailov and G.V. Plekhahov. The first programme adopted by Zemlia I Volia contained social rather than political demands - all land to the peasants, self determination for all parts of the Russian empire, and transfer of self-government functions to the peasant communes. The programme accordingly called for agitation in order to arouse and stimulate revolutionary section of civil liberty (Schapiro 1975: 2).

Although there was strong populist tradition against any kind of political objectives, pressure are inside Zemlia I Volia for more concrete and immediate political action. This became evident at a congress of the party held at Voronezh on 24 June 1879. The programme adopted at this congress declared that the immediate objective was the overthrow of the regime in order to liberate the people. There after a freely selected constituent assembly would decide the future course of action. The party would have to take the lead in overthrowing the autocracy, and preparing the people for the election that would follow. The task of organization was left to the conspiratorial party centre, the executive committee. But towards the end the only activity of *Narodnaia Volia* or 'People's will' proved to be the assassination of Aleksandra II (Fainsod 1969: 15).

The Voronezh Congress of Zemlia I volia was significant for another reason too. It led to Plekhanov's break with Zemlia I volia and the founding of a separate organization, Chernyi Peredel (Repartition of the land) by him along with a few supporters prominent among whom were P.B. Akhel'rod, Vera Zasulich and Leo Deich. In the first issue of Chernyi Peredel (The organ of the movement), Plekhanov and his supporters argued that it was only through economic struggle that the people could gradually learn the meaning of and the need for political struggle. The future founders of Marxism were thus preaching for over a year the very heresy, which under the name of 'economyism' this would soon condemn. On 25 September 1883, Plekhanov announced the publication in Veronika of a series of popular political pamphlets for workers to be called 'The Library of contemporary socialism'.

Thus, came into existence the first Russian theoretical Marxist group which came to be known as the group for the Liberation of labour and Plekhanov came to be rightly regarded as the father of Russian Marxism (ibid 1969: 38). The primary aim of Plekhanov and his companions was the formation of a social democratic party in Russia. The first to put this idea into practice, were not the Russians, but the Polish and Jewish inhabitants of the Russian Empire. The success of the Jewish organization (The Bund) in defending the interests of the workers gave considerable impetus to the development of the Russian movement. The successful experience among the Jewish workers was set down in a Pamphlet entitled 'Agitation' by A. Kremer.

The main theme of this influential pamphlet was firstly that, the Proletariat must on no account wait for the bourgeois to win freedom for it. Second, the masses could not be induced to take up the cudgels for abstract ideas. Third the development of proletarian consciousness was a gradual process evolved in a succession of battles for small, concerted demands. Late in 1895, Lenin who was already active in one of these circles joined forces with Martov to form the Petersburg union of struggle for the liberation of working class. The joint Political activity of Lenin and Martov did not last long and in December 1895, they were arrested and sent to Siberia (Fainsod 1969: 41-42).

In the midst of all these developments, all Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was founded. Its first congress met in Minsk on 1 March 1898. The congress elected a central committee of three-A. Kremer, B.L. Eidelman and S.I. Radchenko. The congress adopted a broadly democratic party structure with the central committee being made responsible to periodic congresses. The congress also issued a manifesto which was largely the work of Peter Struve a Marxist intellectual. The first congress did not exercise much practical influence as most of its delegates were arrested immediately after it. Conflict among the ideological leaders caused much damage to the party. These conflicts centered around two questions: organization, and what was called 'economism' in party polemics. The older party intellectuals were more concerned with the professional side of the revolution; the newer social democratic leaders were more intent on practical action such as strikes.

Meanwhile in course of his exile Lenin evolved the idea of creating a newspaper. It was hoped that this newspaper, besides safeguarding the Russian social democratic movement from ideological contamination would also form an organizational center for unifying the Russian underground committee. This idea was first formulated by Lenin in an article written in 1899, which remained unpublished (Schapiro 1979: 22). By the end of 1900 an agreement had been reached on policy, and on the composition of editorial board with Plekhanov, Aksel'rod, Vera Zasulich, Dotresov, Martov and Lenin. This scheme was put into effect when the first issue of the newspaper ISKRA (Spark) appeared in Leipzig on 24th Dec. 1900 (Carr 1950: 22-27).

Around this time Lenin started to emerge as one of the main leaders among others through clarity of his ideas and energy. It was the time when Lenin published his first major original work on revolutionary doctrine and revolutionary organization; 'What is to be done'? "Bolshevism as a stream of political thought and as a political party, Lenin was to write twenty year later has existed since 1903" (ibid 1950). The character of his writings was defined by the controversies evolving during the period in which it was conceived. Since the foundation of ISKRA, winning of political freedom by the overthrow of autocracy was put forward in the name of the proletariat political as well as economic demand. Lenin's writing started shaping the party doctrine and he

became the pacemaker of advanced ideas. Lenin put more focus on two propositions, the first was that "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement". The second was that 'social democratic consciousness' or 'class political consciousness' was not a spontaneous growth and could come to the worker only from within (Carr 1950: 25).

Lenin was clearly influenced by the autocratic nature of the Russian state which precluded the formation of any kind of socialist or even Democratic Party on a western model and drove every democratic or socialist movement into secret conspiratorial channels. Thus the whole emphasis came to rest on the need for a small closely knit party under a strong central leadership to act in the name of the proletariat as the spearhead of the revolution. The methods of the revolutionary struggle varied and had to be determined empirically from time to time. Lenin advocated these views with considerable success at the party's Second Congress held in Brussels and London during August 1903.

The Congress was marked by controversy over the definition of a party member, over how much autonomy local party organizations would have and on the issues of national self determination and cultural development of non-Russian nationalists. When seven delegates walked out of the Congress, Lenin and his follower were able to claim a "majority" and as a result of this fateful act, Lenin's faction becomes known as the 'Bolsheviks' (members of majority). The opponents who remained at the congress were called 'Mensheviks' (members of minority), and Lenin was to claim subsequently that this Bolsheviks were the majority even when they were in the minority in a badly divided party (Christopher 2005: 60).

Another party Socialist Revolutionary was founded in 1898. One of its main objectives was to collect and unite the diverse local socialist revolutionary groups that were against the Tsarist regime. The party's ideology were different than Marxist ideas, they wanted peasantry proletariat to spark the revolution instead of industrial. The party was highly supportive of the rural

peasantry but did not believe in land nationalization, which the Socialist Revolutionary Party believed.

The defeat of the autocracy in the Russia after Japanese war started a revolutionary storm in Russia, the revolutionary movement had started. The revolution of 1905 led to the formation of many progressive parties, like the Constitutional Democratic Party. It was a liberal party which was founded during the peak of the Russian Revolution of 1905, when Nicholas II was strained to grant basic rights to the people in signing the October Manifesto. The members of the party were normally known as the Kadets and mostly supported by professors and lawyers. The opposing parties at the time, the Constitutional Democratic Party, as a left-wing party, wanted universal suffrage and a constituent assembly that would write down the constitution, deciding the country's government. In the First State Duma elections of 1906, the Kadets received 30% of the seat but this initial success would go to waste as the government dissolved the Duma, calling it dysfunctional. The Kadets' leaders were soon banned from participation in the Duma due to a manifesto they wrote in response to the government's breaking up of the party. Finally the Kadets, who were not initially committed to the idea of a constitutional monarchy, declared their support for it and abandoned their revolutionary ambitions (Walkin 1954: 164).

The Octobrist Party was founded during the latter part of October in 1905, when the October Manifesto was being issued. Unlike the Constitutional Democratic party which was left, the Octobrist Party was a non-revolutionary centrist party, it was neither left-wing nor right-wing but in the middle. From starting Octobrist party believed in constitutional monarchy and also emphasised on the need of parliament (Duma) and complete government control over it. The Octobrist party and other groups associated with it did not do well in the elections for the First and Second State Dumas, as the Kadets made up the majority of the parliament.

After that, before the Third State Duma, the laws on parliament election changed in favour of the Octobrists, and they eventually made up the largest group of the Duma (Gill 1994: 78). The

Octobrist party could not grab the opportunity and take benefit of the majority; as they had no influence on the politics and as a result the Octobrist party split. The Union of the Russian People is the only one to hold up the Tsarist regime. A counter-revolutionary party was founded in St. Petersburg as a part of the Black Hundred movement. This anti-Semitic conservative movement supported the autocracy and went against all revolutionary causes.

Until 1905 the workers did not have the right to strike. It should be noted, however, that the law did not unconditionally prohibit all strikes or provide for the punishment of all strikes. There was, for example, no provision for punishment for strikes called at the end of the work contract, if no acts of violence were committed. The terms of the law were such also that strikes called in protest against terms of the work contract proposed, but not yet actually in force, could go unpunished, again if no acts of violence were committed. Nevertheless, neither collective bargaining nor strikes of any kind were permitted up to 1905, principally because of the inordinate fear of workers' disorders by the Ministry of the Interior, which ordered the governors to deal with any strike on the basis of the emergency laws and to exile striking workers to their home districts (i.e., the site of the peasant commune from which most of them came). In practice, of course, conditions under the Tsarist regime were such that the workers had no difficulty meeting in secret, came more and more under the influence of the revolutionaries as 1905 approached, and engaged in strikes on an increasing scale until after the revolution of that year (Mosse 1980: 282).

There were a number of other disadvantages arising from the police interests of the state from which the workers suffered. Thus under Article 5 In of the code of punishments, a worker who broke his work contract before it had expired was punishable by detention for not more than a month. A similar violation by the factory administration was properly recognized as a civil matter for which the worker could find redress only through a civil suit. Even if the factory owner failed to pay wages, or the worker was beaten, insulted, or otherwise badly treated, he could seek satisfaction or have his work contract annulled only through a civil suit (Articles 98, 106, Ustav o pronys'lennosti). A factory manager could impose fixed fines on workers for

misbehavior defined by law, and in the interest of maintaining discipline; the imposition of the fines could not be appealed. On the other hand, a normal system of appeals was established for any fines imposed on the factory managers for violation of the law (Degras 1956: 26).

The distinctiveness of the Russian factory inspection does not end with its powers of direct intervention into the affairs of management in the interests of the workers. From the point of view of the Government, even more important was its role as mediator between capital and labor, should disputes between them arise which threatened public order. As stated in Article 54 of the *Ustav o promyslennosti*, the inspection was "to adopt measures for the prevention of disputes and misunderstandings between the factory owners and the workers by means of the investigation on the spot of dissatisfactions which have arisen and by means of the peaceful agreement of the parties." It is correctly charged by Luntz that this phase of the functions of the inspection interested the Government even more than the enforcement of the factory laws, but as the history of the labor movement shows and the Government later admitted, government intervention in labor disputes proved to be a complete failure.

The role of the factory inspection as a conciliator between capital and labor appears to have had considerable success in the years immediately after the establishment of the inspection, when the complaints of the workers principally concerned those abuses regulated by the law of 1886, and the employers, fearing prosecution, tended to obey the instructions of the inspectors (Keep 1976: 112). However, as the employer became familiar with the competence of the inspectors and the abuses against which the law of 1886 was directed became less frequent, the conciliatory functions of the inspection lost their significance. "As has already been pointed out, the inspectors lacked powers of enforcement on most of the issues arising between capital and labor other than those regulated by the law of 1886 and the Moscow factory inspectors summed up the situation well in 1905 when they stated that the inspectors were in fact "not regulators of the relations between factory owners and workers, but buffers between the needs of the workers and the imperfection of the law".

The accumulated grievances of the workers led after 1896 to an increasing wave of strikes, and even if the inspection had the power to deal with them, it was forbidden by the policy of the Ministry of Finance to look into the grievances of the workers until they had first resumed their work. The workers naturally insisted that their grievances must be satisfied before they returned to work, and the Government, alarmed by the impact of the strikes on a society it was finding increasingly difficult to keep under control, generally took direct action to put an end to them. Nothing perhaps better illustrates the peculiar attitude of the Tsarist Government toward the labor problem than its reaction to the wave of strikes from 1896 to 1906, and this reaction is worthy of the closest study (Schapiro 1960: 422).

Two ministries, Finance and Interior, were most directly concerned with ending the strikes, and it is curious to note that they were not in complete agreement on what the government policy toward the strikes should be. The Ministry of Finance was charged with the promotion of industry, and although the successive Ministers were far from having identical views, it was natural for them to have a sympathetic attitude toward the economic problems of the industrialists and to espouse the latter's cause in resisting what they regarded as unreasonable concessions to the workers. The views of the Ministers of the Interior, on the other hand, were shaped by other influences. These ministers were drawn for the most part from the landowning nobility, who, as was pointed out above, retained the traditional attitude that the well to do must look after the welfare of the impoverished. Their education in economics tended to be meager or nonexistent, and since they held primary responsibility for the maintenance of public order, they were the government officials most alarmed by the wave of strikes (ibid 1960: 434).

It is understandable, therefore, why officials of the Ministry of the Interior should have been so receptive to the idea that some strikes are caused by the just dissatisfaction of the workers and that it is the responsibility of the Government to remove the causes of their dissatisfaction. "The chief and fundamental task of governmental supervision of the factories" Sipjagin return from a

tour through four provinces of European Russia, “must be the adoption of measures of a preventive character which would pursue the aim of warding off the possibility of the rise among the workers on grounds for dissatisfaction against the factory owners and against the Government”. It is easy, countered Witte, by means of administrative influence to convert living industrial institutions into dead charitable institutions, created by force at the expense of the possessing classes, which hardly corresponds to our state interests.

A partial consequence of this difference in the views of the Ministries of Finance and of the Interior was a struggle between them for control of the factory inspection, the details of which are, however, outside the scope of this research. With or without the control of the factory inspection, and with or without the consent of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Interior could take action within its own sphere. One of its moves, the experiment in police socialism from 1901 to 1905, is already well-known to Western readers and need not be dwelt upon here. The establishment of labor unions in violation of the law but under the protection of the secret police was motivated by the belief that if the Government assisted the workers in organizing and winning concessions from the industrialists, then their devotion to the existing order could be assured and the revolutionary parties rendered harmless (Carr 1950: 68).

To the Ministry of the Interior also, acting through the governors and other local officials, fell the primary responsibility for restoring order once strikes had broken out. When the wave of strikes began in 1895, the Ministry's first impulse was not to reward illegality by permitting concessions, even if the industrialists felt that they ought to make them. The police sought rather to compel the workers to return to work through the appropriate use of arrest and exile. This procedure, of course, merely inflamed the otherwise peacefully disposed workers, and not infrequently, it finally became necessary to call out the troops to restore order.

The Ministry quickly found another possible solution, namely to put pressure on the industrialists, sometimes before a strike had actually begun, to meet the demands of the workers,

and in 1903, Minister of the Interior even went so far as to threaten recalcitrant employers with exile to the Yenisei province in Siberia. This procedure too had its disadvantages, for the quick satisfaction of the workers' demands led workers in similar factories elsewhere to try to make the same gains with the result that military force replaced concessions as a means of dealing with the strikes, to the natural bewilderment of the workers. The constant possibility that gains made in one factory would lead to discontent in other factories sometimes caused the Government to forbid industrialists who recognized the justice of the workers' claims from making any concessions (Fainsod 1969: 84).

Information is not at present available on the extent to which the Government used force to suppress strikes or intervened on the side of the workers. In a memorandum on the labor problem prepared for the Tsar in January, 1905, Minister of Finance Kokovcov wrote: "In the majority of cases, the administration gave preference to the workers, as the weaker, and insisted that the industrialists obligatorily satisfy the demands of the workers." This statement is revealing, but it may not be valid for the entire period from 1896 to 1905, since it is likely, as the labor movement gathered momentum toward 1905 and the limited use of force by the Tsarist state was plainly fruitless, that the administration was finding it more and more expedient to back the workers. Nevertheless, government interference in behalf of the workers appears to have taken place on a significant scale and almost certainly began in the 1890's, if not from the start of the labor movement in the 1880's. The result of this arbitrary and inconsistent interference was disastrous, and every objective sought by the Government came to naught. Strikes became more frequent, more and more acquired political as well as economic objectives, and fell increasingly under the influence of the radical intelligentsia. Worse still from the point of view of the interests of the Russian people, the administration not only failed to inculcate a sense of legality in the masses, but actively encouraged disrespect both for the law and for the Government. By 1905, all this was recognized by the highest officials and a new course was projected for the labor problem (Keep 1976:117).

In the face of the rising strike movement after January 9, 1905, one of the first of the mistaken ideas to go was the idea that there was no labor problem in Russia at all and that the relations between the industrialists and the workers were governed by patriarchal benevolence. With the recognition that the labor problem was a serious one came a new eagerness to pacify the workers by means of protective legislation. In this field, a precedent had already been set in Germany by Bismarck, and Russian statesmen were quick to grasp the significance of that precedent. Commenting on the labor problem late in January of 1905, the Committee of Ministers stated The history of factory legislation of Germany, for example, shows that German statesmen, at the head of them Prince Bismarck, opportunely evaluated the significance of the labor problem, and having insisted on the promulgation of the most essential laws for its solution, laws on the state insurance of the workers, on their unions, on strikes, etc., then took the labor movement into their hands. Thanks to this, the strike which went soon in the Ruhr Basin simultaneously with ours, involving a large number of strikers ran its course peacefully, without the breach of public, much less state, order (Gill 1994: 78).

The result of the new approach to the labor problem was a strange conflict between the industrialists and the bureaucracy, with the bureaucracy represented this time by the Minister of Finance himself, V.N. Kokovcov demanded concessions for the workers, partly in the form of legislation to be worked out in the future, partly in the form of immediate action by the industrialists. The industrialists, thoroughly alarmed by the apparent readiness of the Government to sacrifice their interests, emphasized that the workers' disturbances were part of an agitation affecting all classes of the population, that economic concessions to the workers could not affect the situation, and that pacification could be achieved only through political concessions to be granted by the Government to society as a whole.

The views of the industrialists were in this case sounder than those of the Government, and their fears proved on the whole groundless. Kokovcov quickly abandoned his demand for immediate concessions on hours of work and wages, and the preparation of new legislation in behalf of the workers dragged on for several years in a government commission to which the factory owners

elected representatives. The only substantial result of the work of the commission was the sickness insurance law of 1912, passed by the Duma and the State Council, and approved by the Tsar on June 23 of that year. The urgency for new legislation lessened with the decline of the revolution in the cities after October 17, 1905, and final action on the new law seems to have been heavily influenced by the revival of the labor movement in 1910, a revival which continued with increasing intensity until the out- break of war in July, 1914 (Walkin 1954:167).

Another aspect of the "new course" was the recognition that state tutelage over the workers had been a failure, and that it was necessary to legalize both strikes on economic grounds and the organization of trade unions. It is an interesting commentary on the Tsarist administration that all the arguments now advanced in favor of such a change in policy had already been ably presented, with suggested changes in the law, in a memorandum of the Division of Industry of the Ministry of Finance, in 1902 and perhaps earlier, but until the old policy had proved a total failure, neither the Minister of Finance himself nor the other ministers seem to have given the memorandum serious attention. It was now admitted in the State Council that since strikes are primarily economic phenomena, they cannot be effectively dealt with by criminal measures.

Strikes in themselves are organically tied up with the economic conditions of industrial life, and are possible wherever hired labor is in use. Moreover, strikes arising on purely economic grounds and permeated exclusively by economic aims are not subject to suppression by criminal measures as is proved by the experience of all countries which have attempted to combat them by means of repression. Therefore, strikes of workers not accompanied by violence or damage to property are recognized as unpunishable by almost all legislators (Keep 1976: 118).

In discussing the problem as to whether to legalize the organization of trade unions, the State Council also conceded that state interference in behalf of the workers and the repression of strikes by military force threw the workers into the arms of the revolutionary movement. Until recently, no self-activity was permitted among the workers; hence it seemed to follow that the

Government took upon itself the whole burden of satisfying their numerous needs. Thanks to such a situation, the Government naturally was always blamed for the negative sides of the conditions of life of the workers, and the movement of the workers, instead of setting as its goal the improvement of their economic and social conditions, acquired the character of a revolutionary struggle with the existing state order.

Seventy- two members of the State Council took into account that the mediation of the factory inspection during the rise of misunderstandings between factory owners and workers did not prevent instances of the shift of these misunderstandings into open disorders, for the suppression of which there was not infrequently required the interference not only of the police but also of armed force, appearing in defense of the interests of the factory owners. Such an attitude of the authorities to the labor movement naturally roused the mistrust of the workers toward the Government and contributed to the growth among them of the influence of revolutionary propaganda. Making use of this mood agitator everywhere brought to life in the factories special organizations for the pursuit not so much of economic as of political aims, directed against the state order. At the present time it is necessary to encourage the workers to transfer from the above mentioned organizations, extremely harmful for the public peace, into such societies and associations as pursue exclusively professional aims (Schapiro 1960: 428).

Motivated by the complete and undeniable failure of the old policy and by the need to propitiate a public opinion roused to an uncontrollable peak against bureaucratic repression in the year 1905, the Government by the law of December 2, 1905, legalized strikes for economic purposes, and by the law of March 4, 1906, governing the organization of voluntary associations in general, legalized among other associations trade unions. It should, however, be pointed out that despite very unfavorable conditions, including, of course, renewed government repression, a small number of trade unions did survive, so long as Russia remained at peace, and the Government became powerless either to do away with them entirely or to modify the law of March 4, 1906. As for the manner in which the Government dealt with the new wave of strikes from 1910 to the outbreak of war in July, 1914, given the breakdown of the original plan that both the

entrepreneurs and the workers should organize and settle their disputes themselves, it was inevitable that the Government would again intervene.

It should be pointed out that the management of the labor movement in underdeveloped countries presents great difficulties regardless of the political complexion of the Government. This arises partially from the fact that the workers tend to be too ignorant to understand the position of the entrepreneur and present impossible demands which no entrepreneur, private or governmental, and regardless of his attitude toward the workers, could possibly fulfill without undermining his industry. This situation was pointed out in the State Council in 1906, which stated: owners completely unacceptable demands, insupportable for a given industrial enterprise, is explained, aside from the instigations of revolutionary agitators striving to aggravate the labor problem, by the ignorance of the workers concerning the economic factors of industrial production. To explain to the workers the significance of these factors, to point out to them the means for the peaceful compromise of the interests of capital and labor, must constitute the next, inalienable task of the newly created trade unions (Fainsod 1969: 83).

One Russian writer, who certainly cannot be regarded as a "reactionary," even argued in 1907 that the workers were not ready for complete self-government and that many disputes between capital and labor could be solved in the best interests of the country only through the intervention of the state. From the standpoint of the state, the situation was made even more difficult by the presence in the labor movement of revolutionaries, who were interested not in solving the labor problem but in making it worse, and who, therefore, encouraged the workers to make impossible demands. The possibility exists, therefore, that the ultimate solution of the labor problem in Russia (and in other underdeveloped countries) rests on the delicate adjustment of the need to maintain some form of tutelage over the workers and the need to give the workers an opportunity to learn the art of self-government. The management of this adjustment will require the greatest statesmanship, for too much tutelage can lead to tyranny and the premature grant of too much self-government can lead to anarchy.

The first reaction among all the Social Democrats was to boycott the Duma elections as there was no guarantee that electoral canvassing and agitation would be free from police interference. For the Bolsheviks, the Duma was a reactionary body which would merely encourage false illusions among the workers. The best course for the social democrat was to boycott the elections and after the Duma had assembled to exploit the conflicts which would arise between the Duma and the people. The Mensheviks, though divided in their views believed that the Duma could serve as a valuable source of experience for the worker by teaching them that only a democratic constituent assembly could satisfy their demands. Like the Bolsheviks, The Socialist Revolutionaries too decided to boycott the elections. This policy resulted in the complete disorganization of the workers. Left to themselves, the workers in some cases returned to candidates with social democratic sympathies. The peasants in the absence of socialist candidates voted for the *Kadet* resulting in its emerging as the strongest party in the Duma, with 179 out of 478 seats. Eighteen social democrats were also elected (Carr 1950: 45-70).

The Social Democrats had not played a very active role in the first Duma. With no Bolsheviks in the Duma, the tactics of the social democrats was more like that of the Mensheviks. As the time for the elections to the second Duma approached, Lenin who had earlier called for a boycott of the elections decided to reconsider his views. He declared that history had demonstrated that the Duma was a valuable forum for agitation (Lenin 1962: 28-32). An electoral compromise with the Mensheviks worked well with the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks co-operating fairly harmoniously in the electoral campaign. On 3 June 1907, the Tsar issued a manifesto dissolving the second Duma. A new electoral law considerably restricting suffrage was promulgated. The immediate cause of the dissolution was the refusal of the Duma to surrender for trial the members of the Social Democratic 'faction' on the charge of fomenting an uprising among the armed forces. The effect of the revised electoral law was clearly evident in the composition of the new Duma which met on 1 Nov. 1907. The majority of the deputies were right wing or liberal conservative Octobrists, of the radicals the *Kadet* now numbered only fifty four and the social democrats

eighteen of which the great majority were the Mensheviks with only five Bolsheviks (Carr 1950: 47).

In January 1912 Lenin gathered his followers in Prague for a conference, as result of which his organization came to be called the Russian Social Democratic Labour party (of Bolsheviks) and the division of the Russian Marxist into two parties was final. With the binging of 1st world war the first reaction of the Russian proletariat was a patriotic upsurge. The situation soon changed when rising costs, shortage of commodities, economic depression, defeat and disorganization started having its effect and major workers unrest were witnessed in Moscow and Petrograd. Among the radical parties, the Kadet supported the war effort. The Socialist Revolutionaries were far from united in this matter: some supported it, while the others opposed it. Inside the Duma, the Russian Social Democrats refused to vote for the war budget and issued a declaration in August 1914 repudiating the war, and calling on the international proletariat to work for its termination. In spite of the split both the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks agreed on the declaration (Fainsod 1969:42),

In March 1917, the Russian monarchy and the old regime collapsed in the largely spontaneous and virtually bloodless revolution. The old order collapsed not because new claimants for power were pushing it aside but through its own inherent weakness. Out of this void two potential governments emerged, the provisional government of the liberal intelligentsia pledged to some form of constitutional government, and Petrograd soviet, a revival of 1905, claiming to speak in the mystic name of revolution. To the provisional government the revolution stood for democratic freedoms, for liberation from oppression and for a chance to prosecute effectively a war which the inefficient monarchy had hampered. The soviet in which the Mensheviks and socialist revolutionary's pre dominated until 1917, viewed the imperialist war with disgust and bourgeois provisional government with suspicion, they demanded conclusion of peace on just, democratic terms (Schapiro 1979: 25).

From February to October 1917, Russia lived under the so called 'dual-power'. By September the Bolsheviks who were at the outset a tiny minority in the soviets obtained a majority in the Petrograd and Moscow soviet. Lenin returned from exile to Petrograd in April 1917 and came round independently to the same view as that of Trotsky that the socialist and bourgeois revolution should be telescoped into one. The record of event between the February and October revolution of 1917 reveals that the Bolsheviks seized power.

The Bolsheviks won because once the Tsar was overthrown they were the only group who consistently evoked confidence in their ability to seize and maintain power (Carr 1950: 45-70). There were other reasons too which contributed towards the victory of Bolsheviks besides singleness of purpose, they possessed a superior organized and disciplined armed force the Red Guard. Their slogan of bread, peace and land brought them considerable support among the workers and sections of the army nearest to the capital, also they had ample funds which they skillfully used to suit their purpose (ibid 1950). The decree of Nov. 1917 of the Second All-Russia Congress, of Soviet established the Council of People's commissars. It was described as the 'provisional workers and peasants government' exercising authority until the convocation of constituent assembly.

Elections to the constituent assembly were held in Nov. 1917. The Bolsheviks secured only a quarter of the total votes polled. Half of the country voted for socialism but rejected Bolshevism. The signing of Brest-Litovsk treaty in February-March 1918 marked the beginning of the end of the coalition government. In July 1918 the Socialist Revolutionaries pulled out of the coalition government to raise the country to revolutionary war. Within the party it produced an open opposition movement, led by Bukharin which came to be known as 'left communism' (Schapiro 1960: 187). During the first three to four years of the revolution almost every policy decision of the party was preceded by a policy conflict both within and without the party. This resulted from a number of factors. Firstly, the Bolshevik party had not clearly chalked out a plan for building socialism. Secondly the circumstances in which the Bolshevik party operated had been exacted before the seizure of power. Thirdly many members of Bolshevik party were not fully in accord

with Lenin's policy and sometimes non-Leninist views prevailed. The Bolsheviks did not possess a monopoly of political power until July 1918.

SOVIET RUSSIA: TOWARDS A MONOLITHIC PARTY

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was one of the largest Communist organizations in the world and the only legal ruling Political Party in the Soviet Union. Under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, CPSU emerged from the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. The Bolsheviks wanted to establish the world's first socialist state. In 1918 Bolsheviks named their party as Russian Communist Party and in 1920 the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine joined them. Later the party was renamed as the CPSU in 1952.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF SOVIET UNION: ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

In pre revolutionary phase CPSU adopted many specific principles in order to regulate its internal functioning. After Bolshevik revolution there were free debates going on, about forming an appropriate way forward for the society setting to create socialism as a preliminary to communism. The basic organizational principle of the CPSU was Democratic Centralism. It involves election of all leading bodies from the lowest to the highest, periodical reports of party bodies to their party organization and to the higher bodies, the decision of higher bodies are obligatory on the lower bodies, strict party discipline and subordination of minority to the majority¹. Fundamental law of the party was laid down in preamble and it focused on 'monolithic' unity in ideas and organization, and prohibition of all 'faction' and groups. This proposal was adopted at the 10th congress in March 1921. The duty of party member was to use his entire endeavor to strengthen the ideological and organizational unity of the party (Article 2). But, as a party member, one had the 'inalienable' right to engage in free and business like discussion of the policy of individual party organization and the party as a whole. There was even provision for discussion on a nationwide scale in certain instances, with safeguards against the formation of groups (Article 27).

¹ Rule of the CPSU, adopted by 22nd congress of the CPSU, 31st oct1961, Soviet Booklet no.82, London,1961,p.11

The territorial organization was roughly same as the administrative sub-division of the country. All-union level organization comprised of the All-union congress and the permanent organs of party administration e.g. the Central Committee, the Politburo a Secretariat, a committee of party control etc. the next tier was formed by the party organizations of the fourteen union republics (except RSFSR), of the six areas and of the regions, which for party purpose included the autonomous republics and autonomous regions. They were 142 in total in April 1971. The last tier comprised of ten circuit organizations, 1964 city organizations 448 urban and 2810 rural district organization. The functional organization of party was composed of 370,000 primary party organizations at industrial enterprises, state and collective farms and government, educational, cultural, scientific and trading institutions.

RSFSR was the largest and most important union republic and it had no party organization separate from the All-union organization. The party organisation of union republics were in no sense a national political parties but a branch of all union organization which were subjected to parties rules and discipline like any other subordinate organisation. This principle of centralization, cutting across the national division of the country was always cardinal in party policy. The supreme policy-making organ of the party was called the Politburo. The Politburo was in practice the real centre of power and in theory elected by and was responsible to the central committee. In March 1919, Orgburo was set up as a second sub-committee of the Central Committee, overlapping in membership with and lower in status than the Politburo. According to Lenin the general principle of assigning matters was that while the Orgburo allocated forces, the politburo decided policy. At the same time third sub-committee Secretariat had emerged.

These four bodies Central committee, the Politburo, the Orgburo and the Secretariat virtually controlled all aspects of country's life (Schapiro 1960: 235-45). After 1922, the main centre of party administration was the Secretariat headed by Stalin as General Secretary. The improvements effected to consolidate it as the real centre of power between 1924 and 1927 were

as follows. First, after the setting up of organized the system of control over subordinate party organization was perfected by improving the inspection, guidance and verification of the work of the local committees. Second, the system of maintaining personal records was rationalized the centre how kept the all records in case of key man and delegated the responsibility of other records to local organizations. A third change also involved more delegation. The practice of making appointments by the centre was restricted to limited list of key posts.

MEMBERSHIP

In 1918 CPSU had a membership of approximately 200,000. In the late 1920s under Stalin, the party started a heavy recruitment campaign of new members from both the working class and rural areas. This was both an attempt of the party as well as Stalin to strengthen his base and influence in the party by outnumbering the old Bolsheviks. In 1925 there were only 1,025,000 communist party members in a population of 147 million. After an intensive recruitment campaign, their membership rose to 1,200,000 in 1927. By 1933, the party had approximately 3.5 million members. Due to great purge, party had to cut down its membership to 1.9 million by 1939. In 1986, approximately 10% of USSR's adult population or 19 million people were members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Of these members 44% were classified as industrial workers and 12% were collective farmers.

The CPSU had party organizations in fourteen of the USSR's 15 republics. There was no separate communist party present in Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). All the affairs were directly controlled by CPSU. Children could get directly enrolled as young pioneers and by the age of 14, they might graduate to Komsomol (Young Communist League) and if they show proper commitment to party discipline or had the right connection, they would become the members of Communist Party itself. However, membership also had its obligations. Members of Komsomol and CPSU were expected not only to pay dues but also to carry out appropriate assignments and "social tasks".

LENIN TO BREZHNEV

After October revolution, the major developments which marked the period were the increase of authority of a small Central Party leadership. The transformation of the Party from a revolutionary organization directed to the overthrow of existing institutions into the direction nucleus of a governmental and administrative machine, and finally, the creation of a monopoly through the elimination of other parties (Schapiro 1979: 38).

The adoption of the new economic policy created deep division in the ranks of Communist Party. NEP was introduced to placate the peasantry and rebuilt the economy; the initial policy change agreed to at the 10th Party Congress in March 1921 was to replace the method of surplus appropriation of grain by tax in kind. Any grain produced above the tax could be freely marketed by the peasant. But the left wing of party led by Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamanev were against NEP and were in favor of industrial programme by squeezing the peasantry. For Lenin the economic reforms were only a subsidiary to the political reform if the supremacy of the Communist Party and its monopoly of power was to be preserved. He argued that the attempt at direct transition to communism had been a grave misstate. The proper road was from small scale production to state capitalism and them to socialism and only thereafter to communism.

An insight into the party during formative years reveals several striking features. At the policy making level, at the summit, a high proportion of newcomers including stalwarts like Trotsky and Bukharin had emerged. Much of the friction of the early years of communist rule owes its explanation to this factor. In sharp contrast to this, in actual party apparatus, Lenin's pre-revolutionary collaborators culminated. Thus the organizational structure after the revolution was in this respect very close to the pre-revolutionary structure. It is significant that closer one came to the centre of power, one became representation of the older Bolsheviks in the party apparatus. Secondly, the tendency to use old Bolsheviks in the party apparatus in the local organizations was showing a natural increase by 1922. So far as party state relations are concerned, the eight Congress in March 1919 decided that there has to be an end to the integration of party and soviet

led party committees were to maintain themselves in a position to 'guide' and 'control' government bodies through directives given to the party 'faction' inside them. The new central machine took steps to consolidate its position. As a first step, it liquidated the autonomy of various party institutions and organizations operating outside the control of regular machine. Secondly, it brought the local party committee under the control of Central Committee.

Stalin was appointed General Secretary in 1922. He started making own appointments, especially people from centre rather than from the soviets. In a conscious manner, Stalin neglected and isolated the earlier Bolshevik leadership. It was victory in the factional disputes over policy especially after the death of Lenin which helped Stalin to gain supremacy over the party. The policy of opposition to NEP was described as 'un-Leninist'. Once the NEP was abandoned in 1929, the right wing faction of Bukharin was also sidelined. A combination of apparatus power, factional victories and more importantly his sheer persuasive and political skill put Stalin in undisputed control of soviet politics by the end of 1920's. The period of 1936-37 was period of great purges which saw tremendous increase in police and widespread use of arbitrary arrest and punishment of suspect citizens and party workers. Not only the old Bolsheviks but a large percentage of Stalin's loyal supporters in the party were destroyed by purges. The party as Lenin said was, in theory, monolithic.

The Tenth Congress had put an end to factionalism. The party was also 'monopolistic' in a way that it enjoyed a monopoly of right to interfere in personal and private affairs as well as it was only party tolerated. Even in 1921 severe measures were taken to subdue the party but it was never destroyed as institution. Congress meetings were held regularly, control organs of the party retained a pinch of independence and some ideological robustness survived for years. Lenin dominated the party but never destroyed it as an institution. The purges broke the ranks of the party both from inside as well as outside, as a result any possibility of cohesion or solidarity were effectively ruined. Stalin destroyed the party as an institution, and undermined its monopolistic position. He used both the personnel of the security police and the state bureaucracy to impose

his personal rule over those who were his rival in the party. The 'atomization' of society was completed in the year of terror (Schapiro 1960: 422-35).

The overall effect of the purges became clear when Malenkov gave the eighteenth Party Congress in 1939 an analysis of party members over the years. Only 8.3% who joined the party earlier at the end of 1920 survived of the total membership at the beginning of 1921, less than a fifty remained in party in 1939. Less than half of total members who joined between 1929 and 1933 survived the purges. The social composition of the party had undergone a profound change which was mainly the result of deliberate policy of recruitment. In the initial years after the launching of first five year plan, there was a traditional preference for working class recruits to the party. The avowed aim was to increase the proportion in the party of workers actually engaged in production and this aim was achieved. Production rose from 40.8% in January 1928 to 48.6% in 1930.

In the Eighteenth Congress new party rules abolished preferential categories for admission to the party and threw open membership to all 'conscious and active workers, peasants, and intellectuals, loyal to the cause of communism (ibid: 1960: 443). The effect of purges and new recruitment policy on party were chiefly three. First, 70% of recruits came from the new intelligentsia secondly, it was now a young party more than half of delegates to the Eighteenth Congress were under thirty five thirdly, the party was still predominantly male. In 1941 woman formed only 14.9% of the total membership, infect a decline from 15.9% in 1932. The transformation of party ensured Stalin's supremacy. By 1939 this was virtually unchallengeable (Fainsod 1953: 245-82).

There were major significant shifts in CPSU polices under Khrushchev. First, it became a mass party, yet at the same time selective. It freed itself from its doctrinal preference for proletarian membership and admitted experts and specialists from various fields. Secondly there was predominance within the party of the apparatus of officials and secretaries. Thirdly, there was

centralization of the apparatus itself. At the top of the hierarchy of secretaries and officials were the secretaries of the Central Committee, controlling through their subordinate officials the several departments of Secretariat. Despite all, administrative devolution the three of control laid firmly in the hand of the control secretariat. Fourth, personal ascendancy of Stalin led to the brutal imposition of the idea of monolithic unity upon the party and nation.

Stalin governed through the party and also without it. Khrushchev restored the intuitional framework of the party, its organs and regularities, which Stalin had destroyed. Party elections under Khrushchev were rigidly control from the centre as before. The most momentous change effected by Khrushchev was his repudiation of Stalin. At the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, in Feb. 1956 Khrushchev delivered his famous attack on the period of the 'cult of personality'. But he himself as first secretary retained personal authority to exercise over all party officials as well as party members. Khrushchev insistence on asserting his personal will in the matters of appointments and policy was one of the major factors for his quarrel with party apparatus.

Brezhnev succeeded Khrushchev as General Secretary and Kosygin was chosen as chairman of council of ministers. Both the offices were merged in 1977 when Brezhnev became the chairman of the Presidium of the USSR. By the early seventies Brezhnev's domination was clearly established. It was the 1977 constitution under Brezhnev in which for the first time constitution mentioned the CPSU as the 'leading and guiding force' of soviet society and 'The nucleus' of its political systems and all state and public organization (Article 6). Regarding the composition of CPSU since the 24th congress, the report at the 15th Congress, stated the strength of party to be at 15,694,000 members, of them 41.6% were worker, 13.9% collective farmers, nearly 20% in the technical fields and 24% were working in the fields of science, literature, arts, education public health management and military².

² XXV CPSU Congress: Documents and Resolutions (New Delhi,1976), p.63

In the post-Brezhnev era Andropov became the CPSU general secretary he survived only for 15 months. Andropov initiates limited reform in agriculture, industry and in the party. After his death Chernenko succeeded him. His leadership was a balanced coalition, two regular central committee plenums were held during Chernenko's period of office. Neither plenum made any change in the membership of Politburo or Secretariat and Central Committee. Andropov and Chernenko's tenure was a transitional phase prior to the Gorbachev era.

GORBACHEV REFORM: WITHERING AWAY OF CPSU

In the preceding decades things were not smooth for the Soviet Union. It faced many challenges in the emerging national and international arena. The new General Secretary of the Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev's tenure started with new challenges which forced him to go for a reform programme in the party and the state. The Soviet Union had become economically fragile, Mikhail Gorbachev's reform programme became famous as 'perestroika' (restructuring) an economic reform, and 'glasnost' (openness) denoted transparency in government. Gorbachev's politics, intended merely as an internal reform of the centralized government of the union, triggered a process whereby many of the constituent republics asserted political independence and eventually general elections in these republics produced elected regional leaders who could challenge Moscow's authority. Boris Yeltsin was elected president of the largest of the constituent republics "Russia".

Upon coming to power as general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it was soon made apparent that Mikhail Gorbachev planned to revive the stagnant Russian economy. To do this, Gorbachev would initiate a series of reform programmes that he hoped would help in his quest to 'accelerate socio-economic development and the perfection of all aspects of social life. Whatever his aspirations when he became the Soviet leader in 1985, it is doubtful that Gorbachev could have foreseen that he would be remembered as the person who presided over not only the loss of Moscow's dominion over Eastern Europe but the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union as well (Barry & Moser 2001:78). Glasnost was one of the most distinctive

reform policies that was started by the Gorbachev leadership. It meant "openness" or "publicity" but in no sense it should be considered as freedom of press or right to information. It was his belief that people will not commit themselves to reform programs until and unless they are aware of the real state of affairs and considerations that led to a particular decision.

The key issue during the early month was that to acceleration economic growth which required a greater degree of decentralization but still there were no talks of any kind of radical reforms let alone the creation of market. By 1987, however, these reform initiatives would take a dramatic shift. It was realized at this time that economic reconstruction required a degree of political democratization. It was felt by Gorbachev that political stability would be assisted if reformist (albeit pro- Soviet) leaders could build up their domestic legitimacy by introducing official accountability, and by democratizing their political system (Gill 2006:5).

A great stride has been taken since Gorbachev initiated these efforts for democratization in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev established plans for elections to create a new system of legislative powers at the level of the Soviet Union in 1989 and to the Supreme Soviets in Republics in 1990. Both of these plans were faithfully implemented. Gorbachev's two-tiered legislature was implemented at the union level following elections in March 1989. The idea of competitive elections gave a chance to group of democratic activists to mobilize their followers to elect known reformers and defeat the candidates representing old Communist Party. The democrats were successful in doing this, and Gorbachev, as party leader lost his influence and considerable power to control the pace of reform (Sakwa 2008: 98).

In early 1990s, Gorbachev was facing an increasingly active opponent, on one side were hard conservatives in the central state bureaucracies on his right and left were democratic forces who wanted to start a movement for national sovereignty in the union republics. In order to strengthen his political position, he started a series of constitutional amendments for the creation of state presidency through the Congress of People's Deputies he eventually won the Deputies for the creation of post of president (Gunther & Larry 2001:7). Moreover Gorbachev requested that

Congress should elect the president rather than through direct popular consensus. Gorbachev using his extensive power and influence had himself elected as the president of USSR, being the first and the last person to hold that position.

The presidential office created by Gorbachev was extremely powerful. It gave him both personal powers as well as mass participation in the political system. The president exercised immense power which included that he could name and dissolve the government, suspend legislative enactments, declare emergencies, and impose presidential rule as a result the establishment of the presidency led to the problem of 'competing mandates' between the legislative and executive branches. There were deep conflicts between the president and legislature over the proper division of powers and even after the collapse of the Soviet Union , it continued to be one of the most decisive factor in post-Soviet Russia (Christopher 2005: 121).

In order to create a powerful presidency, it did not inhibit popular tides of republican sovereignty and democratic reforms. In 1990 these movements were given further momentum around the time of elections for the legislative organs of the union republics. The Democratic forces constituted of nearly 40% of the newly elected Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) parliament. The democratic forces quickly used this success to consolidate their support, by electing prominent democratic politicians to positions of power (Makinen 2009:11). In the Russian Congress, the democrats succeeded after three ballots appointing Boris Yeltsin as chairman of Russian Parliament. Yeltsin after assuming the role of chairman ensured that the committees of the parliament was headed by the democratically-oriented deputies which helped in easing the stranglehold the Communist Party had on Russian politics.

While the democratic and conservative sides were roughly equal in strength, the strength of popular hostility to communist power and privilege enabled the democrats to win a number of significant legislative victories in the newly established Congress. This was especially the case in large cities and industrial centers but still in rural areas many high posts were acquired by

conservatives and they faced very little opposition. Soon the democratic forces at all level began to divide in rival factions. They were unable to maintain any sort of partisan discipline and the newly elected legislature soon started to express frustration over its inability to seize levers of power and force to become more responsive to the will of people (Gill 1994: 82).

As 1990 wore on, a widespread trend developed among the nationalist in the republics for the need of more powerful president that could resist the central government in Moscow. The hold that Communist Party had over the union started to fade. Communist Party itself started to weaken and disintegrating into smaller factions. Both conservatives and reformist started to realise the need for strong presidency as the only solution to avoid the decay of order and authority in the state. Gorbachev agreed, and in a pattern that was to become all too familiar under Yeltsin, Gorbachev attempted to expand the power of the presidential office.

In January 1991, responding to Gorbachev's call for a union-wide referendum on the concept of a 'renewed' federal Union, Yeltsin won over the Russian parliament's leadership to the idea of placing another question on the referendum ballot in Russia. This would test the Russian electorate's support for a directly elected president, and would thus have an enormous moral and political advantage over the union president. A referendum was held in March 1991 to test the Russian electorate's support for the creation of a Russian presidency (Hofferbert 1998:37). About 70 percent of the voters in the referendum endorsed the proposal, and later in the month, at the 3rd Congress of People's Deputies, Yeltsin's plans for a popularly elected executive presidency were approved. The presidential election for the Russian republic was held in June and was vigorously contested. The balloting marked the first time in Russia's history that its political leader had been chosen by means of popular democratic elections.

Boris Yeltsin triumphed in this election, winning over 57 percent of the vote in a field of six candidates. This gave him democratic legitimacy that virtually no other politician in the former Soviet Union could claim. While the elections of 1990 and 1991 were integral to the development of political institutions, they also set the stage for a bitter struggle between President Yeltsin and his legislative opponents. This struggle centered on whether the country

should have a parliamentary system dominated by a strong legislature or a presidential system dominated by a powerful chief executive.

After rallying the country to defeat the August coup attempt in the fall of 1991, President Yeltsin looked virtually unchallengeable. In November, the Russian Congress of People's Deputies voted Yeltsin special powers for a year, and endorsed the presidential blueprint for rapid marketisation drawn up by Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar. However, as economic reform generated increasing economic hardships, relations between the president and the parliament began to sour. Yeltsin's short honeymoon with the legislature was over." Ironically, Yeltsin, as chairman of the national legislature, had played a substantial role in enhancing the legitimacy of legislative prerogatives during the last year of Soviet rule. Legal amendments assured that the powers of the executive were derived from the legislature, with political accountability extending from the former to the latter. However, post-Soviet realities quickly altered Yeltsin's view, and he struggled for new constitutional arrangements which he hoped would bolster the powers of the executive (Sakwa 1995:89).

The speaker of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies, Ruslm Khasbulatov, a one-time ally of Yeltsin who would emerge as a leading spokesperson against the President and his initiatives, sought to curb Yeltsin's extensive power. Khasbulatov proved quite sway in directing the legislature and safeguarding the prerogatives it had secured during the late Soviet period, and formulated his own draft constitution that would drastically constrain Yeltsin's powers. Each leader had sufficient power to block the other's major initiatives, but neither had enough political strength to push his preferred constitutional model through the drafting process. Political gridlock and constitutional crisis resulted (Mikkel 2006:67). By late 1992, the struggle between Yeltsin and Khasbulatov was already quite pointed, contributing to a political gridlock that reflected not only the politics of personality, but the politics of fundamental system and institution building in post-Soviet Russia. Yeltsin continued in his attempts to resolve the constitutional debate. Every time he offered to put the constitutional referendum back on the political agenda to solve this frustrating deadlock in Russia, however, his opponents continued to derail all his efforts.

The Supreme Soviet was continuing to issue counter-edicts to every presidential decision, and the ensuing deadlock threatened to destroy the regime as well as to put in jeopardy the transformation. Something had to be done to alleviate the powerlessness of the Russian government which was for the most part a result of this persistent constitutional debate? Divisions within the parliament and its leadership constrained legislative dominance during 1992-93, but Yeltsin failed to find the legal means either by directive or national referendum to secure a preeminent decision-making position for the executive branch. Only a presidential crackdown in late 1993 enabled the executive to secure the position Yeltsin so desired. In August, the Russian parliament set in motion constitutional amendments that would have reduced the president to a political figurehead. On September 21, Yeltsin counter-attacked by issuing Decree 1400, dissolving the Supreme Soviet and calling for new legislative elections on December 12, at which time the electorate would also decide the fate of a draft constitution Yeltsin had constructed that was decidedly weighted in favour of the executive (Gill 1994: 75).

This turn of events did not sit well with the Supreme Soviet, and in a move reminiscent of the USSR Supreme Soviet two years earlier, rebel deputies refused to leave the political stage gracefully. For two weeks, supporters of the parliament, including many ex-deputies occupied the White House. On October 4, Yeltsin's forces succeeded in forcing the rebels out of the building through the use of superior military force. The White House was charred black as a result of extensive tank fire, and over one hundred people were killed. A victorious Yeltsin then scheduled elections for a new parliament and a referendum on a new constitution, suspended the Constitutional Court, and reopened the constitutional drafting process. History is written by the victors, and so are new constitutions (Christoher 2005: 117). When the text of Yeltsin's constitutional proposal was published on November 10, there were few surprises. Yeltsin's draft constitution provided for a very strong presidency. To provide some semblance of constitutional foundation for the fruits of his labor, Yeltsin issued a decree placing the draft constitution before the electorate to be approved in a popular referendum on December 12, 1993, the same day as the parliamentary elections.

According to the official results, the constitution was approved by 58 percent of those voting. However, only 54.8 percent of the electorate took part in the referendum. Critics of Yeltsin's draft have deemed the constitution illegitimate on the grounds that it contravenes the 1978 Constitution (Basic Law) of the Russian Federation (and subsequent amendments) and of the 1990 Russian Federation's law "On referendum. According to the Russian Federation Law "On Referendums," in order to adopt a Constitution or make amendments to the Constitution, a majority of the votes of the total electorate must be obtained. As it was, the Constitution was approved by the votes of less than a third of all eligible voters.

Yeltsin attempted to thwart such criticism by having his decree describe the vote as a 'plebiscite' rather than a referendum, and therefore only a simple majority of actually-participating voters would suffice for the draft to be adopted (Hale 1999:79). Despite the fact that the constitutionality of this procedure has yet to be established, the decline in criticism against the constitution in the past few years suggests that it has become generally accepted. As well, after gaining control of the Lower House after the 1995 State Duma elections, it seems unlikely that the Communists (previously the chief critics of the Constitution) would continue to argue so vehemently against the constitution's adoption, especially if the Duma proves to be an effective counter-balance to the executive.

Chapter III

Emergence of Multi Party System in Post-Soviet Russia

INTRODUCTION

A democratic system is typically characterised by the space that enable a proper functioning of a multi-party system which is an essential part of the democratic apparatus, and there is preeminence of political parties in political change, reform and governance. By end of 1980s, Russia looked towards transition from an authoritarian structure to a democratic society along line of market economy.

Historically speaking, such a fundamental modification requires a political setup where a multi-party system is favorably accorded a special place and importance. The formative phase of a multi-party system being a completely new vector for Russia, encountered both objective and subjective difficulties. The two decades long controversial process gave an opportunity to judge its preliminary results, as well as various conditions that facilitated or hindered the advance of Russian political history to new frontiers (Emmons 1993: 18).

The transition from a single party system to a multi-party system which reflects varied opinions in public arena began during the late 1980s of the Soviet Union. During the prevailing circumstances, it appeared that the political vanguard of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was incompetent to handle the problems that overwhelmed Soviet Russia in the 1980s. The crises spread across all spheres of life of the Soviet society, which suddenly shed its veneer of prosperity, eroded the belief of general population in the “leading role” of the CPSU, compelling the party to gradually adapt itself to changed conditions (Alan 1996: 50). The replacement of three secretary generals from November 1982 to March 1985 surprisingly coincided with three basic trends in the then Communist leadership: the trend for reform as seen by security agencies, personified by Yuri Andropov, the trend for conservatism (Konstantin Chernenko), and the trend for democratic reforms (Mikhail Gorbachev).

The 1985- 1990 period shows lack of consistency in the policies of the “architect of *perestroika*”, his veering from one extreme to another extreme, and his lack of a team of like-minded people,

which intensified centrifugal trends within the CPSU. Emergence of Boris Yeltsin in the Russian politics only seemed like the birth of a champion. Indeed, his personal courage in confronting conservative sections from the Politburo exhibited the resentment many Communists of lower and medium levels felt towards everything labeled as “stagnation phenomena,” which continued even after the reformists came to power. At the other end, the existence of the conservative group led by Yegor Ligachev and Ivan Polozkov was not just a protruding of personal ambitions of the provincial officialdom, opposed to Gorbachev.

Along with the distinct erosion of the CPSU ranks, there emerged another strand of inexperienced political activity. Non-CSPU members, firstly creative intellectuals and researchers became highly active in large and developed industrial centers of Russia, nurturing to group at informal public-discussion clubs. In fact, these very activists raised for the first time the issue of setting up Western-type political associations, other than the CSPU: social-democratic, liberal-conservative, national and religious ones. As stated the period 1989-1991 became a phase of turbulent political activity (Barry 2001: 21).

The electoral system to the USSR Supreme Soviet and to the legislature of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) within the Soviet Union made it possible to nominate non-Communist candidates and even bitter critics of the CPSU’s course. The Inter-Regional Deputies’ Group of the USSR Congress of People’s Deputies and the Democratic Russia organization, that appeared during elections to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet and which included many members of unofficial associations, could become an exemplar of a strong and influential political force that would challenge the CSPU in Russia and even in the whole of the Soviet Union in the struggle for power.

The political activity of democracy-aligned deputies at the above legislative bodies provided legitimacy to the multi-party system. “In March 1990, the 3rd Congress of USSR People’s Deputies amended Article 6 of the USSR Constitution, eliminated the CPSU’s political monopoly on power, and Article 51 which now declared the Soviet citizens’ right to form

political parties” (Bielasiak 2002: 189). In October 1990, the newly adopted law On Public Associations set specific guidelines for regulation of political activities in legal terms. It allowed political parties participation in the functions of legislative and executive bodies. The above law became effective on January 1, 1991 giving an impulse towards formalizing the multiparty system.

By late 1980s, those who called themselves democrats failed to unite and establish one political party in Soviet Union. Andrei Sakharov’s death in December 1989, who was the moral leader of new forces, and Boris Yeltsin’s de-facto refusal to head Democratic Russia, reduced the latter to an ambiguous culmination of small groups led by increasingly ambitious politicians. Yeltsin was of belief that he had come to power in Russia (initially as chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet and later, following the June 12, 1991 elections as Russian president) as more or less like a national leader, not just as a representative of the broad circles of the democratic public opposed to the CPSU. “Characteristically, Yeltsin, when announcing his withdrawal from the Communist Party at the 19th CPSU conference (in July 1990), explained the move not so much by his disagreement with its policy, as by his new supra-party functions as chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. Interestingly, the first executive order in the capacity of the RSFSR president (July 1, 1991) banned all political activities at organisations and enterprises and thus squeezed the consolidation of potential members of Democratic Russia” (CDSP 2007: 5). At the other end, CPSU grassroots organizations that operated at places of residence remained intact and facilitated as groundwork for the new Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

Yeltsin’s decision to suspend the CPSU’s activity after an abortive coup attempt in August 1991 and subsequent legal proceedings against it obstructed strengthening of the multi-party system in Russia. This incident created a precedent for purging any political opposition of the powers that be. Those who were prepared to involve themselves in the development of the political system in the wave of the enchanting political activity of the Russian population in 1989-1991, apparently changed their mind and considering their safety instead. In addition, the Russian president and his motley milieu promptly turned into top state elite in the new conditions. This transformation did not require a political victory at elections or efforts from parties led by pro-Yeltsin officials.

The government of Yegor Gaidar, formed in the autumn of 1991, primarily consisted of not party leaders but bureaucrats close to Yeltsin. Eventually, Russia began in 1992, the first year of its existence as an independent state with the legislative and executive bodies formed in the last years of the former public-political and socio-economic system (Emmons1993: 22).

CHAOTIC MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM OF THE 1990S

The politico-economic changes in Russia in 1992-1993 set a poor groundwork for parties' activities. On the one hand, many deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation used their official capacity to enlist support in their respective constituencies. They formed parties, whose names denoted and included words like "democracy," "socialism" and "people" in various combinations, and the ever-present word "Russia." However, it became quite apparent that those parties were like house of cards that could not withstand even a normal phase of political struggle. "In essence, the so-called "parties" were run by aides of parliament deputies; the aides indeed hoped to secure a respectable position in the legislature in the foreseeable future, with the strategic aim of making a career in the executive branch of power" (Shveitser 2009: 37).

The ever prevalent conflicts between Boris Yeltsin and his associates, on the one hand, increasingly fragmented Supreme Soviet, on the other, slackened and obstructed the formation of a normal, by European standards, apparatus of political parties in Russia. Supreme Soviet deputies, as opposed to their original ideological and political standing, steadily adopted stringent opposition methods in the struggle against the powers that be. The Russian president could sense the increasingly hostile attitude of a majority of the parties represented in the Supreme Soviet. This led to his disenchantment towards parties as such and of their participation in government bodies in the federal centre and the provinces.

Post nationwide victory in a referendum in April 1993, Yeltsin decidedly understood that parliament should be treated as a rubber stamp for decisions made by executive bodies. Another reason for this opinion of the president and his team was that the democracy minded camp, which had thrown its weight behind Yeltsin a few years before, was in a sorry state: the internal

power struggle in it undermined the reputation of democrats in society (Gelman 2004: 102). The economic upheaval however dented his reputation. A majority of Yeltsin's former electorate associated the chaos with the notion "democrat" which appeared fluid to most Russian citizens.

The "autumn" of 1993, categorically speaking became a lynchpin in the formative phase of a multi-party system in Russia. The authorities, within a period of few months, held elections to form a new kind of parliament, the State Duma, they also hurriedly drew a new Constitution that was adopted through a plebiscite, which coincided in time with the parliamentary election. The new Fundamental Law curbed the powers of the legislative branch, and remarkably strengthened the executive branch, in particular, the presidential powers. A sense of inferiority led, the State Duma, already in the first term of office (1993-1995), pass a law on public associations in a bid to regulate the political process, as participants in the political process were only vaguely outlined in the 1993 Constitution (Shveitser 2009: 40).

The law, which became effective in May 1995, introduced the legal notion of "political public association". It set the criteria for registering these associations and enumerated conditions for their participation in politics in the event of threats to the state's integrity or in cases of inciting social, racial, ethnic or religious strife. Some limitations also were imposed on legitimate participants in the political process (John 1994: 41). These associations were not allowed to receive foreign funding, although the possibility of membership in international political associations was available to them.

Notably, the said law never regulated the problem of funding associations inside Russia. Later, this problem aggravated many other problems related to the activities of political parties. Additionally, the law did not demarcate the difference between "political public associations" and "political parties". These circumstances influenced the substitution of the development of a multiparty system with the courting of the electorate, which is necessarily limited by election cycles. Personal blocs helped to secure their leaders' winning coveted seats in parliament. The blocs, that by headcount exceeded the parties, tended to capitalise the personal charisma of

leaders on the party lists who often were not career politicians rather than the ideological essence of the movement they represented (Marcus 2004: 608).

The 1993, 1995, and 1999 elections to the State Duma denoted significantly definite, quite concrete tendencies of voters' electoral behavior. As far as figures are concerned, about 20 to 25 percent remained loyal to the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF). They regarded it as not only the savior and defender of economic and social rights of the low-income groups of the population, obviously infringed upon by the authorities, but also as the successor to the CPSU, on which they had hopes for at least partial reanimation of the Soviet system. Following remarkable electoral success of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) at the 1993 election (when it garnered 22.9 percent of votes), the support for Vladimir Zhirinovsky's party fell dramatically to 11.2 percent in 1995 and a mere 6 percent in 1999. Initially the only party that, appealed to nationalist sentiments among section of the electorate, later giving way to others, as other political exponents of nationalist positions entered the political ambience. As a wholesome analysis, these parties gathered about 20 percent of the votes (Mikkel 2006: 27).

Thus the protesting, pro-Communist and nationalist electorate accounted at least half of all voters in Russia in 1990s elections. Given the prevailing conditions, the powers that be, understanding that parties play a special role not only at parliamentary, regional or local elections, but largely determine voters' preferences at presidential elections, attempted to shape a Russian version of a "party of power". However, since Yeltsin originally projected himself above parties, the leadership of such a party had to go to a close associate of his. Neither Sergei Filatov, nor Alexander Yakovlev succeeded in forming a "party of power" in the period between the 1993 and 1995 elections.

State Duma chairman Ivan Rybkin able to set up a leftist party in support of the presidential policy, especially as he relied on an insignificant part of the provincial elite that was close to the authorities. Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin's taking up the role of leader of the "party of power" looked more promising in terms of electoral prospects. However, his Our Home Is Russia party, which came up with an unimpressive 10 percent of votes in 1995, was unable to

even clear the 5-percent barrier in 1999 to secure seats at the State Duma (Neil 1998: 159). The condition worsened in the second half of the 1990s for those who could be considered as a camp of “critical solidarity” with the authorities.

Such figures as Yegor Gaidar, Grigory Yavlinsky, Irina Khakamada, Boris Nemtsov and Sergei Shakhrai, sponsored by Russian oligarchs, while remaining loyal to market economy principles and democratic development, failed to find a mutually acceptable conceptual basis for forming a united party. It was largely owing not only because of their orientation towards different electoral trajectory, mostly in large industrial centers, but also because of their firm personal ambitions and their attempt to sideline their colleagues in ideologically close political forces from leadership positions in the future party. The search for a changed version of a “party of power” was caused predictably for preparations for a presidential changeover.

Initially, Yevgeny Primakov was proposed as the most deserving statesman for both Moscow and St. Petersburg elites, and also for part of the provincial establishment. The Fatherland-All Russia bloc was fashioned for the future president (ibid 1998: 162). However, Yeltsin’s closest setting and he himself believed that the former prime minister may not be loyal in his new capacity to the ailing president and his family. On the advice of Yeltsin’s close associates, Vladimir Putin was appointed prime minister, the last in Yeltsin era. In the first months of 2000, he became acting president. The newly formed Yedinstvo bloc was to provide electoral support to him. That was largely out of the appreciation received for the success of Putin’s anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya and tackling the August 1998 financial default.

As for the disunited pro-market democrats, they ran for the 1999 elections separately. Notably, the December 19, 1999 election results projected a new electoral trend. Voters actively (23.5 percent) supported the new comer Yedinstvo, which was largely due to Putin’s effectively taking the helm. Another candidate for being a “party of power” Fatherland – All Russia, led by the Primakov-Luzhkov tandem, looked less impressive with 13.3 percent of votes. “The KPRF held its ground with some 25 percent. The results of Yabloko (some 6 percent) and the Union of Right

Forces (8.5 percent), which enjoyed the support of the bulk of oligarchs at the time, were less than modest” (Reemington 1996: 125).

A major section of Russia’s political elite remarked the unstable and chaotic multiparty system of the 1990s as an outcome preexisting complexities and unresolved complications of varying shades. Superficially, this manifested itself in barely concealed discontent with the country’s top executive post being held by someone who was unable physically, intellectually, or organisationally to form a stable structure of government. Hence, the new Russian president and his closest associates had to precisely identify the gaps and resolve the issue of adequacy of the whole legislative-executive system and decidedly demarcate and enumerate the role and place of Russian parties in it (Riggs 2005: 265). For almost seventy years Soviet Union had been dominated by the one Party structure of Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU).

This worked as a stumbling block in establishing a smooth and functioning multi-party system. Elections during this period were a farce as electorates were provided no options to choose. It was Mikhail Gorbachev who initiated the process of democratisation and introduced multi-candidate election and also amended the Article six of the constitution that ensured the dominant position of CPSU in all walks of soviet life (Ross 2011: 430). Gorbachev replaced this very Article with a new provision that provided space for other political parties and political groups in the soviet political system. Besides this, in October 1990, he introduced a law and established a mechanism through which political parties and other organisation could register themselves in the system. This specified that there should be at least 5,000 members in an organisation to be registered at the all-union level.

Despite such changes, by August 1991 CPSU and LDPR were the only two organisations that gained the status of a political party. A good number of organisations though applied for the registration but their membership was very low. It is believed that Gorbachev’s attempt to reshape and reform the system, during the Perestroika years, contributed to the dismemberment of Soviet Union. Expectedly, the alternate political formations could not emerge or even challenge the earlier system dominated by the one party the CPSU. Later Russian Federation

provided enough space for the development of a multi-party system. The introduction of a new constitution (1993) recognised political diversity, and multi-party system (Article 13.3).

The policies of glasnost advocated that political movement and informal groups be allowed to exist even if they pose a challenge to the CPSU. The Gorbachev regime expected that it would broaden the social base of the CPSU which would most certainly facilitate the emergence of new political parties. As a consequence of the policies of Glasnost and Perestroika, a number of movements and political groups emerged, during this period, in the Soviet Union. Democratic Union was one such independent political formation. Democratic Union came into existence in May 1988 and advocated liberal democracy and market economy as was the case in the western states. It is worth mentioning here that the activities of the party were limited to the slogans only and it neither outlined a clear strategy nor a party programme. It failed to mobilise the public opinion and faced a split within a very short period of time (Sakwa 2005: 368).

During the 28th CPSU Congress in July 1990, the Democratic platform left the CPSU to set up a new political organisation. But the leadership was not clear about their political strategy. For instance, leader of the democratic movement V. Shostakovsky insisted that this was a “division not a split” (Hale 1999:15). The group later transformed itself and became the Republican party of the Russian Federation (RPRF). The leader of the Democratic movement did not work out the basis for an alternate political movement or plan an organisation for a party. All the leaders of the movement were well known leaders of CPSU and were not clear on its relationship with the CPSU. The position taken by leaders on almost all major issues were not only contradictory but blurred also. They were even confused whether the movement was to be inside the party or outside the party. Because of these self-destructing and contradictory policies, the movement lost its relevance and could not transform itself into a significant movement or a political party.

A pro-reform group called the Inter Region Group of Deputies (IRGD) was initiated from within the parliament and was chaired by Gavril Popov. However, because of the various factions it also failed to set up any effective structure and continued to remain in an amorphous shape. Thus, it could not become an alternative to the CPSU (Popov 1990: 6). These parties thus had informal structures and remained as factions in the parliament or movements outside the parliament. Their

leadership retained communist party membership and links with the CPSU. Later, these movements became formal Political Parties, especially when the CPSU weakened and the soviet centre appeared to lose control.

To encourage the development of Political Parties, Article 6 of the Soviet constitution that enshrined the leading role for the Communist Party in the Soviet System was abolished in 1990. Gorbachev and the Soviet policy makers felt that this would encourage a multiparty system. This period also saw the assertion of Russian nationalist Political Parties like RUKH, the PAMYAT etc. These parties advocated ethnic nationalism and attempted to mobilise the masses on the basis of ethnicity. Though, these parties were poorly organised yet in the end succeeded in creating the space to be a nationalist party. It was in this context that the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, under the leadership of Vladimir Zhirinovsky was set up. Zhirinovsky contested the June 1991 Russian Republic's presidential elections, in which he received 7% of total votes that counted around 6.2 million (Weiss 2004: 219).

A right wing nationalist party emerged, but effort at developing democratic Parties remained unsuccessful. Yeltsin as the leader of a movement for democracy retained his Communist Party membership till 1991. After leaving the party, he preferred to have an unstructured alliance with the new democratic political formation. He worked with the deputies in the Russian Supreme Soviet who supported his political moves and his opposition to the soviet structures. Yeltsin fought and won the 1991 presidential elections without any party platform. The movement for Democratic reform supported him without establishing any clear party linkage. Long years of a monolithic political culture and a lack of civil society had curbed the space for an organised opposition. Opposition Political Parties of this period were based on personalities (Chenoy 2001:164). Yelstin did not promote the growth of the democratic parties. He promoted individuals who were loyal to him. The Russian political elite did not pay sufficient attention to party formation or political mobilisation.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK CONCERNING POLITICAL PARTIES

The need for a special law to regulate Political Parties date back to the First Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic) in 1990. A bill for such a law was completed under the auspices of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation in 1993, but as the parliament was disbanded in September of that year, it was never considered. In 1995, the Duma passed a "law" on parties but it was rejected by the Federation Council and never entered the law book (Wilson 2006: 315).

Under Article 13 of the Constitution in the Russian Federation, political diversity and multiparty system shall be recognised otherwise, there is no further reference to political parties. The Federal Law on Political Parties, enacted in 2001, has 48 articles divided into ten Chapters, Chapter I contains general provisions, chapter II refers to the formation of a political party, Chapter III concerns the registration procedure, chapter IV regulates the internal structure of the Political party, chapter V enumerates its rights and obligations, chapter VI refers to the possible State support to parties; chapter VII regards the rules on financing; chapter VIII establishes the Participation in elections and referendums; chapter IX regulates the suspension and dissolution of political parties and chapter X includes the closing and transitional provisions. The lengthy and detailed regulation in itself deserves scrutiny, as a detailed law on a fundamental right necessarily contains a number of limitations.

A political party is the only form of public association that has the right to nominate candidates (lists of candidates) for deputies and for other elective positions in the government (Venice commission: 2012). By this is meant not only federal institutions, but bodies at all levels in the Russian Federation. However, the Venice Commission has been informed that, following a decision of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, this does not include the local level. Political parties can nominate candidates to the post of President of the Russian Federation. The law in force is extremely detailed concerning not only the requirement and the process of registration, but also concerning the control over the activities of the political parties, as well as concerning their internal functioning and structure. The infringement of any of these rules can end in the suspension or liquidation of the political party. No specific reference to the respect of

the principle of proportionality is required in the decision making and in this regard the law makes no distinction between serious and trivial breaches.

The laws regulating political parties should be developed in conformity with international human rights standards and relevant jurisprudence. Restrictions on political parties are possible, but only where they can be considered to be necessary in a democratic society in the sense of articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights. Taking into account the above considerations, the observations made in this opinion should be read together with the opinion on the Law on the election of deputies to the State Duma. The general requirements that a political party must meet are laid down in Article 3 of the Law on Political Parties. The main requirements, which were introduced by the 2001 law, concern territorial representation and minimum membership. The law also sets out quite detailed rules concerning the functioning of parties, including, for example, when they must hold congresses, rules for elections and requirements for the rotation of party officers. There are also other types of requirements added to the minimum membership and the territorial representation.

Territorial representation

A Political party must have regional branches in more than half of the subjects of the Russian Federation (Article 3.2.a) requiring at least 400 members or more (it was 500 beforehand). The other regional branches must have at least 150 members. (Article 3.2.b) The rationale for this rule was, according to the ruling of the Russian Constitutional Court of 1 February 2005 (on the Baltic Republican Party, a regional party dissolved for not satisfying with the requirements established by the law on territorial representation and minimum membership), to prevent the establishment, functioning and participation in elections of regional parties. Requirements for registration do not, in themselves, represent a breach of freedom of association according to the European Court of Human Rights. However, the Guidelines on Political Parties regulations state that requirements for registration of political parties are not necessary for a democratic society. When domestic legislation establishes that registration is required, substantive registration requirements and procedural steps should be reasonable and based on objective criteria (Weiss 2004: 221).

Countries applying registration procedures to political parties should refrain from imposing excessive requirements for territorial representation of political parties as well as for minimum membership. The democratic or non-democratic character of the party organisation should not in principle be a ground for denying registration of a political party. Registration of political parties should be denied only in cases clearly indicated in the Guidelines on prohibition of political parties and analogous measures, i.e. when the use of violence is advocated or used as a political means to overthrow the democratic constitutional order, thereby undermining the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the constitution.

The fact alone that a peaceful change of the Constitution is advocated should not be sufficient for denial of registration.” Several provisions concerning the limitation of political parties which represented a geographical region should generally be removed from relevant legislation. “Requirements barring contestation for parties with only regional support potentially discriminate against parties that enjoy a strong public following but whose support is limited to a particular area of the country (Wilson 2007:89).

A requirement for geographic distribution of party members can also potentially represent a severe restriction of political participation at the local and regional levels incompatible with the right to free association. As such, geographic considerations should not be a requirement for political party formation. Nor should a political party based on a regional or local level be prohibited. From a more practical point of view, not all Russian regions are of equal size and accessibility. Failure of a party to win support in every region is therefore not always necessarily due to regional considerations. In most political systems, support for most parties will not be evenly distributed throughout the country.

The present case is illustrative of a potential for miscarriages inherent in the indiscriminate banning of regional parties, which is moreover based on a calculation of the number of a party’s regional branches. The applicant, an all-Russian political party which never advocated regional interests or separatist views, whose articles of association stated specifically that one of its aims

was promotion of the unity of the country and of the peaceful coexistence of its multi-ethnic population and which was never accused of any attempts to undermine Russia's territorial integrity, was dissolved on the purely formal ground of having an insufficient number of regional branches (Shveitser 2009: 42).

Therefore, the requirements concerning territorial representation appear too burdensome and should be reduced or abandoned. The Law as it stands now, read in combination with the electoral legislation and especially with the minimum threshold required to obtain representation, and has an important impact in the electoral field. The limitations imposed by the law appear to constitute a serious interference with the electorate's right to make a free choice in elections and with the citizens' right to take part in political life. A pluralist party system, fulfilling its basic role in a democratic polity, can only emerge if coupled with a stable and clearly defined legislation that does not enforce unreasonable requirements for registration, nor intrusive controlling mechanisms. Restrictions on political party formation based on regional, linguistic or ethnic grounds may lead to the creation of separatist movements, which may resort to non-peaceful means if the democratic path is forbidden.

The membership threshold

The required minimum membership applied in Russia has been amended at least three times after 2001. The required number of members was increased in 2004 from 10 000 to 50 000, but has since been gradually dropping, first, to 45 000, and then, starting from 1 January 2012, to 40 000 (Article 3.2.b of the Law). The law on political parties fails, as it is now, to respect the rights of freedom of association of citizens by requiring such a large number of members as a precondition for the registration of political parties.

The very concept of the political party is based on the aim of participating in the management of public affairs by the presentation of candidates to free and democratic elections. They are thus a specific kind of association, which in many countries is submitted to registration for participation in elections or for public financing. This requirement of registration has been accepted, considering it as not per se contrary to the freedom of association, provided that conditions for

registration are not too burdensome. And requirements for registration are very different from one country to another. They might include, for instance, organizational conditions, requirement for minimum political activity, of standing for elections, of reaching a certain threshold of votes. However, some pre-conditions for registration of political parties, existing in several Council of Europe Member States requiring a certain territorial representation and a minimal number of members for their registration could be problematic in the light of the principle of free association in political parties (Venice commission 2012: 22).

The rationale for this requirement, according to the government, is “the necessity to strengthen political parties and limit their number in order to avoid disproportionate expenditure from the budget during electoral campaigns and prevent excessive parliamentary fragmentation and, in so doing, promote stability of the political system”. However, the submission was not accepted by the Court whose opinion is ingrained in the following statement, “The Court is not convinced by those arguments. It notes that in Russia political parties do not have an unconditional entitlement to benefit from public funding. Only those political parties that obtained more than 3% of the votes cast are entitled to public financing” (Wilson 2007: 109). In addition, minor political parties supported by rather small section of the population does not pose burden in financial terms on the treasury of the State. Court opined that financial considerations cannot be accounted as the reason in favour of existence of large parties at the cost of small parties.

In reference to the latter argument, i.e. in relation to the deterring of excessive parliamentary fragmentation, the Court was of view that this is achieved in Russia through the introduction of a 7% electoral threshold that is already one of the highest in European region. As matter of relevance in this context, the right of a political party to participate in elections is not automatic. Only those political parties that have seats in the State Duma or have submitted a certain number of signatures to show that they have wide popular support (200,000 at the relevant time, recently decreased to 150,000 signatures) may nominate candidates for elections. In such circumstances the Court is not persuaded that to avoid excessive parliamentary fragmentation it was necessary to impose additional restrictions, such as a high minimum membership requirement, to limit the number of political parties entitled to participate in elections.

The Court considered therefore that the change in the law had had an impact on the registration of political parties, which drastically decreased from 48 political parties to 15 in 2007. It saw little doubt that all those measures had an evident impact on the opportunities for various political forces to participate effectively in the political process and thus affected pluralism” and alluded, in particular, to “the fact that only fifteen political parties out of forty-eight were able to meet the increased minimum membership requirement. Only 7 political parties ran for the Duma election in 2011. A further consideration, which has not been discussed in the Court’s judgment, is that such an onerous membership requirement makes the organic growth of a new party difficult.

A political movement which cannot contest elections may be strangled at birth. More dangerously its supporters may be tempted in frustration to resort to undemocratic means. This may be a particular risk where the representation of ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious groups is denied. Secondly, the argument that small groups need not be permitted to contest elections because they have no hope is both self-fulfilling and circular. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. There are plenty of examples in history of large and successful political parties which suffered sudden and catastrophic decline. In other cases small parties which barely survived for years have experienced sudden and rapid growth or, in other cases gradual growth from a low base (ibid: 118).

The point that a presence of large number of small parties may be detrimental to a healthy democracy also fails to gain ground. Largely because weak parties would naturally disappear any rule to prevent those parties from seeking mandate is unnecessary. It appears that arguments against such small parties are primarily directed to exclude undesired political rivals and there is nothing to do with safeguarding democracy. The Venice Commission has on several occasions indicated that it considers thresholds above 5% as being problematic. Furthermore, a political party’s right to participate in elections is not automatic, but, according to the Law, only those political parties that are represented in the Duma or have submitted a certain number of signatures may nominate candidates for elections.

It is therefore excessive to add additional registration requirements to avoid fragmentation. Finally, a political party can also be denied registration (or, at a later stage, suspended or dissolved) on the basis of excessive bureaucratic requirements related to the signatures. The minister of Justice, in the exercise of its supervisory powers, which can be exercised on an annual basis (Article 38.1), can require certain documents. According to the Minister of Justice, for example, if, in the list of signatures provided by the political party, there are more than the minimum number required, but one of the forms accompanying the signature does not contain accurate information on the members, they can request the denial of registration or even the suspension or dissolution of the party by the court.

Requirements of minimum membership and territorial representation do not therefore meet the applicable European standards, based on Article 11 of the ECHR and specified in the case law of the European Court of Human rights, as well as the guidelines adopted by the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR (Venice commission 2012: 29). The minimum membership requirement and territorial representation should be considerably lowered. What requirement can be considered justifiable should be decided taking into account provisions establishing the right to nominate candidates for elections and the electoral threshold. As it has been stated, President Medvedev has proposed draft amendments to the law on Political parties on 23 December 2011 in order to liberalise the requirements concerning the minimum membership. The draft seems a step in the right direction, but it has come too late to influence forthcoming elections and is yet at the stage of draft amendments. There should be enough guarantees for the existence of political parties.

The rules affecting the electoral process, especially before the elections, undermine the stability of the electoral process. Thus the frequent changes in the minimum membership requirements might have the same negative effect. As stated by the Venice Commission in the Explanatory Report of the Code of Good Practice in Electoral matter. Repeated changes in laws and regulation unnecessarily may be a cause of confusion for voters and complicate the electoral

process. It may also give rise to an opinion among voters that these kinds of electoral laws marginalise the opinion of voters.

The other requirements

There are other requirements for political parties' registration and also to avoid suspension and dissolution. Some of them raise special concern. Regarding the individual membership, "only citizens of the Russian Federation can join a political party" (Article 2). No foreigners, stateless persons as well as "citizens unfit to plead" can be members of a political party (article 23.1). The meaning of this last expression is not very clear in the text, but the Venice Commission was informed that it refers to persons serving prison sentences. This provision is problematic. It should be recalled that, according to the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODHIR guidelines political party regulations: freedom of association and freedom of expression, including in the formation and functioning of political parties, are individual rights that must be respected without discrimination.

The principle that fundamental human rights are applicable to all within a state's jurisdiction, free from discrimination, is essential to ensuring the full enjoyment and protection of such rights. Non-discrimination is defined in Articles 2 and 26 of the ICCPR and Article 14 of the ECHR as well as a number of other universal and regional instruments such as CEDAW. Notably, however Article 14 of the ECHR defines discrimination to be unlawful only in the enjoyment of any right protected within convention". Political parties must also respect certain legal and constitutional conditions. They have to submit to the Minister of Justice for registration their Charter and Program. Article 9 states that it is prohibited the formation and activity of political parties whose aims or actions are directed toward carrying out extremist activities. The creation of political parties on the grounds of professional, racial, national, ethnic or religious affiliation is also prohibited. To prohibit political parties on these grounds can be a dangerous solution, which may foster the resort to undemocratic means to those who can't find democratic representation of their ideas.

If the reform announced in December 2011 aims at liberalising certain requirements, others stay in the legislation. In fact, the very concept of the political party is based on the aim of participating in the management of public affairs by the presentation of candidates to free and democratic elections. They are thus a specific kind of association, which in many countries is submitted to registration for participation in elections or for public financing. This requirement of registration has been accepted, considering it as not per contrary to the freedom of association, provided that conditions for registration are not too burdensome.

The control over the internal affairs of the political parties

The Law on Political Parties also goes into considerable detail on how political parties conduct their affairs covering procedural issues relating to meetings, how programmes and policies are to be adopted, the relationship between the central and regional authorities and many other matters. This relates to the activities that the political party can develop once it has been registered.

Parties are required to provide an important amount of material to the authorities, including lists of members with their addresses (the list of documents required is listed in Article 16 of the Law). However, the law does not allow for the possibility that a political party might grow slowly and organically from a small beginning. Law on Political Parties, the founding congress of a political party will be considered “competent” only if it was attended by delegates representing more than half of the subjects of the Russian Federation and residing therein (Article 11.2 &14).

According to Article 21.1.(b) of the Law, among the many obligations of political parties, they also have to submit annual reports on the members of each regional branch, their activities, subdivisions, etc. Article 38, under the title “control over activity of political party”, establishes that:

Competent authorities shall monitor the compliance of political parties, their regional branches and other structural units with Laws of the Russian Federation as well as compliance of political party, its regional branches and other structural units with provisions, aims and objectives provided in the charters of political parties.

Not more than once a year to get acquainted with the documents of political parties and their regional branches confirming the presence of regional branches, the number of political party members and the number of members of each regional branch of a political party. (Rev. Federal Law dd. 20.12.2004 N 168-FL)

To send representatives to participate in the ongoing public events (including congresses, conferences or general assembly's) of political party, its regional branches and other structural subdivisions in respect to adoption of the charter and program of a political party, changes and additions thereto, election of governing and supervisory auditing bodies of political party, nomination of candidates for deputies and other elective offices in the state government bodies and local governments, as well as to liquidation of political party and its regional branches.

To issue to a political party, its regional branch or other registered structural unit a written warning (stating the specific grounds for such warning) in case of exercising activities contrary to the provisions, aims and objectives stipulated by the charter of a political party. Such warnings may be appealed in court by political party, its regional branch or other registered structural units. In case of warning the regional branch or other registered structural unit of political party, the territorial authority shall immediately notify the federal authority and the governing body of political party. (Rev. Federal Law dd. 21.03.2002 N 31-FL)

To petition in court for suspension of activity or liquidation of a political party, its regional branch or other registered structural units in accordance with paragraph 3 of Article 39, paragraph 3 of Article 41 and paragraph 3 of Article 42 here to.

Political parties not only had to show their membership situation at registration but had to submit annual reports and be liable to inspections by the authorities under threat of dissolution, which would be done by the Supreme Court (Article 41.3). The European Court stated in the Republican Party case: The Court is unable to discern any justification for such intrusive measures subjecting political parties to frequent and comprehensive checks and a constant threat

of dissolution on formal grounds. If these annual inspections are aimed at verifying whether the party has genuine support among the population, election results would be the best measure of such support. This over prescriptive legislation appears to be unnecessarily and unjustifiably intrusive into the internal affairs of political parties.

All the criteria must be assessed in reference to what is 'necessary in a democratic society. In addition, undesired control on activities of political parties, such as membership, number and frequency of party congresses and meetings, operation of territorial branches and subdivisions, should be clearly avoided. Political parties have also to report on their financial activities once a year to the Central Electoral Commission, although in the new reform in progress, it is announced that the financial reports on the funding of political parties will take place in the future, if the draft law is adopted, once every three years.

However, according to the Central Electoral Commission and to the Minister of Justice, there have been more dissolutions and refusal of registrations based on the lack of documentation concerning the signatures, not achieving the minimum membership, as well as on the respect of the Constitution and legislation, than concerning financial aspects. In fact, the rapporteurs were informed that there had been no dissolutions or refusals of registration for financial reasons. No respect of the principle of proportionality is required nor there is a distinction made between trivial infringements and more serious offences in the application of these rules.

The bureaucratic control over the political parties, as well as the submission of documents including details about every member of the political party to the Minister of Justice, may have a chilling effect on individual membership and on the registration of political parties. In the light of the above considerations, bureaucratic control over political parties should be reduced and any supervisory powers should be given to an independent authority not part of the executive branch, in order to ensure transparency and build institutional trust.

On the consequences for political parties of the non compliance with the requirements

The consequences of non compliance with the model described in the Law are severe. Non compliance with any aspect of the rules can result in a decision not to register a party and hence to exclude it from the political process. A failure in continued compliance with the rules can lead to the dissolution of the party. While a party unable to continue compliance with the rules may continue as a public association, it may not participate in elections. In the Republican party case, the European Court of Human Rights raised “it has already found it unacceptable that an association should be forced to take a legal shape its founders and members did not seek, finding that such an approach, if adopted, would reduce the freedom of association of the founders and members so as to render it either non-existent or of no practical value. It is significant that in Russia political parties are the only actors in the political process capable of nominating candidates for election at the federal and regional levels. A reorganisation into a public association would therefore have deprived the applicant of an opportunity to stand for election.”

It should be emphasised that Chapter IX of the law, in dealing with the consequences of non-compliance with the law, fails to make any distinction between the trivial and the essential. As noted in the above paragraphs, nothing in the rule suggests that any principle of proportionality is to be respected. Indeed, the underlying legal philosophy of Article 39.3 appears to be that after two warnings, the political party may be suspended, which seems to give a great scope for the use of the Law based on politically motivated actions. It was precisely on the basis of such strict controls that the Republican Party was dissolved by the Russian Supreme Court.

Remarkably dissolving a political party is considered as serious step and only should be undertaken in special situation. Election related complaints can be lodged either at the election administration or at the courts. It is not very clear where the division of competences lies and whether respect of the political parties electoral rights is fully guaranteed.

To ensure fairness of a hearing, ‘expedited consideration’ is a prerequisite. Ideally, legislation must mention deadlines for filing application and grant decisions, also considering the condition

of special circumstances. It must also specify the procedures of initiating judicial review and must also extend right of judicial review to affected persons and parties by any decision made.

It should be noted that the final decision on the dissolution of the Republican Party after the European Court declared it to be in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights in April 2011 is still pending at the Russian Supreme Court. The Law on Political Parties is a very detailed piece of legislation, which regulates the requirements and conditions concerning the registration and the existence of political parties, their internal working and regulation, the possibilities of suspension and the dissolution of political parties. The present law in place, introduced significant obstructions to the very survival of political parties. The negative impact of the law on the existence and functioning of political parties in the Russian Federation is evident from substantive reduction in political parties and the limited participation in the Duma elections in December 2011 in which only seven parties ran. That does not stand in accordance with European standards and articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The main concerns in the Law on political parties which need to be addressed:

a) There appears to be no problem with the registration of political parties. However, the Law on Political Parties does not stand in consonance with the European standards, based on “Article 11 of the ECHR and the case law of the European Court of Human rights, including the Guidelines adopted by the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR”. In particular, the minimum membership requirement, if applied at all, it should be considerably lowered and intrusive control mechanisms in the context of initial registration reduced, with prospective parties having the opportunity to complement the required documents in case they have been found deficient. The basic requirement on regional representation should be ideally made flexible, if not completely done away with. To ensure conformity with the European standards, restrictions on individual membership in political parties should also be amended.

b) The parties should be able to control their own internal procedures, with appeals to courts where appropriate, but it should not be a function of the state to monitor every aspect of the life

of a political party and be regularly provided with a list of party members, as is the case in this Law. The Venice Commission recommends that any supervisory powers and control of political parties should be given to an independent authority and not to part of the executive branch in order to ensure transparency and build institutional trust.

The Venice Commission is aware of the process of reform launched in December 2011, which proposes the liberalisation of important aspects of the Law on Political Parties, particularly concerning the requirements for the registration of political parties. The draft amendments are pending for adoption at the Duma, where they were discussed in the first reading on 28 February 2012. This reform is welcome, in particular since it drastically lowers the number of members' signatures required for the registration of a political party and the requirements for membership in the regional branches of parties. Reform must be directed at curbing 'red-tapism' on the establishment and functioning of political parties. The possibility of dissolution or refusal of registration because of breach of the rules will continue to create a problem even after the number of members required to establish a political party is reduced.

PARTIES AND PUBLIC EXCHEQUER

The most contentious issues in the debate on the law on Parties has been state funding. Hitherto, electoral associations were permitted a modest amount of compensation to fund their campaign, as mentioned in various electoral laws that were occasionally modified or rewritten for each specific election. "The 2001 law 'On Political Parties' brought about several substantive changes to Party finance in Russia". The Party law envisioned permanent state funding for Parties that (1) obtained at least three percent of the list vote in Duma elections, or (2) received at least 12 SMD candidate selected to the Duma (in which case the 'three per cent threshold' was not applicable) or (3) secured a minimum of three per cent of the votes for their Presidential nominee". (Wilson 2007: 190).

In all the above cases, the number of votes received was to be multiplied by 0.05 times the minimum wage. Other sources of income beside's state funding were membership dues, donations by sympathetic 'outsiders' (both individuals and firms) and entrepreneurial activity.

There appeared to be no maximum set for membership fees, the authors of the law most likely expected these to remain within reasonable limits. But restrictions and ceilings were established for donations (pozhertvovaniya) from without the party ranks. Donors could be Russian citizens and legal persons, funds from abroad were expressly outlawed. The total sum of yearly contributions was not to exceed 10 million. (Oversloot & Verhuel 2006: 389).

It was viewed that some of the political parties managed to generate considerable income by the way of membership dues and donations from donors. Political parties constantly have been dependent on donors like industrial and financial groups. They were also closely associated with public media and had business contacts. Co-sponsorship of Political Parties by businessmen was the rule rather than the exception in Russia. Corporate funding was usually clouded in secrecy, but it can be safely assumed that all major parties in Russia enjoy such support and that the bulk of it went to the “Parties of Power”. (Gel’man 2005: 20-23). The Parties of Power, additionally, were able to use the public apparatus as an organisational resource. Although the law requires transparency as to financial income, accurate and up to date figures for political parties were often difficult to obtain. The Union of Right Forces and United Russia were particularly successful fund raisers.

The Russian daily Vedomosti recently reported that United Russia receives large contributions from different sources. According to official information, during the period 2005-2009 United Russia collected about US \$16.7 million in party dues, about US \$54 million from the state budget, and more than US \$200 million from private donors. The list of the main donors of the United Russia for the five past years included the metallurgical giant NLMK, owned by Vladimir Lisin, a poultry farm owned by the son of former Minister of Fuel and Energy Victor Kalyuzhny, the Moscow developer MTZ Rubin, the Eurocement Group, the mining and metals company Mechel, plus Gazprom, Svyazinvest, Severstal Group and the oilfield service company Geotech³.

³ ‘Businesses to Donate Funds to Russian Political Party in Power’ [Online: web] Accessed on 11 February 2012
URL: <http://russia-briefing.com/news/businesses-to-donate-funds-to-russian-political-party-in-power.html/>

POLITICAL PARTIES IN RUSSIA

United Russia

The United Russia Party emerged with the amalgamation of the hitherto competing Duma factions of Unity (otherwise known as ‘Medved’– ‘The Bear’), a centre-right party headed by Sergey Shoigu, and Fatherland-All Russia, a centre-left bloc led by Evgeny Primakov and Yuri Luzhkov, in 2001. United Russia derived its current nomenclature in the year 2003. United Russia campaigned under the slogan ‘Together with the President!’ in the 2003 Duma elections hence, demonstrating its closeness with the administration of Putin. In 2003 Duma election, United Russia managed to achieve 37.57% vote. The United Russia list for the 2007 Duma elections was supervised by Vladimir Putin himself. ‘Putin’s Plan: a worthy future for a great country’ denoted the election programme. United Russia achieved 64.30% vote in 2007 election. Dmitri Medvedev was selected by United Russia as a candidate for Presidency in the wake of Russian Parliamentary election. In 2008, Putin was elected as its chairman. Surprisingly, despite both the leaders holding significant stature in the party, neither Putin nor Medvedev are formally members of United Russia (Kynev 2011: 1).

In the recent years, the Party has integrated some of the relatively moderate and reformist political views of President Dmitri Medvedev. Ambiguous line of thought and developments are also depicted during the course of internal differentiation that United Russia has been going through in the past decade. This demarcation is expressed, *inter alia*, in the creation of several thematic ‘clubs’ such as the Centre for Socio-Conservative Policy, the Liberal Conservative Club, or the Government-Patriotic Club. Rather the connection between what these clubs do and what they stand for, are far and distance apart. “At the pre election party convention in September 2011 President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin announced that they were to swap jobs”. Party received 49.32% of vote in Duma election held in 2011⁴.

⁴ European forum for Democracy and Solidarity’ [online: web] Accessed on 15 April 2012, URL: <http://www.europeanforum.net/country/russia#top>.

The Communist party of the Russian Federation (CPRF)

The CPRF succeeded Communist Party of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Despite CPRF being one of the strongest political parties in Russia, its share of vote has gradually decreased in last two decades. In 1993 Zyuganov was elected as the party leader, who resembled a key figure of the left. A Marxist reformer whose ideas echoed a mix of statism, slavophilism and populism (Sakwa 1998: 139). CPRF is a structured and systematised force in the political arena. The ideological evolution inside CPRF in 1994 denoted a marked transition from orthodox Marxism to social democracy and definite components of nationalism (Chenoy 2001: 170)

An opinion poll released in November 1995 observed CPRF as the most favoured political party for above 55 age group but was far more unpopular in 18-24 age group and the trend still continues. CPRF also over the years lost appeal to its agenda of state driven economy, as Russia undertakes to acclimatize itself on the track of globalisation and privatisation. However, Zyuganov asserted that the party has come out of its sectarian approach, resembled by “narrow class interest” and now wishes to taken into consideration the opinions and aspirations of the majority of the Russians (Sakwa 1998: 133).

The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR)

LDPR one of the oldest Political Party in the present Russian Federation was established in 1990 as the Liberal-Democratic Party of Soviet Union. It was also the first party other than the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) that was officially registered. The support base of the party comes from the personnel in the Military Industrial Complex (MIC), from sections of the army and retirees and the underprivileged. Zhirinovskiy was elected as the sole leader of the party in April 1994. Electoral asset of LDPR is personality based. As opposed to communists the party is equally revered in 30-54 age group, and ordinary educated class.

Indeed, Zhirinovskiy remained an important figure at the political and ideological level in the party was played an important role in the election campaign in 2011. The party is known for its

indecisive nature and customarily considered belonging to the nationalist strand. In 2011 election was campaigned on nationalistic lines with the slogan 'For the Russians' largely directed at the problems in North Caucasus region and the region of Far East. In 2011 it received a total of total vote share of 11.67%⁵ in Duma election.

Our Home is Russia

Our Home is Russia was founded as a political movement in 1995 to sustain the Chernomyrdin government in the Duma elections, primarily classified as pro-government party. The party stood for a 'broad centre', in favour of a stronger state and to stand with the interests of domestic producers and investors. The 1995 pre-election programme enlisted three main objectives, the 'spiritual renewal of Russia', comprising the right and freedoms of the individual, the 'integrity' of the country', including public order and promotion of market economy prioritises protection at the social level. The party however witnessed decline in voting percentage after 1995 election⁶.

A Just Russia

Just Russia appeared in 2006 owing to Kremlin's decision to dissolve the socialist-patriotic Motherland (Rodina) Party. Under the leadership of Dmitry Rogozin and Sergey Glaziev, Just Russia was formed by the Kremlin striving to (at least in the preliminary phase) rein in competing political forces; however the party soon came out of hold of Kremlin technocrats. Indeed, to reduce the influence of Rodina and eventually remove in from the Russian politics. The small 'Russian Party for Life', headed by Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov, lent itself to this purpose.

In the course of 2006 the Party of Life, the Motherland party and the Party of Pensioners merged into Just Russia with Sergey Mironov as its new chairman. In the 2006-2008 period, the party brought under its umbrella many small political parties comprising Green Party 'Zelyenye', the

⁵ 'European forum for Democracy and Solidarity' [online: web] Accessed on 15 April 2012, URL: <http://www.europeanforum.net/country/russia#top>.

⁶ Centre for the study of public policy, University of Strathclyde, 'Party Alignments in the Duma, 1995-July 2003'. [online: web] URL http://www.russiavotes.org/duma/duma_align_1995_2003.php (Accessed on 20 April 2012).

United Socialist Party of Russia, and the People's Party. The process and related factors made many of significant personalities of Rodina insignificant. The political programme of Just Russia laid its foundation under 'contemporary, democratic and effective socialism' which called for a rather radical bent at the level of social policy ensuring social stability and a reduction poverty, tackling of corruption and most prominently United Russia's monopoly in political power. In 2011 Duma election, Just Russia managed to get 13.24% of vote (Kynev 2011: 2).

United Russian Democratic Party (Yabloko – 'Apple')

The United Russian Democratic Party, 'Yabloko', that was formed 1995 under the mentoship Gregoriy Yavlinsky, Yuri Boldyrev and Vladimir Lukin. Yabloko draws its ideological inspiration social liberalism: 'Our aim is a society of equal opportunities, based on the principles of social justice and solidarity between the powerful and the weak. This means that the most important condition for establishing a free society in Russia is not only the unleashing of private initiative, but also a well-developed social support system'. Surprisingly, after its defeat in the 2007 elections, the party carefully assessed itself and focused predominantly on ecological and local residential issues (Kynev 2011: 2).

As far as internal organisation of Yabloko is concerned, more or less it is remarked as hierarchical and resembled by personalised rule. At the formal level, the party was led by Sergey Mitrokhin since 2008. Though, was largely dominated by Grigory Yavlinsky a frontrunner of the 2011 party list (together with Mitrokhin and 78 year old ecologist Alexey Yablokov). This resulted into many senior member of the party leaving Yabloko and later joining Just Russia or United Russia. Even persuasion and negotiations to convince Boris Titov, the leader of the organisation Business Russia, to join the 2011 party list eventually failed. It appeared that Yabloko's political campaign witnessed insufficient publicity and also that the candidates who contested were not a popular face in Russia's regions.

CLASSIFICATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES UNDER A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

There are at least three ways to examine Russian Political Parties:

- 1) The persistence of parties
- 2) Party coherence
- 3) Regional representation.

In addition, the parties can be categorised into three different sets; first category includes the established Political Parties; second category includes the transitory Political Parties and; the third category includes the ephemeral Political Parties. The first criterion is the persistence of Parties, which concerns the time dimension. In this reference, established parties have taken part in all the elections, however, transitory and ephemeral parties participate in one election and become invisible by the time another election is held. The second criterion is party coherence. In the Russian Parliament, a number of political parties are unruly and Duma members easily change their political membership in parties. Evidently, the definite patterns of faction building in Duma resemble to degree the party discipline. The third criterion is regional representation. At the geographical level of analysis, this can be used for assessment of how broadly parties are supported by the public (Sangtu 2011: 89).

POLITICAL PARTIES IN STATE DUMA

The Russian electoral process and system has considerably altered in 2005 on the proposal of President Putin's claim on limiting the number of Parties in Duma that would in return build up the Russian party system. Until 2003 election there was a functional but a mix. That implied that half of the 450 seats were circulated in single-member districts and the other half were elected on the basis of a party list. The new election law however, denotes that all seats in Duma are awarded exclusively from party lists and the threshold for eligibility to win seats is raised to 7 % (Moraski 2007: 29).

Table 3.1, 1993 to 2011 Duma election (Number of seats)

| Party | 1993 | 1995 | 1999 | 2003 | 2007 | 2011 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Contesting elections Communist party | 42 | 157 | 114 | 52 | 57 | 92 |
| Liberal Democratic party | 64 | 51 | 17 | 36 | 40 | 56 |
| Contesting elections Yabloko | 27 | 45 | 21 | 4 | – | – |
| Contesting elections Agrarian party | 38 | 20 | - | 2 | - | |
| Contesting elections United Russia | - | - | - | 225 | 315 | 238 |
| Union of right forces | - | - | 29 | 3 | - | – |
| Woman's party | 23 | 3 | - | - | - | – |
| Our Home is Russia | - | 55 | 8 | - | - | – |
| Russia choice | 62 | 9 | - | - | - | – |
| Russian unity and Harmony | 22 | 1 | - | - | - | – |
| Contesting elections | - | - | - | - | 38 | 64 |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|----|----|-----|----|---|---|
| Just Russia | | | | | | |
| Democratic party | 15 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Homeland party(Rodina) | - | - | - | 37 | - | - |
| Unity party(Medved) | - | - | 73 | - | - | - |
| Fatherland All Russia | - | - | 66 | - | - | - |
| Independents | 13 | 77 | 113 | 68 | - | - |
| Others | 16 | 32 | 9 | 23 | - | - |

Source: Sangtu 2011, p.90

As the table 3.1 indicates the Communist Party and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) have successfully and effectually contested all the six elections held in Russian Federation. On this basis these two political parties can be classified as under the established party category. Nevertheless, every political party presently accounts for roughly 10% of the Duma seats. Indeed, Communist party in 1995 election achieved a maximum record number of seats, i.e. 157 seats at a time when Russians witnessed the sweeping market reform. However, there have been a fall in the number of seats at a considerable level as evident figures from 114 seats in 1999 and 52 seats in 2003 election and eventually coming down to 57 in 2007 election but for the better, in 2011 election, the seats increased from 57 to 92.

The Yabloko participated in 5 elections and can be classified as the established political party. It substantially became invisible in 2003 election by merely winning only 4 seats and finally paths to the 2007 Duma were closed. The Agrarian party contested 3 elections and it contested one more election in 1999 with a changed name, i.e. Fatherland party. It failed miserably to come into the Duma like the Yabloko in 2007 and in 2011 Duma election got 1.84% vote (Sangtu 2011: 92).

The Parties that contested one or two elections consisted the transitory Party and the ephemeral party. The parties that follow the party of power can be classified into the transitory Party like Russia's Choice and Our Home Is Russia. United Russia managed to fight in three elections and Unity party contested only one election. They are the Party of power in their nature and in this context transitory. Russia's Choice developed under the leadership of Gaidar, who in association with Yeltsin contributed the required market reforms. It performed badly in the 1993 election and in result gave its status of power party to *Our Home Is Russia* under the leadership of Chernomirdin that failed to win over in the 1995 election. Two political parties which braced Yeltsin arose, in 1999 election. The leaders that were in favour of the reform in Yeltsin era gave rise to the Union of Right Forces that was under the leadership of Anatoly Chubais, Yegor Gaidar, Boris Nemtsov, and Vladimir Putin.

That two pro-Yelstin Parties that emerged in 1999 was an outcome of the coalition of local politicians. Yuri Luzhkov mayor of Moscow, formed the Fatherland party and in collusion with a section of governors with the intention of regionalization and devolution of power. Primakov joined the party owing to the unpopular image of Yeltsin. Unexpected defeat in 1999 election, led to the merger of Fatherland and the Unity into United Russia. In fact, the United Russia party was the first 'party of power' which has uninterruptedly achieved a majority in the Duma (Wilson 2006: 314). The party also managed to achieve an outright majority in 2007 and 2011 election. Hence, in a course of time, the party has enhanced itself from a transitory party to the established party. Several other political parties lost hope just after one election and they are considered as ephemeral. Women's party became visible merely by victory over 23 seats in 1993 election. Russian Unity and Harmony won 22 seats and Democratic Party won 15 seats in the same election. Added to it, there existed several ephemeral parties in the founding election. Emergence of Just Russia as a new political party became evident in the 2007 election and it is largely known for its activism and advocacy of social democracy.

The Politics of Switch Over

There exists a gap between electoral Parties and Duma Parties. It is evident that at times winning candidates change their political party under whose name they contested election instantaneously after entering Duma. “In particular, several independents from single-member districts either join parties or make new parties, which are called convenience parties” (Sangtu 2011: 92). This was as a result of the Duma rule which permitted faction members to enjoy greater benefit in office facilities and committee assignments. “That is opposed to the established party system where the association of members of parliament is the same as at the general election, and changes in affiliation during the life of a parliament are few” (White, Munro & Rose 2001: 425)

Table 3.2 Party in December 1995 Duma

| Party | Election | Duma Opening | Change |
|----------------------------|----------|--------------|--------|
| Communists | 157 | 149 | -8 |
| Our Home Is Russia | 55 | 66 | +11 |
| Liberal Democrats | 51 | 51 | 0 |
| Yabloko | 45 | 46 | +1 |
| Agrarians | 20 | 35 | +15 |
| Russia's Regions | 0 | 40 | +40 |
| People's Power | 0 | 38 | +38 |
| Power to the People | 9 | 0 | -9 |
| Russia's Choice | 9 | 0 | -9 |
| Russian Communities: Lebed | 5 | 0 | -5 |
| Women of Russia | 3 | 0 | -3 |

| | | | |
|------------------|----|----|-----|
| Forward, Russia | 3 | 0 | -3 |
| Ivan Rybkin Bloc | 3 | 0 | -3 |
| Minor Parties | 13 | 0 | -13 |
| Independents | 77 | 25 | -52 |

Source: Sangtu 2011, p.93

Table 3.2 shows that 105 deputies changed their political parties between the election of December 1995 and the opening Duma in the next month. In order to become eligible as a Duma faction, the Agrarian Party selected some independents and deployed some extra members from the Communist Party. Independents formed two factions, known as Russia's Regions and People's Power. A small number of Communist deputies also hinged with these new convenience parties so as to enable them qualify as a Duma party. This confirmation demonstrates that "established parties" (Sangtu 2011: 93) remain immune to party indiscipline of their members. However, a number of Duma members of minor parties leave their organisation soon after the election and that in turn weakens the position of the "ephemeral party" (ibid 2011: 93).

United Russia in 2003 increased the number of seats in Duma from 222 won by election to 300 at the opening of the parliament. It improved its position with 78 seats in three weeks' time. It cornered 13 members from the People's Party, 3 from Union of Right Forces, 2 Agrarian Party deputies, 1 from Yabloko and 1 from the Pensioners Party. There were 66 independents who hinged with United Russia (See Table3.3). United Russia at a substantial level flourished in taking benefit of the position of 'Party of Power' and considerably benefitted from the faction building after election as compared to the many other established parties in Russian politics. In 2007 election, the change of Duma seats did not occur, as Duma seats were not assigned exclusively by proportional representation. Notably, as per the new election law any member who moves to another political party should by design lose their seats (ibid 2011: 94).

Table 3.3, December 2003, Duma

| Seats | Election, 03.12.2003 | Duma opening 29.12.2003 | Change |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| United Russia | 222 | 300 | 78 |
| Communists | 52 | 52 | 0 |
| Liberal democrats | 36 | 36 | 0 |
| Motherland | 37 | 36 | -1 |
| Minor Parties | 32 | - | -32 |
| Independents | 68 | 23 | -45 |

Source: Sangtu 2011, p.93

LACK OF NATIONWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL PRESENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

As per the previous system, that is the system was in place before 2005, when half the Duma seats were elected from single member districts several national level political parties could not nominate candidates in all the districts for the reason that these political parties did not have local level leaders in all districts. Indeed, the local network of grassroots workers and leaders were missing. Just as an example, the single-member system was in place until 2003 election that stimulated political parties to nominate candidates to contest districts national level, no party contested as many as half the 225 single-member districts. In fact, even big political parties had a pathetic organisational base outside Moscow, barring Communists. “In 1993, the Communist Party listed its candidates in 98 districts, and Russia’s Choice listed only 88 candidates. In 1995 the Communist Party listed 130 candidates, and Our Home Is Russia listed 103 candidates” (Niel 1998: 165). In 1999 pro-Putin, Unity, disregarded the election in more than five-sixths of the single-member districts, evident from nomination of small number of candidates than five parties that failed to succeed list seats. The other party getting admiration from Putin, the Union of Right Forces (SPS) did not manage to nominate the candidates in more than two-thirds of the SMD constituencies. There were an average of five independent candidates per district; in sum they

outnumbered all the candidates nominated by officially recognised parties (White, Munro & Rose 2001: 421).

PARTY SYSTEM IN POST SOVIET RUSSIA

After the collapse of the CPSU in 1991, the Russian state endured party-less political environment, and after the unsuccessful coup of August 1991 Russia more or less came under dictatorship. As the state was provided legitimacy by the people's deputies and the President no single party was influential in reaffirming state power for the people and instrumental in redesigning the order in the Russian Federation. Indeed, the very notion of 'party' was muscularly, destructively, associated with the party, namely the CPSU, led Yeltsin and the 'new democrats' (sometimes working together in the Democratic Russia movement) were successful to curb the powers of other parties. It was only after the disbanding of the Soviet-era parliament and the adoption of a new Constitution that facilitated the first open multiparty elections of December 1993. It was the first time that these political parties got an eloquent, albeit limited, part in the political process of Russian politics (Oversloot & Verhuel 2006: 384).

Characteristics of the Russian party system became increasingly visible in the backdrop of the consolidation of President's power. A form of the so called "party of power" was underway during the term of Boris Yeltsin. However, its advance was rather inhibited by the difference of opinion between Boris Yeltsin and the parliament that influenced on further developments. As a result, Yeltsin intentionally overlooked the parliament, thus leaving minute space for the parliament and the parties to play any significant role. For example, the relative number of seats in the parliament did not mirror in the preference of the prime-minister and members of the government. Such a lack of consideration on the President's part backed the safeguarding of a certain degree of heterogeneity in the Russian party system and some piecing together started to materialise between groups of voters and the parties intended to represent them. With some issues, this course was imitated at the ideological level as well (using the most common terminology in Russia: left vs. right; orthodox groups getting support from the Soviet-time nostalgia vs. democratic forces aiming at significant changes and reforms (Mikkel, 2006: 35).

Stability has not been representative of the Russian party system. Political Parties have emerged and vanished between the federal elections, both politicians and the electorate have altered their political affiliation, and regulation concerning political parties and elections has been revised. During the 2000s, the party system went under significant ups and downs. Both the altered political culture and the growing power of Putin have aided a sturdier control of the party system by the executive power to the degree that the party system became identical to the executive power and, in particular, the presidential administration.

The parliamentary tool in the hands of the executive power is the United Russia Party received the majority of the seats in the State Duma in the last two elections in 2003 and 2007. This guaranteed an even process for adopting the bills prepared by the president, the presidential administration or the government. It again acquired majority of seats in the 2011 election that remained in controversy, though by a reduced margin. Economic progress and the popular image of Mr Putin have fortified the persistence of the current party system as part of the power vertical but now, as a result of the economic crunch and with a president more liberal in his rhetoric than his predecessor, there are hopes, and even some signs, of the liberalisation of the party system (Makinen 2009: 3).

PARTY SYSTEM DURING YELTSIN PERIOD

The monetary and political troubles in Russia in the period 1992-1993 inhibited the creation of an amiable atmosphere for the development of political party in Russia. At the other end, several deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation in their official capacity enlisted support in their respective constituencies. "They formed political parties, whose names included the words like "democracy" "socialism" and "people" in various combinations, and the ever-present word Russia." Though, in a short time, it became noticeable that the political parties were weak to handle the serious issues that perpetrated the state and bowed under the political tussle. To add further, these political parties were led by the aides of parliament deputies who were engrossed to enhance their own political career and were eager to develop their own locus in the executive branch of power (Wilson 2006: 317).

Putting European model context, it can be concluded that the permanent struggles between Boris Yeltsin and the legislature fragmented the Supreme Soviet, slackened and substantially damaged the establishment of a normal system of political parties in Russia. Supreme Soviet deputies, as opposed to their original ideological and political positions, steadily embraced sturdy opposition tactic in the tussle against the established powers. The Russian president had conflicting relation with most of the political parties represented in the Supreme Soviet. That may be reason for his displeasure of parties as such and limited their participation in government bodies in the federal centre and the provinces.

After victory in a nationwide referendum in April 1993, Yeltsin treated the parliament as a rubber stamp for verdicts of the executive bodies. Primary cause for this was the inner struggle for power which diluted the status of democrats in society. The financial volatility of the first half of 1990s vilified their repute: a bulk of Yeltsin's former electorate coupled the disarray with the notion "democrat" which signaled vague to most Russians.

The "autumn" of 1993 developed as a breakthrough in the creation of a multi-party system in Russia. Within a period of some months, the authorities conducted elections to a new kind of parliament, the State Duma; they also prepared new Constitution and embraced it through a plebiscite, which corresponded in time with the parliamentary election. The new Fundamental Law visibly restricted the powers of the legislative branch, and enormously fortified the executive branch, particularly, the presidential powers. Feeling faded, the State Duma already in the first term of office (1993-1995), approved a law on public associations intended to control the political process, as members in the political process were only ambiguously sketched in the 1993 Constitution. The law, became effective in May 1995, presented the legal conception of "political public association;" it drew parameters for registration of these associations and enlisted conditions for their participation in politics in the incidence of threats to the state's integrity or in cases of inciting social, racial, ethnic or religious rivalry (white 2011: 656).

However, the above law did not solve problem of regulation of funding associations inside Russia. Indeed, later this resulted into several problems for the political activities of various

political parties. Additionally, the law did not elucidate the variance between “political public associations” and “political parties”. Personal blocs were formed to shield their leaders ‘winning coveted seats in parliament. The blocs, whose number surpassed that of parties, inclined to highlight the personal appeal of leaders on the party lists who were not career politicians rather than the ideological core of the movement they signified (Shveitser 2009: 46)

In an accountable Party system a proportion of voter would swing between parties from one election to the next but the contending parties remains perpetual. In the 1993 Duma election 13 parties were on the list ballot, in 1995 there were 43 parties, and in 1999 it came down to 26. A party must win at least 5 % of the vote share, to be awarded any list seats. In 1993 six parties managed to pass this threshold, in 1995, 39 parties failed to meet this condition and in 1999 there were 20 list parties incapable to secure one in 20 votes. The fragile nature of Russian political parties is apparent from the fact that more than 60 parties were unsuccessful to win any list ballot seats because their vote fell below the 5% threshold. In the year 1995, 49.5% of the list vote went to parties that were unsuccessful to achieve the 5% hurdle. “In 1999 a total of 18.7% of the vote was cast for parties that failed to win any list seats or against all. Only 12 parties cleared the 5% barrier at least once” (White, Munro & Rose 2001: 420).

In the subsequent Duma elections, parties have been floating on and off the ballot. Of the 13 parties that contested list seats in 1993, five became defunct in 1995 and three more by the 1999 election. Of the 43 parties contesting list seats in 1995, 35 had vanished by the succeeding election. Additionally, two of the four existing parties, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the Zhirinovsky’s party, cannot be branded as campaigners of democratic accountability. Egor Gaidar's 'party of power' at the 1993 Duma election, Russia's Choice, has fused into the Union of Right Forces bloc. Our Home is Russia, established to support Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in 1995, almost left after the end of the term of Chernomyrdin from the Kremlin. “In the 1999 Duma election more than half the vote was cast for new political parties, chiefly for parties formed to promote Presidential candidates”. (Wilson 2006: 321).

In a sense, if the Russian political parties were steady, the large number of parties fight list seats, and in particular those political parties winning by clearing the 5% threshold at least once, would be the same at all three elections. But the case was different as of the eight parties that cleared

the threshold in the 1993 election, only three, the Communists, the Liberal Democrats and Yabloko, fought and cleared the mark again in 1995 and in 1999. A new party that cleared the impediment in 1995, Our Home is Russia, failed in 1999, when it was no more a party of power, while three political parties that didn't exist in the earlier election managed to do it. Two-thirds of the parties winning list seats at least once have not contested all three Duma elections.

Choice Variables in Political Participation

In terms of the choice of variables in political participation is concerned, a survey conducted by New Russia Barometer, 79% of Russians held they favoured elections, a level of testimonial similar to that found in established democracies.

Table 3.4 Age Education and Party choice

| Age, Education and Party Choice | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------|-------|-------------|------------|------|--------------|
| % of those voting for | | | | | | | |
| Total | Age | Yabloko | Unity | Zhirinovsky | Fatherland | KPRF | Right Forces |
| 26 | 18-29 | 9 | 23 | 33 | 11 | 6 | 31 |
| 43 | 30-54 | 54 | 46 | 43 | 45 | 36 | 45 |
| 31 | 55 plus | 37 | 31 | 24 | 44 | 58 | 24 |
| 27 | Elementary education, incomplete secondary | 12 | 25 | 38 | 24 | 42 | 19 |
| 28 | Secondary, basic vocational | 22 | 26 | 32 | 24 | 21 | 29 |
| 30 | Secondary, specialised vocational | 41 | 35 | 25 | 37 | 28 | 28 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--------|----|----|---|----|---|----|
| 15 | Higher | 24 | 14 | 5 | 15 | 9 | 24 |
|----|--------|----|----|---|----|---|----|

Sources: Richard Rose, Neil Munro and Stephen White (2001), *Voting in a Floating Party System: The 1999 Duma Election*.

When inclinations for the six parties winning list seats at the 1999 Duma election are associated with social structure characteristics, including age, education, subjective social status age and education are interconnected. Theories of the impact of education on party choice suggest that, regardless of generation, voting behaviour of educated people will differ from uneducated. However, in Russia generations vary profoundly in their political involvement. The oldest generation has vivid first-hand memories of the Great Patriotic War and of Stalinism, while the young generation witnessed political socialisation under Gorbachev.

Voters for the Union of Right Forces and the Zhirinovsky bloc are disproportionately young, and the Zhirinovsky bloc depended on the leader's personality rather than a persisting organisation. Among Communist voters, 58% were aged 55 or older in 1999 (See Table 3.4). Level of education also impacted the preference of voters similar to age. Both pro-market parties Yabloko and the Union of Right Forces draw a disproportionate support from the university educated class. While the appeal of the latter to the educated tends to reflect its staffing of youthful supporters, Yabloko's is ideal choice of mature as well as educated ones; its supporters are also older than average. In contrast, the Communist appeal to older voters and to less educated class of the electorate. The support of the Zhirinovsky bloc comes from a characteristic marginal set of voters: relatively uneducated, youthful voters. (Rose & Carnaghan 1995: 28-56).

Table 3.5 Political values and Party choice

| Q. What broad political outlook are you most inclined to favour? (% of those voting for) | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|--------------|---------|-------|-------------|------------|------|
| -90 | Total | Right Forces | Yabloko | Unity | Zhirinovsky | Fatherland | KPRF |
| 35 | None | 9 | 22 | 28 | 26 | 30 | 5 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 18 | Market | 82 | 36 | 33 | 17 | 15 | 1 |
| 7 | Social democratic | 5 | 20 | 13 | 23 | 15 | 1 |
| 7 | Great power patriot | 1 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 13 | 1 |
| 5 | Environment green | 1 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| 24 | Communist | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 13 | 91 |
| 4 | Other | 1 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 9 | 0 |

Source: Richard Rose, Neil Munro and Stephen White (2001), Voting in a Floating Party System: The 1999 Duma Election.

An unconventional theory of party stabilisation is that, independently of their socio economic Position, individuals embrace political principles and policy inclinations that become a robust basis for voting. Glasnost' facilitated Russian political class to discuss alternative ideologies and acquainted the electorate with new viewpoints such as 'green' values, as well as bracing older stances, such tempting to the patriotic Russia's great power status. The New Russia Barometer based on the variable of outlook found that communism was the most universally recognised view, with 24% respondents; its antithesis, the market, was preferred by 18% (See Table3.5).

Two kinds of Russian parties contested in the 1999 Duma election. Just under a third of votes went to the Communist Party and the Union of Right Forces, parties whose supporters each shared a united political viewpoint. More than two-thirds of voters allowed parties minus a well-defined appeal to a recognisable political ideology or values.

PARTY SYSTEM IN PUTIN ERA

President Vladimir Putin as opposed to his predecessor Boris Yeltsin has relentlessly acknowledged the importance of political parties and voiced his aspiration to fortify them. Among many, one of the Putin's clear objectives was to reorganise Russia's party system. In the

press conference in July 2001, soon after he approved the law on political parties, Putin uttered his antipathy at the condition of party system in Russia and clarified his intent to restructure it (Wilson 2006: 342). He said:

If there are de facto two, three, and four party systems in developed, civilised countries, why does there have to be 350 or 5,000 parties in Russia? This is a kind of Bacchanalia, not democracy. This leads to a situation in which the population cannot orient itself politically. It leads to a situation in which people choose not between ideologies and programmes but between individuals and personalities. And it will always be like this in Russia, if we don't construct a normal political base (Putin, 2001).

Putin's largely revealed solidarity with United Russia, that not only presented itself as a party of well-organised managers but which was in fact such a party during the stabilisation period, and the full identification of United Russia and local powers enabled the party to guarantee a relative and later an absolute majority of mandates in the State Duma. Thus, the State Duma attained the eminence of a driving belt of the executive branch and efficaciously eliminated the struggle between the two branches of power that had been perpetually on the agenda in Yeltsin's time.

The presidential government also effectively affected a project for creating another pro-Kremlin party, Just Russia, under the leadership of the speaker of the Federation Council Sergei Mironov, a popular loyalist to the president. In reality, Just Russia is a spectacular combination of former nationalists from the Rodina party, ex-Communists from the Party of Pensioners, and members of Mironov's former Party of Life, that were rather known for their unclear ideology. The cross posed as a Russian form of social democracy garnered support at the Socialist International and other European reformist organisations. Candidates and even entire political parties that the Russian establishments suspected were excluded from elections. During the election campaigns, the press was under the government control during the time of the demonstration of publicity materials of political parties that were critical of the present regime. Not all the political parties enjoyed identical situations when organising pre-election rallies. Law enforcement organisations rooted out the actions of the opposition which, in their biased view, were against Russian laws. Decisions of courts of any level were incalculably directed against the political opposition (Shveitser 2009: 47).

Unreasonable or, at best, unsubstantiated practices with regard to parties that had not vowed their loyalty to the establishments, were based on the law on Political Parties, approved by the State Duma in 2001 and later continuously revised. In defiance of the generally recognized democratic norms, the law put a minimum number of party members (it amounts to 40,000 at present) and obliged parties to have branches in more than a half of the administrative bodies of the Russian Federation. Unfair checks enabled authorities to impact the validity of parties that could, at least theoretically, rival pro-Kremlin parties. As opposed to the Western European political practice, the Russian authorities did not permit political parties to be set up along confessional or professional lines. Political activity was banned at enterprises and colleges. As a whole, the law on political parties impedes prospects for Russian citizens to set up political parties enabling the expression of public sentiments.

The dwindling number of Political Parties in Russia in the first decade of the 21st century has imposed restricted mutual integration between party leaders and top state officials. The 2008 presidential election brought forward about two correspondingly powerful and influential political figures in the Russian political hierarchy, namely Putin and Dmitry Medvedev. This dynamic has in some sense untied the stiff structure of a “presidential republic”. While the president (Medvedev in this case) kept his character of neutrality, despite formal invitations from United Russia, Putin has established his individual know how quasi-party membership. He has decided to become United Russia chairman without becoming its member in the formal sense. This condition, unparalleled in European political practice, is illuminated by a longing to have political support for a possible comeback to the top state post and by a distress of being branded with the party, whose functionaries, chiefly at the regional and local levels, may involve themselves in high-profile corruption scandals (Shveitser 2009:45).

Russian powers need these pseudo-parties to maintain an impression of the democratic ethos. The establishments do not wish to remain entirely aloof themselves from the party system in the expectation that trustworthy political parties would be a sort of “safety cushion” (ibid 2009) in the incident of a dramatic fall of the socio-economic situation. Hence, the political parties would

network the spontaneous displeasure of the population into judicious parliamentary activity. The establishments are of view that this tactic can work in the centre, where political activity developed at the turn of the 1990s. Of no less prominence are political party “safeguards” in regions, where local leaders of the “party of power” are answerable to the population and hence confine public protests. So as to create an appearance of parties’ participation in forming local government bodies, victors of local elections can now propose candidates for governors.

Appraising the likely responses by the “party of power” to popular displeasure during delicate stages of the financial crisis, one cannot rule out a possible fissure within United Russia and Just Russia into smaller parties, which the authorities may have failed to foresee (CDPSP 2007: 5). The oligarchic troika of state officials, businessmen (Both from the private and public sectors) and security agencies are suspicious to fully synchronise their positions in a grave disorder. At various stages of the crisis, individual members of this troika reflects the tendency to leave it and suggest to the population their own vision of ways to handle the crisis, posturing as new leaders within the narrow scale of parties. However, a development of this kind would result into the breakdown of the complete power vertical, erected by the authorities with so much exertion. Subsequently the political class close by the Kremlin would try if there is adequate time for that, undeniably to find conciliatory solution to restructure this power vertical and avert its disassembling (White 2011: 667).

Chapter IV

Electoral Politics during the Formative Phase, 1993 to 1999

INTRODUCTION

Major political developments were witnessed after the disintegration of Soviet Union. The Russian Socialist Federation of Soviet Republics (RSFSR) was the major constituent of the Soviet Union and as per provisions of the international law it became the successor state of it. The idea of free and fair elections was not known to majority of Russians after Soviet Union ceased to exist. Nonetheless the elections were called and Boris Yeltsin was elected as the President of RSFSR in 1991, while Soviet Union was still there. A convention was set up by Yeltsin to draft a new constitution including a new electoral system. However, the new Constitution was not adopted till November, 1993. The new electoral model crafted the voting process to elect the President as the Head of the state for a maximum of two four year terms by popular vote. (Gill 1994: 95)

On December 12, 1993 Yeltsin's office put up draft of new Constitution before the people which accorded greater powers to the President than the Federal Assembly (*Federalnoye Sobraniye*) or the Parliament. The parliament had two components, two houses in the form of State Duma (*Gosudarstvennaya Duma*) having 450 members and the Federation Council (*Sovyet Federatsii*) having 178 members. The members of the Federation Council were added as two each from the total 89 subjects of the federation, with one each from the executive and legislative branches of the regional administration. The law which oversaw the 1993 election was enacted through a presidential decree.

The nature of the electoral law has debated in large disagreements among the advisors of Yeltsin. (CDPSP 1996: 6) The advisors were adamant in molding a system which would maximise the interests of the Yeltsin side, which they saw as 'reformists' and not to build a leveled play field for all. Some advocated for a single member district (SMD) system whereby individuals would be elected on the basis of a simple plurality, i.e. no run-off elections if the leading candidate did

not get 50% of the votes. This had to function from a territorial constituency. It was believed that such an electoral system would be in the favor of the reformists by creating a distinct choice and according to Duverger's logic would produce a two Party system.

The other argument was for a proportional representation (PR) system, in which candidates had to be elected on the basis of a central party list in accordance with the percentage of the national vote acquired by the party. It was postulated because it was believed that the Communists- the opponents, remained in positions, therefore would be able to dominate the candidate selection process, whereas reformers did not have enough time to organize the constituency based parties before the election. Ultimately a mixed system was adopted comprising both the formulas. In this system half of the 450 members or deputies of the State Duma would be elected by the SMD system and the remaining half by PR, with a threshold of 5%, (i.e. parties would not gain any seat under the PR unless they gained at least 5% of the national vote).

Thus, the new Russian electoral system, an amalgamation of two different systems, was undoubtedly a compromise, consequently was unsupportive to the development of a viable party system. The system was tasking in the way that to be successful, the parties in the constraint of little resources and time must create powerful central party machinery to harness the PR system and must develop an outreaching party organisation to maximise support though the SMD aspect of the electoral system (Aleksandra 2011: 115). The dual demand was a tough deal for all political groups. One more considerable hurdle was that parties were supposed to collect 100,000 signatures with no more than 15,000 from any one of the Russia's 89 regions to be registered and field a candidate. This was really demanding in the circumstances of 1993. The required turnout for the validity of the election was as low as 25 percent.

Further, the administrative uncertainty about the election approach provoked Yeltsin to skew the electoral choice available to the voters. With the closure of the Parliament, Yeltsin banned some 15 newspapers on the ground of creating mass disorder in Moscow. This implied that newspapers had supported the parliament against Yeltsin. He also suspended 16 parties on the

ground that they have been involved in these events. One of the significant parties in the list of banned ones was Communist Party of the Russian Federation. However, the ban was repealed in time to let it participate in the election. Finally, more than 30 parties or electoral associations tried to collect the required 1000,000 signatures, out of which 21 claimed to have succeeded in the endeavour . Parties also claimed that they were threatened officially in the form of the intimidation of the persons collecting signatures and the seizure of signature. Even after fulfilling the signature requirement eight parties were denied registration, leaving 13 to contest the election.

The election campaigns witnessed restrictions, principally in the form of media bias against the Communists. Meanwhile the draft constitution which was to see a referendum along with the election was not put up in the public sphere for any discussion until 10 November before only a month to voting. Yeltsin also warned the leaders of the contesting 13 blocs to not indulge in any attack and criticism to the draft Constitution, the President or each other. This would result in losing them the free time allocated for them on the state media. Election result was once again produced a fragmented State Duma. Though eight parties had been successful to enter in the Duma winning both; PR list and SMD seats, none of them got a clear majority. Independent candidates won half of the SMD seats. Again, the election was not free from controversy as concerns had been raised over the counting of votes (Robert 1998: 54).

As the 1993 election result was against the expectation and speculations of pre election polls. Russian and foreign media considering the outcome called for to assess the allegations of fraud. The influential newspaper "MK" (Moskovskii Komsomolets) called the elections "a brick fallen on the head of Russian democracy" (Sorokina 1994), while, others were defying fraud allegations. Eventually a electoral fraud commission was established. The commission reported in May 1994 arguing that regional administrations had exaggerated the voter turnout in order to achieve the 50% requirement mandated for adoption of the Constitution. It also came into light that in the single- member districts around 9.2 million ballots (about 17 % of valid votes) were falsified mainly on the ground that they were allocated to parties for whom the electors had not voted. The LDPR was said to be a major beneficiary of this practice.

On referendum on the constitution, it was claimed that in a total turnout of 54.8% voters, 58.4% approved of it. On contrary, the commission on electoral fraud later suggested that only 46.1% of the electorate had voted in the favor of the Constitution, implying that while the election itself was legitimate, the constitution had not been formally adopted. However, commissions report was ignored. Hence, while the 1993 election was fundamentally free, but not fair (ibid 1998: 59). The circumstances in which it was called, restrictions imposed on participation and the manipulation of the voting all rendered its deviation of basic fairness. Despite all these manipulations, a legislative chamber agreeable to Yeltsin was not emerged. The overtly pro-Yeltsin parties (Russia's Choice and Party of Russian Unity and Concord) achieved only 22.2 percent of the vote, while the opponents (LDPR, KPRF and the Agrarian Party) secured 43.3 percent. This result and the complicated time Yeltsin had with the parliament over the succeeding two years forced pro-Yeltsin officials to make further efforts to ensure a satisfactory outcome at the next parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for December 1995 and June 1996 respectively.

As a result a new election law was introduced on June 1995 for the 1995 election, with few significant modifications in 1993 election law. Under new law, the number of party leaders to be appeared from Moscow for party list for the PR section of the election was condensed to twelve. Further, for participating in the election campaign, now it was mandatory for the parties and movements to register themselves with Ministry of Justice at least six months before the election. The number of signatures needed for registration of parties was also doubled from 100,000 to 200,000 with no more than seven percent from any one of the federal subjects. While a candidate contesting for a single-member district still needed the signatures of 1 percent of the electorate. After considerable deliberation, rule of the five percent threshold retained but now invalid votes were included in the calculation. Further, offering inducements to potential supporters were made illegal. It's noteworthy that, in October 1995 the rate for a signature was 2,000 Rubles and 10 Rubles to contribute to the nomination of more than one list of candidates. A cap on expenditure of the candidates and parties for the election campaigning was also introduced.

Irrespective of the larger number of signatures required for participating in the election, 69 parties and political blocs went for the collection of the required signatures. Meanwhile, the Central Electoral Commission refused to register some of these parties- including Democratic Russia, Yabloko and Derzhava on the ground of deficiencies in their documents. However, later the Supreme Court of Russia ruled in the favor of them and some of them (including Democratic Russia and Yabloko) reinstated. Eventually, 43 parties and movements were stood (Matthew 1995: 591).

The significant increase in the number of parties was an indication of the greater opportunity for party formation due to longer timetable involved. It also reflected the weakness of the party system itself. The chief characteristics of the Russian party system were in the words of Vladimir Gelman “feckless” pluralism, fragmentation, electoral unpredictability, and in which non-party actors had played significant role. KPRF was the only party, which had a developed infrastructure of political organization across the country. Other parties were mostly small groupings concentrated around prominent individuals, highly subject to splits and without any significant mechanism providing a real substance to the party itself.

In these circumstances, the pro- Yeltsin people endeavored to construct a two-party system (Gill 1994: 97). It was believed that if the two-party system would be implemented successfully, it will provide some stability to the political system, which was obviously a high priority. Further, creation of the two moderate parties would also have pushed the extremes (main opponents of Yeltsin) at the margins. Consequently two parties were created. The first one was Our Home is Russia (NDR) often nicknamed as “party of power”, headed by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and was premeditated to take up the centre-right position on the political spectrum. This was the party which represented the interests and stands of Kremlin and presumed to accomplish a dominating position in the political system. It intended to take the place of Russia’s Choice of Yegor Gaidar, a party represented in 1993, but subsequently had failed to become a major force. The second party presumed to take the center-left position was Electoral bloc of Ivan Rybkin- speaker of the Duma and member of the Agrarian Party, an ally to KPRF. Nevertheless, Rybkin’s party failed miserably in the election as it captured only three

SMD positions and 1.12 percent of the vote. Thereby, an attempt of creating a centrist two-party system was failed miserably.

Though, the election was not characterized by the same levels of vote manipulation as in the case of 1993 election, but it was believed that vote manipulation has taken place. More importantly the fairness of the ballot was suspected largely on the ground of the combination of two factors, first media campaigning, and second use of state resources. The pre-election polls suggested about the increasing strength of the communist vote and a precipitous decline of support for Yeltsin. Consequently, as the election approached the media coverage of the leading national newspapers and television stations increasingly became biased towards NDR and against the communists. This clearly indicated the violation of free and fair election norms. Moreover, NDR used its close links with the state in acquiring greater access of state resources. The way its election campaign had been ran that was impossible without access to state treasury. Although, other parties may also have surpassed the spending limits, but none did so to the extent of NDR and its government cohorts (Richard 1996: 352).

Regardless of these advantages, the pro- Yeltsin forces defeated and communists or anti-Yeltsin forces were emerged victorious. However, none of the electoral group got majority in the State Duma. Only four parties crossed the mandatory 5 percent threshold the Communist party, KPRF, LDPR and the Our Home Russia (NDR), representing a total of 50.5 percent votes. In other words 49.5 percent of electorate did not get representation through the PR system. The NDR or 'party of power' got only 10.1 percent of the vote. The communists with 22.30 percent vote and 157 seats emerged as the biggest single group in the Duma. This outcome reinforced the concerns among pro-Yeltsin people about the result of the forthcoming presidential election scheduled for mid 1996. Therefore, pressures for the postponement of the election increased on the Yeltsin. Nevertheless, in spite of some wavering, Yeltsin resisted such pressure and the election went ahead as scheduled.

Further, the presidential election 1996, for the first time, had witnessed a clear exploitation of incumbency advantages. Yeltsin used the combined resources of rich/influential business

backups and the state coffers to insure his way back into power. Contrary to the \$3 million, permitted by the law, it has been estimated that he had spend around \$500 million on his election campaign. The average campaigning expenditure of Yeltsin ranged between 30 and 150 times than his opponents was permitted. Most of these funding used for buying free advertising time on national media, travelling across the country and doling out charity to local officials and voters to strengthen his support.

Though, much of the media was anti-communists during the Parliamentary election 1995, but in the Presidential election this reached at a new level. Possibility of communist's victory in the presidential election increased the anxiety of foremost business and media owners. In February 1996, a group of them assembled and decided to support Boris Yeltsin (Gill 1994:99). As a result, most of the media coverage turned unremittingly antagonistic to the communists. The emphasis was laid on the maligned features of the communist era. A lot was made of the terror and the camps on the television just prior to the Election Day and was linked to the KPRF candidate Gennady Zuzanov. Media manipulation was even continued between the period of first ballot and run-off- necessitated because no one achieved majority in the first ballot. It is also noteworthy that, at the end of the campaigning for the first ballot, Yeltsin was excessively exhausted due to his vibrant campaign. As a result after the vote he got a heart attack and was absent from the hustling of the run-off vote. However, the media kept silent and colluded with those around the president in keeping the secret of his true health status hidden from the electorate (Pammett 1996: 368).

Nevertheless, the real strength behind Yeltsin's success was his excellent strategy and election campaigning. In contrast, his lackluster opponent- Gennady Zuzanov was incapable of widening communist voting support ahead of its established heartland. Meanwhile, Yeltsin dismissed his unpopular advisers, and prior to the run-off vote co-opted Aleksandr Lebed, the third place getter in the first poll and thereby insured his victory. The manipulation of the electoral process was definitely insured his victory, but its fairness was questioned significantly.

Prior to the next Parliamentary and Presidential election, scheduled in December 1999 and June 2000 respectively, succession was the biggest question exercising the minds of the political elites of the country. According to the 1993 Constitution a President might hold only a maximum of two consecutive terms of office and it was Yeltsin's second term. Further, continuation of Yeltsin's Presidency required either amendment of the constitution or to ignore the Constitution. Considering the political conditions this was not a viable option. Identification of a safe successor and insuring his entry into the presidency thus, became very important for Yeltsin and his supporters. However, this quest ended in the second half of 1999 with the appointment of Vladimir Putin as prime minister, followed by Yeltsin's subsequent endorsement of him as his successor. This was also a big issue of the 1999 Parliamentary election (Rose 1999: 429).

Soon after the collapse of the USSR a harsh wrestling started between President Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament- the Supreme Soviet and Congress of People's Deputies popularly known as 'Russian Constitutional crisis 1993'. It eventually culminated in the forced dissolution of the Parliament by the President and subsequent arrest of its leaders, which created a very apprehensive environment in the state. Meanwhile Yeltsin announced for the election of the Parliament and a referendum on the new Constitution, to be held in December 1993, despite the fact that, neither the Constitution nor the election law was established. But, it was indispensable for legitimizing dissolution of the Parliament and to put forward Yeltsin's economic reforms (Mcfaul 1996: 318). Though, procedure of the adoption of the new Constitution was initiated earlier, but concerned parties (presidential and parliamentary representatives) failed to reach an agreement over the form of the Constitution.

In order to avoid imbalanced representation emerged after 1995 election, due to the fact that only four parties/ blocks crossed the five percent threshold, in June a new electoral law was approved. Most distinguished features of the new law were:

- 1). Parties with less than five percent vote of the electorates might be included in the PR seat allotment, if the parties exceeding the threshold would have less than half the party list vote among them.

- 2) If a party gets more than 50 percent of the total vote and no other party achieved the five percent threshold, the second biggest party would be included in the seat distribution.
- 3) Parties and candidates had an option to get registered with Ministry of Justice, by depositing over two million Rubles and 83,490 Rubles (refundable only after winning at least 3% of PR list votes and 5% SMD list) respectively, instead of gathering signatures.
- 4) Candidates were required to declare their income, property and any court sentence against them.

However, as expected the new electoral law did not have much impact on the forthcoming election and its result (Rose 1999: 431).

The 1998 economic disintegration and the continuous rotation of the Prime Ministers in the period of 1998-99 were revealing the volatility of the government. In this situation many observers believed that, Yeltsin and his supporters would face great difficulty in selecting a face; to be loyal to him and his legacy and have some Parliamentary support as well. This became even more complicated because of the emergence of a new potential “party of power”, the Fatherland-All Russia (OVR) in August 1999, based at the Moscow mayor’s office not in the Kremlin. The OVR, whose leadership was comprised of the former Prime Minister Evgenii Primakov presenting a viable alternative to the prolongation of Yeltsinism without Yeltsin. It appeared to guarantee competency, a capability to get things done, and an extensive geographical base.

However, Yeltsin selected a little known Vladimir Putin as new Prime Minister and his successor. Putin imparted the impression of steely eyed competency and an aptitude to get things done effectively (Hale 1999: 69). In addition, he neither had been linked with the corruption charges- swirled around Yeltsin and his colleagues, nor carried the political baggage of Luzhkov or Primakov. His popularity augmented in part due to sympathetic, even at times passionate, media coverage. Therefore, Putin’s selection proved a masterstroke of Yeltsin and turned the eventual outcome of the 1999 election.

Formation of a new Kremlin-based party of power 'the Unity' in September 1999 had, further strengthened the position of Yeltsin. Unlike other parties the Unity was created in the Kremlin, just to support Putin's position. Henceforth did not have any independent policy positions. It attracted, or possibly selected a strong list of candidates to contest in the 1999 State Duma election. Fastened with Putin a rising star, it went in the election offering electorates the appearance of a choice for a new future, but one which was neither occupied with the restoration of communism nor simply a continuation of Yeltsin. Finally, twenty-six out of thirty-five parties or electoral blocs which sought registration were successfully gained registration.

Forthcoming presidential poll in 2000 overshadowed the 1999 election campaign. It was majorly seen by many as a prequel of the presidential poll. After the election result announced six parties out of twenty-six succeeded in achieving the five percent threshold, representing about 81.5 percent of the total ballot casted. The KPRF emerged as victorious in both the PR list and SMD contest with highest voting percentage and 46 SMD seats respectively. While, the newly created Unity (merely three months ago), without any specific policies except support for Putin and from Putin, won second position with just under a quarter of the votes. Unity's success attributed partially to the support of Kremlin and extensive use of state resources to strengthen the campaign (John 1999: 49) and partially to Putin's popularity, largely mediated through the media. Completely biased media not only generated significant positive support to the Kremlin and Putin, but through vigorous anti Luzhkov and Primakov campaigning destroyed their reputation as viable national leaders as well.

After the Federal Assembly election, now the focus shifted to the presidential election. To ensure Putin to be his successor, in the end of December Yeltsin resigned from his office. After his resignation, Putin being the Prime Minister automatically became the acting President, thereby had full access of the advantages of incumbency in the election coming forth. The incident rescheduled the election to be held in March instead of June, because under the Constitution new President need to be elected within the three months, in case the President office is vacant. In this scenario opponents had not only to compete with an exceedingly popular contestant, who had all the advantages (including the resources and largesse) of incumbency, but have had very little

time to twist the popularity of Putin. The position of other prospective candidates; Luzhkov, Primakov, Yavlinskii and Zuganov had been weakened by poor performance of their respective parties in the 1999 parliamentary election as well (Rose 1999:432).

In the election campaign instead of offering a blatant election agenda, Putin presented himself as a statesman, offering stability and improvement and who was above the cacophony of politics. With a vigorously sympathetic media, (though vigorously attacked by Gusinsky-owned NTV) reinforced through certain level of administrative pressures of officials and election fraud, it was no surprise that Putin crushed his rivals significantly. Putin dominated the election campaign in the way that, for the first time in independent Russia's history election was finalized through first poll (though Yeltsin won first round win in June 1991 election) because the victor exceeded fifty percent of the vote in first round itself. The same strategy or blueprint further insured his victory in 2003-04 and 2007-08 presidential elections.

After procuring the President's office, Putin instigated a sequence of changes to the political structure. These changes had significant impact on the regional governments and representation in the Federation Council (Birch 2010: 111). A new law on political parties introduced on July 2001. According to which a party wishing to contest in federal Assembly elections must "have regional branches in more than half of subjects of the Russian Federation"⁷, in other words need to be truly national. The minimum membership of the party was also doubled to 50,000, consequently ruling out the regional and governors' parties effectively. They also needed to have a minimum of 100 members in at least 45 regions and 50 members in other 44 regions. It also imposed a ban on creation of the parties on the basis of sectional interests or promoting them. In addition, now parties that won at least three percent votes of the PR list, twelve SMD seats or three percent votes in the presidential election would be entitled to the state support. However, parties that failed to obtain even two percent vote would have to pay back the state funds they had received. The law also set limitation on the creation of electoral blocs. Now

⁷ FEDERAL LAW ON POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, July 2001, Online URL: [http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF\(2012\)001-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2012)001-e)

an electoral block might be comprised of only three members, of which one had to be a party, thereby limiting the involvement of small groups significantly (ibid 2010: 117).

New law also introduced to set more stringent rules for registration of the parties. Now, it became mandatory for the parties to hold a founding congress, attended by at least 150 delegates from not less than 45 regions, where its governing bodies would be selected and agenda would be adopted. Only then parties would be able to register with the Ministry of Justice. Thereafter, its regional organizations would be registered at the regional level and finally the registrations need to be validated by the central ministry. Following the registration, whether parties were abiding the rules are not would also be monitored and any violation of the rules might result in deregistration. From now on, only political parties were the organization that was eligible to contest in the elections. Though, it appears that the more strict registration system had contributed significantly in the disappearance of many smaller parties; however, by mid 2003, there was 51 parties registered with the Ministry (Aleksander 2011: 116).

In the year 2002, again a new law on Duma election was adopted. The new law replaced five percent threshold by seven percent; to be implemented from the 2007 election and mandated that from the 2003 election a minimum of four parties would enter in the parliament via the PR list, irrespective of the votes they won. Also, the parties having representation in the parliament through the PR list system were now entitled to nominate a presidential contestant and both the party and contestant would get extra resources for additional media coverage. In addition, it also made restrictions on the authorities regarding the withdrawal of the registration of a candidate (ibid 2011: 116).

Nonetheless, the most critical changes in the Russian political system were made in the year 2008. The president and the Federation Assembly's term had been extended from four year to a maximum of six year. The 166 members of the Federation Council have to be appointed by the President directly. Changes in the lower house; the State Duma was also made in the form of extension of its term from four year to five year after 2008 election and most importantly, all the

450 members of the house now have to be elected by proportional representation, thus the SMD system was abolished (Mcfaul 1996:319).

The Post-Soviet Russia Communist Party have always been the second runner-up, first Nikolay Ryzhkov in 1991, then Gennady Zyuganov in 1996, 2000,2008 and 2012, and Nikolay Kharitonov in 2004. It was the 1996 election only, in which any other candidate General Alexander Lebed (independent candidate) got more than ten percent (14%) of the votes in the first round and second round election was required. Russia has observed six presidential elections and three presidents- Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev respectively (Boris Yeltsin elected in 1991 and 1996, Vladimir Putin in 2000, 2004 and 2012 and Dmitry Medvedev in 2008).

As far the Parliamentary elections concerned, the Communist Party was the largest party with 35 percent and 24 percent of the votes in 1995 and 1999 Parliamentary elections respectively. The other continuous contestants have been the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) hovering between five and fifteen percent of the votes and Yabloko, winning ten percent of the votes in 1995 and five percent in rest of the three polls. Parties that had acquired more than ten percent of the total votes in any one of the election held in this period were; Russia's Choice (16% in 1993) Our Home is Russia (12% in 1995) the Unity Party of Russia, the Fatherland-All Russia party, and the People's Deputies Faction party (with 23%, 13% and 15% of the votes respectively in the 1999 election). In 2003 election an alliance of the Unity Party of Russia and Fatherland All Russia the Unity Party with 38 percent votes emerged as the biggest party of the Duma⁸.

CENTRAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Central Electoral Commission (CEC) is the chief election body of the Russia. It was established in 1993 to supervise the 1993 election and later became a permanent agency⁹. The CEC consists of 15 members in which 5 are chosen by the president, 5 by the State Duma, and 5

⁸ Eurussia Centre, (2011), *The electoral system of Russian federation*, The Eu-Russian centre Review, Issue.17, April.2011

⁹ Russian Profile (2011), The Central Election Commission, [Online: Web] URL: http://russiaprofile.org/bg_politics/49377.html (Accessed on 20 March 2012)

by the Federation Council. Nikolai Ryabov, CEC head, supervised elections of 1993 and 1995. He was alleged for consistent electoral fraud during his tenure and replaced by Alexander Ivanchenko after the presidential elections of 1996. Alexander Ivanchenko was relatively more independent, however, he was also involved in over numerous regional electoral scandals. As a result, he was replaced by Alexander Veshnyakov in March 1999. The new head of CEC brought major changes to the electoral system until he was replaced as head of the CEC in March 2007 by Vladimir Churov, a former member of the LDPR.

PARTY IN POLICY MAKING PROCESS

Policy making is always a reflection of people's wishes and parties' attempts to include people's wishes in the system to the extent possible by articulating and aggregating people's interest. In Russian case, President determines the basic guidelines for the state's domestic and foreign policies (Article 80, 2). He also has the supreme appointment powers. Although in any kind of appointment, Duma's consent is expected but not must, this absence of an effectual part makes Duma a weak institution. In the legislative field, the president, the State Duma, Federation Council and government can propose draft of any law (Article 104). It has to be approved by the both houses of the Parliament and requires president's approval in the end. President can veto any bill. This demonstrates president's dominating powers in the field of law making and policy formation. Similarly parties have less influence on the government formation as compared to the president, because government is responsible for the implementation of law to the president and not to the legislature. The last twenty years of Russian democracy reflects a mixed history of cooperation and confrontation between president and state Duma.

President Yeltsin emerged in the changing political scenario in Russia with his agenda of democratization and economic reform. But in the beginning of 1990s when he introduced his agenda, the political arrangement was not so smooth for him (CDPSP 1996: 9). Erstwhile Soviet constitutional agreements made the President subordinate to the legislature. The President nominated the prime minister and other chief government officials and then need to be confirmed by the parliament. However, Yeltsin successfully countered these organizational arrangements

by convincing the Parliament to grant him extraordinary authorities to promote his radical economic reform program.

His decrees were granted equal standing to law. The confrontation became wider over the issue of making a new reformed constitution to make Russia a western type liberal democracy. Yeltsin was in favour of a constitution, which will ensure a strong president whereas Parliament wanted a parliament friendly constitution. In this scenario new Constitution was adopted without following any democratic process of debate and discussions. Neither political groups were invited nor any opposition leader consulted. The draft was presented before the people but accepted by a minority of Russian population. This is now a democratic culture of consensus over the structure and functioning of the democratic system was subverted and a one man constitution was accepted.

In the economic field Yeltsin followed same policy of marginalizing opinion of other groups or political parties. While implementing economic reform Yeltsin used decrees without any prior consultation with the congress. Yeltsin favoured a shock therapy approach, whereas most of the parliamentary groups were in favour of gradualism and against immediate transformation towards western type open and market oriented economy (Anders 1997: 96).

In the field of foreign policy, president Yeltsin and his foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev looked at west as the best supporters for their economic reform and their regime as well. Yeltsin and Kozyrev emphasized the desire for Russia to become a normal great power, not just a military power (CDPSP 1996:9). When, the first draft of the Russian foreign policy was accepted neither the Parliament was consulted nor the political parties were taken into confidence. Yeltsin's foreign policy in large part after 1991 was a response to the growing strength of conservative and nationalist forces in Russia. It gradually turned to its earlier traditional partner like India, China etc. The real cause of conflict between these two institutions was that the Russian Federation was born 'asymmetrical'. The cause of this asymmetry according to Solvinick, was that there were strong region for variation after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the resources that local elites could acquire, and the power that they could generate (Robinson, Neil 2000: 1-23).

THE EXPERIENCE OF DUMA ELECTIONS

Best way to analyze the role of the political parties in a country's political processes is the analysis of their participation and performances in the elections. In the newly adopted Constitution of the Russia (1993), elections were adopted as a method through which people can express their wishes. Existing parliament was dissolved and a new bicameral Federal Assembly, referred as the Russian parliament was established or introduced. The Federal Assembly consists of an upper house (the Federation Council) and a lower house (the State Duma). Members of both houses were elected for special two year terms in December, 1993 after the dissolution of Congress by Yeltsin in October of the same year. Members of the State Duma were elected at the same time for four-year term (Gill 1994: 111).

The upper chamber, the Federation Council, resembled a typical European style upper house that was substantially weaker than its counterpart the State Duma. The Federation Council consisted of the governors (or chief administrators) and heads of local legislatures from each of the 89 regions of Russia. State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly is consists of 450 representatives. Given its structure and powers, the Duma alone is often referred to as the Parliament. Deputies to this lower chamber are chosen by a mixed electoral formula. Half or 225 members were chosen by the familiar 'first-past-the-post' (plurality) system in single-member districts based roughly on population. The remaining 225 seats are filled by a proportional voting system by party list. The proportional voting section is carried out with Russia serving as one immense electoral district called the 'general federal district' The Russian electoral system then combines the two extremes together- the plurality and PR continuum- as independent parts of the same system (Birch 2010: 122).

This differs somewhat from the aforementioned German system of 'personalized PR' which also combines elements of both plurality and PR systems in a two-tiered electoral system. In the German system, the results of the plurality and PR systems are not separate as in the Russian system, but are interconnected. After the results of the single-member plurality contests, parties are awarded the number of seats roughly proportionate to their share of the national vote in the

PR contest, minus the number of seats they won in the plurality contests. This system allows parties that were denied seats in the plurality contests to be compensated by the concurrently held PR election.

On the other hand in the Russian electoral system Parties and blocs are awarded all of the seats they win in both the races regardless of whether the distribution of seats to the State Duma coincided with the distribution of votes in either one of the electoral contest. Russia's mixed PR-plurality electoral system makes it a perfect case for anyone examining the affect of proportional representation and plurality electoral systems on party development (Aleksander 2011: 116), because it allows the simultaneous study of these two electoral systems under the same set of social, economic, and cultural settings. Before the campaign used to begin, electoral blocs and individual contenders were required to collect signatures to participate in the poll.

Political parties and electoral blocs yearning to field a party list in the national PR competition were obliged to gather a minimum of 100,000 signatures from at least seven different administrative districts, with no more than 15 percent of the signatures coming from any one district. In other words, these signatures had to come from a reasonably wide geographical variance. This was an attempt to discourage the participation of small regional parties based in just one or two regions. Despite the overwhelming obstacles regional parties must surmount. According to Viktor Sheinis, Duma deputy and Yobloko member and one of the principal authors of the parliamentary elections law, 'the registration requirement of 100,000 signatures has proven too easy to achieve' (ibid 2011: 122).

There was two ways to get onto ballot for individual candidates contesting for the single-member districts to the State Duma. First, by being nominated by an electoral bloc which fulfilled the signature requirement for the above mentioned party list vote, and two; by collecting signatures equal to one percent of the total voters of his or her electoral district, which typically averaged approximately 5000 signatures.

Hence, the registration rules played a significant role in determining the number and type of parties that would participate in the elections. The requirement of the collection of 100,000 signatures for registration excluded a significant number of would be electoral candidates, even before the electoral campaign started (Aleksader 2011: 121), and narrowed the field from an endless number of small groups and cliques to thirteen. Only these organizations had any chance of putting together the required petition campaign. Another target of the registration rules was regionally or ethnically based parties. Many of Russia's ethnic minorities have their own administrative districts. By requiring that no more than 15 percent of a bloc's valid signatures come from one region, registration rules acted in greatly undermining the formation of ethnically based electoral blocs. As intended no electoral bloc representing a particular nationality (e.g. Tatan or Bashkirs) or any bloc representing the interests of ethnic based areas as a whole were able to get on the party list ballot.

Apart from these registration hurdles, certain legal thresholds were also employed. First, a legal threshold of acquiring five percent of the national vote in the party list PR contest was made mandatory for any party list to be represented in Duma. This threshold was implemented in an effort to encourage Russia's weak parties to join together in coalitions or blocs (John 1999: 54). Many politicians from small parties have criticized the 5% hurdle as being too high. However, according to Sheinis, the barrier for winning Duma seats is one of the law's best features. His Darwinist view on the matter reflected in his statement, that tiny parties "do not have the right to exist", and that the electoral law should promote the creation of a few strong political parties, just as wolves maintain a "biological balance" by eating weaker animals.

Second, in the single-member plurality contests, a minimum of 25 percent of an electoral district's registered voter turnout was made essential for candidates to be elected, otherwise election would be invalid. Under this threshold contest in six electoral districts was invalidated. In Chechnya electoral sites were not opened, hence the election was not conducted. In the rest five electoral districts; viz. Tartarsan, voter turnout remained below to the 25 percent threshold due to the local elite's call of the boycott of the elections. Despite these isolated instances, however, the threshold was not a big problem.

In respect to access to media for political campaigning, all of the parties are allocated free television time for political advisements equally. However, the free-time was not distributed to all the parties equally over the entire period in which advertisements were permitted. Rather, some parties had all of their free time on the eve of the election. In addition, paid time is available, reportedly for 20,000-30,000 per minute. The parties are allowed to spend 250,000 times of the minimum salary on their advertising campaign. Thus, parties with huge resources had greater chance to influence the voting behavior of electorates in their favor.

STATE DUMA ELECTION 1993

Russia witnessed its first genuine multi-party electoral campaign after the State Duma election in 1993¹⁰. However, the circumstances were hardly propitious for a free and fair election. Consequently, the results of the 1993 parliamentary election clearly reflected the division of the Russian society. The new parliament was deeply fragmented, as none of the party or block participating in the election got clear majority in the Parliament. Entrance of the Parties/blocks in the Parliament was based on the acquisition of at least 5 percent of the national vote, considering the whole country as one giant constituency. It was presumed that this would give reformist candidates an advantage over the conservatives, owing to their natural strength in the big cities, especially in Moscow and St Petersburg, as later has its base in the rural areas (Sakwa 1995: 195-227).

Contrary to earlier election practices, 1993 elections were held in one round and run-off contests were abolished. Likewise, the minimum turnout requirement was reduced to 25 percent against the old requirement of 50 percent. Candidates are required either to be nominated officially by one of the party blocks or acquire a minimum of 1 percent nominations (an average of 4-5,000 signatures) for contesting in single-member districts. Finally, a total of 1,586 candidates were contested in 1993 election for 225 single-member constituencies of the State Duma. The rest 225 seats were disseminated to the parties on the proportional basis.

¹⁰ Eurussia Centre, (2011), *The electoral system of Russian federation*, The Eu-Russian centre Review, Issue.17, April.2011.

The election formed a fragmented State Duma. Neither pro-government nor the opposition blocks or parties got a clear majority. The percentage of votes won by each party in the election is shown in the below table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Duma election 1993,

| Party /Bloc | Party List (%) | Party List Seat | SMD | Total Seat | Total Seat (%) |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----|------------|----------------|
| Russia's Choice | 15.51 | 40 | 30 | 70 | 15.6 |
| LDPR | 22.92 | 59 | 5 | 64 | 14.2 |
| Communist Party | 12.40 | 32 | 16 | 48 | 10.7 |
| Agrarian Party | 7.99 | 21 | 12 | 33 | 7.3 |
| Yabloko | 7.86 | 20 | 3 | 23 | 5.1 |
| Women of Russia | 8.13 | 21 | 2 | 23 | 5.1 |
| PRES | 6.76 | 18 | 1 | 18 | - |
| DPR | 5.52 | 14 | 1 | 15 | - |
| Civic Union | 1.93 | 0 | 1 | 1 | - |
| RDDR | 4.08 | 0 | 4 | 4 | - |
| Dignity &Charity | 0.70 | 0 | 2 | 2 | - |
| New names | 1.25 | 0 | 1 | 1 | - |
| Cedar | 0.76 | 0 | - | - | - |
| Against All | 4.36 | 0 | - | - | - |
| Spoiled Ballot | 3.10 | 0 | - | - | - |
| Independent | - | - | - | 141 | 31.3 |
| Postponed | - | - | 6 | 6 | - |
| Total | - | 225 | 225 | 450 | 100 |

Source: Sakwa, Richard (2008) *Russian Politics and Society*, London and New York: Routledge.

As shown in the Table 4.1, the biggest pro-government parties-the Russia's Democratic Choice and the Party of Russian Unity and Consensus (PRES) - jointly polled 22.2 percent (15.5 and 6.7 respectively) of the vote, less than the LDPR (22.9%) alone. The opposition got 43.2 percent (22.9 percent LDPR, 12.4 percent, CPRF, and 7.9 percent APR) of total votes casted. Whereas,

the proportion of the votes of ‘democrats’ (both in power and opposition) had fallen to 33.2 percent (15.5 percent Russia’s Choice, 7 percent Yabloko, 6.7 percent PRES and 4 percent Sobchak). The Women of Russia block (8 per cent) had inclined towards the communists. The centrist block like Travkin’s DPR (5.5 percent) and the Civic Union (1.9 percent) sought to occupy what appeared to be a disappearing centre. Another interpretation, of course, for the weak performance of the openly centrist parties is that all the others now moved to occupy ‘centrist’ positions with the exception of Zhirinovskiy’s LDPR.

Any interpretation of post USSR Russian political culture based on these elections must be tempered by the comparative arbitrariness of the outcomes. A careful analysis of the electoral trend is required. It is noteworthy that, if the elections had been conducted only under the proportional system, the LDPR would have emerged as the single largest group however, if the old two-stage single-member system had been maintained the LDPR would barely have figured. Although, reformist candidates had strong base in Moscow, St Petersburg and few other places but at provinces level their support fell sharply by 15 percent in Vologda *oblast*, 10 percent in Vladimir *oblast* and so on. Lyubarsky argues that the widespread fraud by the old Soviet apparatus was the main reason for such developments. He insists that support for reformist forces had not declined but had probably increased. The results of the referendum adopting the constitution held at the same time have also been questioned, and the charge of vote-rigging still hangs over the December 1993 elections (Sakwa 2008: 171).

The main objective of the 1993 electoral law was to maximize the representation of pro-government political forces in the State Duma. Because the impact of these electoral formulae on the structure of the Parliament was highly uncertain; consequently the election result was very disappointing for the President Boris Yeltsin and his supporters. An unenviable conflict between the President and Parliament has emerged, which led to the introduction of new election draft law by the President, on 1 November 1994. The new draft law, along with other issue proposed reduction of PR deputies from 225 to 150, consequently increasing the number of deputies elected from single-member- districts from 225 to 300. However, the new draft law was not

adopted and Yeltsin's attempt to reform the Russian electoral system was failed. As a result a conciliation commission- made up of the members of the upper and lower houses of the Parliament and presidential administration was established. In June 1995, both the houses of the Parliament passed a compromise law drafted by the commission which was very similar to the 1993 electoral law. The next section is an analysis of the State Duma election 1995 conducted under the new electoral law.

STATE DUMA ELECTION 1995

The second State Duma election was held in December 1995. The electoral law applied to the 1995 election was similar to those applied for 1993 election, with some minor changes. The new electoral law of June 1995 forced party leaders to cut the number of Moscow-based politicians on the party-list to 12, with the rest to be chosen from the regions. The new rules and regulations made it clear that only those parties or movements would enter into the campaign that have been registered with the Ministry of Justice, before six months of parliamentary elections (CDPSP 1996:9). This very provision restricted the uncontrolled proliferation of parties and movements. Despite these measures around 300 parties were engaged in bloc-making to collect signatures. Further, the number of signatures required for the registration of the parties and blocks doubled from 100,000 to 200,000, which was not more than 7 percent of any of the Russia's 89 component units. In the single-member district candidates were required to accumulate signature of one percent voters and the candidates getting a simple plurality of votes won.

However, new electoral law maintained the 225: 225 split and a minimum voter turnout threshold at 25 percent, which indicated the power of the vested interests of the factions already in the Parliament and a constant commitment to the conviction that a proportional system stimulates the development of parties. However, the retention of the 5 per cent threshold for party-list candidates to enter parliament was severely contested on the grounds that a significant proportion of the vote might end up unrepresented. Georgy Satarov, presidential aide, suggested a 'representation threshold' that would be gradually lowered until 75 per cent of votes cast were represented (Sakwa 2008: 172). Victor Sheinis provided the justification of the law on the grounds that smaller parties 'do not have the right to exist' and that it should encourage the

creation of strong parties. He conceded that the lack of a second round in single-member districts was the electoral Law's greatest flaw.

Thus, the two-party system envisaged by Yeltsin in April 1995 did not materialize. He wanted to have a centre right dominated by Chernomyrdin's NDR, while the centre left slot was to be taken by Ivan Rybkin's Electoral Bloc. The later went through several permutations and was challenged by various actors, such as social democratic trade unions, and manufacturer associations, as well as the Women of Russia bloc running with a federal list of 80 women. Despite these precautionary measures, the 'democratic' part of the political spectrum fragmented into small groups. Party leaders were of the view that by gaining access to free air time by heading a party-list group their chances in single-member districts would definitely increase. Thus, they placed their individual interests above those of the movement, something not restricted to the democratic camp (Sakwa 2008: 172).

The left was dominated by the CPRF, the Agrarian Party of Russia headed by Mikhail Lapshin, and a number of extremist parties, above all Victor Tyulkin's and Victor Anpilov's bloc Communists Working Russia For the Soviet Union. Zyuganov's CPRF came into the electoral fray and benefited a lot from the widespread discontent with the course of reforms and in the end emerged victorious in numerous regional elections. The CPRF's electoral manifesto was more a blend of patriotic populism than communism, avoiding a commitment to specific Soviet policies while stressing the reintegration of the USSR. Zyuganov assured Western business that the CPRF would not do anything to destroy the private sector if it happens to be at the helm of affairs (CDPSP 1996:9).

The nationalist wing was once again dominated by Zhirinovsky's LDPR. In 1993, it had won around 25 per cent of votes but in 1996 it was forced to share the national-patriotic vote with numerous other groups. Patriotic centrists were represented by the Congress of Russian Communities whose leader was the former secretary of the Security Council, Yuri Skokov. Second on the list was General Lebed (retired), formerly commander of the Twelfth Army in Moldova, who made clear his presidential ambitions (Sakwa 2008: 172). The KRO had been

established by Dmitry Rogozin in 1993 but he had ceded first place later to Skokov. Lebed announced his entrance into active politics in April 1995, when he joined forces with Skokov, and he resigned his commission in May. There were tensions within the KRO, and in particular between Lebed and Skokov, who also nurtured presidential ambitions and allegedly noted that Lebed's 'education is inadequate.

On the patterns of 1993 elections, the electoral system amplified the representation of the parties making it over the threshold and voters supporting the other 39 blocs were in effect disenfranchised. Since, about 34 million votes were 'wasted' in 1995 the political preferences of a large segment of the electorate did not reflect in the parliament. All of this once again raised a number of questions such as the changing the electoral system, lowering the 5 per cent threshold, reducing the proportion of MPs elected from party-lists or abolishing the proportional part of the election entirely and, reintroducing a second round in single-member districts. In 1993, the votes received by LDPR represented the 'soft' backlash against the policies of the government (Ibid 2008: 173).

CPRF's gain in 1995 elections was termed as 'hard' backlash. This not only reflected anger at the painful economic reforms, but also a broader disenchantment with the post-August 1991 political order. However, the CPRF's 22 per cent vote share represented only 15.2 million votes: the total opposition vote of some 37 per cent was less than in 1993, while the vote for pro-reform parties fell to 22 per cent¹¹. The LDPR's vote halved from that in 1993, yet successfully crossed the party list threshold but won only one single-member seat. The greatest surprise here was the failure of patriotic organisations like KRO to enter into the parliament. In contrast to 1993, the 1995 electoral law set specific limits on campaign spending for parties and candidates, although these were clearly exceeded by some of the blocs.

¹¹ Eurussia Centre, (2011), *The electoral system of Russian federation*, The Eu-Russian centre Review, Issue.17, April.2011.

Table, 4.2 Duma Election 1995

| Party /Bloc | Party List (%) | Party List Seat | SMD | Total Seat | 1993 Seats |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----|------------|------------|
| CPRF | 22.30 | 99 | 58 | 157 | 45 |
| LDPR | 11.18 | 50 | 1 | 51 | 64 |
| Russia our Home | 10.13 | 45 | 10 | 55 | N/A |
| Yabloko | 6.89 | 31 | 14 | 45 | 25 |
| Women of Russia | 4.60 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 23 |
| Working of Russia | 4.53 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KRO | 4.31 | 0 | 5 | 5 | N/A |
| PST | 4.01 | 0 | 1 | 1 | N/A |
| DVR | 3.86 | 0 | 9 | 9 | 76 |
| APR | 3.78 | 0 | 20 | 20 | 55 |
| Derzhava | 2.59 | 0 | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| Forward Russia | 1.94 | 0 | 3 | 3 | N/A |
| VN | 1.61 | 0 | 2 | 2 | N/A |
| Pamfilova et al | 1.61 | 0 | 2 | 2 | N/A |
| Rybkin bloc | 1.12 | 0 | 3 | 3 | N/A |
| Bloc with IMP | - | 0 | 10 | 10 | N/A |
| Independent | - | - | 77 | 77 | 162 |
| Total | 100 | 225 | 225 | 450 | 450 |

Source: Sakwa, Richard (2008) *Russian politics and society*, London and New York: Routledge.

STATE DUMA ELECTION 1999

Parliamentary elections of 1999 were crucial for the presidential elections. The most fascinating aspects of the whole process is the inter-weaving of parliamentary and presidential considerations. It made a deep impact on the entire development of the party system and added a number of complications in the calculations of political leaders. By 1999 the attempt to impose the old bipolarity on the electoral process was no longer credible. The CPRF suffered from defections in the run-up to the December 1999 elections, above all with the majority of the Agrarian Party of Russia (APR) allying itself with the powerful new grouping headed by the

former prime minister, Yevgeny Primakov (Rose 1999: 433). This electoral association was consisted of the *Otechestvo* (Fatherland) organisation, led by the mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, and *Vsya Rossiya* (All Russia), comprised of some of the leading regional leaders like Vladimir Yakovlev of St Petersburg and President Mintimir Shaimiev of Tatarstan. In Russian elections, a new force emerged in the form of regions and their increasingly independent leaders. The delicate and fragmented nature of Russian political system/arena was demonstrated by the propagation of regional party formation in the run-up to December 1999 election. Though, none of the ‘party of the regions’ emerged victorious. This once again confirmed the political and economic cracks of the regional ‘lobby’ (Sakwa 2008: 176).

Prior to 1999 election it was a trend that the government had always supported a single quasi-presidential ‘party of power’, for instance, Gaider’s Russia’s Choice in 1993 and Chernomyrdin’s Our Home is Russia in 1995. However, the emergence of a reconfigured oppositional ‘party of power’ under the Prime Minister Primakov supported by the national security establishment, regional elites, and industrial and financial groups generated a conflict between President’s office and the Parliament. Consequently, Primakov was dismissed and independent Sergey Stepashin was appointed as new Prime Minister on 12 May 1999. Further in September 1999, to counter threats to the succession, Kremlin promoted creation of the Unity (*Edinstvo*) governors’ bloc as the official ‘party of power’ headed by Sergei Shoigu the long-time head of the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

Indisputably, Unity was not a political party as organized as the modern political parties, however; it was not merely a mass movement either. Rather, it was, at best, a political association formed by power elites with an objective to perform as a competitive political party and occupy the space which belongs to genuine political parties. Marginalization of genuine political Parties viz. the CPRF and Yabloko could be attributed to the fact that programmatic debate had included into the struggle for the succession. In a highly presidential system the stakes become extremely high, because the presidency meant access to the enormous monetary resources of the state and its patronage (John 1999: 54). Here, the very survival of the Yeltsin regime where political power was almost indistinguishable was on stake.

After the close analysis of all these elections and their outcomes it could be concluded that the Russian voters have learnt to cast their votes strategically. In the 1995 election, 49.5 percent of the votes casted for 39 parties were wasted, because these parties even failed to cross the essential five percent threshold; in 1999 election this reduced to 18.9 percent of the vote as twenty parties or block failed to gain the threshold. The consolidation of votes around ‘mainstream’ parties had less of a ‘multiplier’ impact and only 18 percent of the party list seats were reallocated to the six successful parties. The CPRF won 22 percent of the PL vote in 1995, and recorded a slight increase in 1999 election (Petrov 2004: 22), but their performance in the SMDs was very poor. Likewise, the Zhirinovsky bloc’s though against all the predictions successfully crossed the five percent barrier but their base eroded significantly.

Success of the Unity in 1999 election reflected the continuous existence of an outsized floating centrist and power-oriented vote, given partly to Our Home is Russia (NDR) in 1995. Unity did not have any ideology except state consolidation centered on the presidency. Thus, due to the very flaws intertwined in the electoral law and political system established in the early 1990s, not a single ideology based party has been competent to emerge since the founding election of the present Russian political system, December 1993. Yabloko has continuously lost a percentage point in each parliamentary elections but the success of the SPS has strengthened the overall position of the liberals (Sakwa 2008: 177). The ‘democratic’ vote, in earlier elections, was separated among adversary groups but, this time SPS successfully brought the majority together to record a substantial improvement in representation. However, due to their support to Putin and the Chechan war few had argued that this was a compromise with their liberalist ideology.

Table 4.3 State Duma election 1999

| Party/Bloc | Party List (%) | Party List Seats | SMD | Total Seats | Total Seats (%) |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|-----|-------------|-----------------|
| CPRF | 24.29 | 67 | 47 | 114 | 25.9 |
| Unity or Medved | 23.32 | 64 | 9 | 73 | 16.6 |
| Fatherland All Russia | 13.33 | 37 | 29 | 66 | 15.0 |
| Union of | 8.52 | 24 | 5 | 29 | 6.6 |

| | | | | | |
|---|------|------|---|----|-----|
| Right forces | | | | | |
| Zhirinovskiy bloc | 5.98 | 17 | 0 | 17 | 3.9 |
| Yabloko | 5.93 | 16 | 4 | 22 | 4.5 |
| Communist Toilers of Russian for the Soviet union | 2.22 | - | - | - | - |
| Women of Russia | 2.04 | - | - | - | - |
| Party of Pensioners | 1.98 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Our Home Is Russia | 1.20 | - | 8 | - | - |
| Party in Defence of women | 0.81 | - | - | - | - |
| KRO | 0.62 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Movement for civil Dignity | 0.62 | - | - | - | - |
| Stalinist bloc for the USSR | 0.61 | - | - | - | - |
| DPA | 0.59 | - | 2 | - | - |
| Peace, Labour May | | 0.57 | - | - | - |
| Bloc of General Andrei | 0.56 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Russia All people Union | 0.37 | - | 2 | - | - |
| Party of Peace and Unity | 0.37 | - | - | - | - |
| Russian Socialist Party | 0.24 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Movement of Patriotic Forces | 0.17 | - | - | - | - |
| Conservative Movement of Russia | 0.13 | - | - | - | - |
| All Russia | 0.11 | - | - | - | - |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|-----|-----|---|------|
| Political Party of the People | | | | | |
| Spiritual Heritage | 0.10 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Socialist Party of Russia | 0.09 | - | - | - | - |
| Social Democate | 0.08 | - | - | - | - |
| Against All | 3.36 | - | - | - | - |
| Independents | - | - | 105 | - | 23.8 |
| Total | 100 | 225 | 216 | - | - |

Source: Sakwa, Richard (2008) *Russian politics and society*, London and New York: Routledge.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, JUNE–JULY 1996

The first ever elections for the head of state of a sovereign and independent Russia was held in 1996. The two front-runners had to enter a run-off poll as none of the candidates obtained more than 50 per cent of the vote in the first ballot held on 16 June 1996. Yeltsin's own chances of re-election were reduced because of the Chechen war and his own ill-health. His popularity had fallen dramatically, from 37 per cent in December 1992 to 6 per cent in June 1995.

Duma elections in December 1995 were crucial for the presidential election as it successfully identified the strongest candidates for the presidency while eliminated the weakest. There were several contenders who explicitly announced their candidature including Zyuganov, Lebed, Yavlinsky, Gorbachev and, of course, Zhirinovskiy. Yeltsin's critics could not agree on a single convincing candidate, hence he remained in with a chance. Hardliners from within Yeltsin's entourage, popularly known as the 'party of war' for their advocacy of the first Chechen war in December 1994, urged Yeltsin to cancel the elections and declare a state of emergency to thwart what they insisted was the threat of a communist victory, and all that this entailed (Timothy 1996: 372).

Alexander Korzhakov, head of Yeltsin's presidential security service, was leading the call for the postponement of the elections. His views could not prevail and were defeated by an alternative group led by Chubais. Reason behind this defeat was the fact that Chubais, with his typical decisiveness, was able to draw on the resources of the 'oligarchs' to organise Yeltsin's successful electoral resurrection. In a notorious letter, the 'Appeal of the 13', a number of the top oligarchs pledged their support for Yeltsin, and made unquantifiable sums available to his campaign (Sakwa 2008: 174).

The first round was largely a confirmation of Russia's traditional electoral geography, where Zyuganov gained strong support on the southern fringe and the 'red-belt' to the southwest of Moscow, while Yeltsin unexpectedly defeated the opposition in the Far East. Yeltsin fought a surprisingly effective campaign and focused on the threat posed by the communists. The media (notably Gusinsky's NTV), fearing the adverse consequences of a communist victory, fell in behind his candidacy as did a large proportion of the electorate (Pammett 1996: 372).

Lebed's showed strong yet covert support of Yeltsin's team. In December 1995, he had been a populist, by June 1996 he seemed to have become a democrat. Between rounds Yeltsin sacked some of his more unpopular officials (including Defence Minister Pavel Grachev and Korzhakov) and appointed Lebed secretary of the Security Council and presidential national security adviser to root out corruption and crime. Yavlinsky fought a typically poor campaign, failing to become the candidate of a united 'third force', while Zhirinovskiy was pushed into fifth place.

In the second round Yeltsin secured a convincing victory from an electorate that was apprehensive of a change of president that would entail a change of regime. The 30 million vote cast in favour of Zyuganov represented a large constituency of dis-satisfied citizens, but he could not broaden his support beyond the communist and national-patriotic opposition. Despite continuing fears over his health, Yeltsin successfully exploited the slogans of continuity, stability and reform. The executive's ability to impose a crude bipolarity on the electoral process reflected

the weakness of the emerging party system. The presidential powers remained unaffected after the 1996 elections¹².

Table 4.4 (1) Presidential Election 1996, first round Result

| Candidates | Vote (%) | Number of Votes |
|------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Boris Yeltsin | 35.28 | 26,665,495 |
| Gennadii Zyuganov | 32.03 | 24,211,686 |
| Alexander Lebed | 14.52 | 10,974,736 |
| Grigorii Yavlinsky | 7.34 | 5,550,752 |
| Valadimir Zhirinovskiy | 5.70 | 4,311,479 |
| Svyatoslav Fedorov | 0.92 | 699,158 |
| Mikhail Gorbachev | 0.57 | 386,069 |
| Martin Shakkum | 0.37 | 277,068 |
| Yuriivlasov | 0.20 | 151,282 |
| Vladimir Bryntsalov | 0.16 | 123,065 |

Table 4.4(2) Second round 1996 election

| Candidates | Vote (%) | Number of Votes |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Boris Yeltsin | 53.82 | 40,208,384 |
| Gennadii Zyuganov | 40.31 | 30,113,306 |
| Against both Candidates | 4.83 | 3,604,550 |

Source: Sakwa, Richard (2008) *Russian politics and society*, London and New York: Routledge.

¹² Eurussia Centre, (2011), *The electoral system of Russian federation*, The Eu-Russian centre Review, Issue.17, April.2011.

Chapter V

Electoral Politics in the Era of Charismatic Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Putin's period manifests major changes in the political parties in his eight years tenure. The period marked drastic changes in the Russian system of political parties. However in reality, he only gave a drive to the situation that had begun to shape during the time of his predecessor (Ross 2011: 429). Putin's era witnessed growth of economic development which improved the socio-economic position of the wealthy group of the population and the middle class, and also brought the survivability for the low income strata. The power pyramid, which was shaped in Yeltsin's time, laid President on the top and was framed in accordance with the Presidential administration (Roy 2000: 122).

The whole power vertical was brought to its optimal shape during "Putin's era." He carefully and deliberately selected the personnel for executive posts, based on personal friendly ties, professional efficiency in addition with oligarchic capital (a practice surviving since Yeltsin's time). All these factors helped to form a modernized power vertical. The party component, foremost the State Duma, was unable to bring an obstacle during Putin's first term in office, while during the second term it gradually turned into a support though not one of the major executive branch. If it is compared during the former President Yeltsin period, the political setup comprised of parties that supported the government, critically or otherwise, but still they managed to consolidate while the opposition was a necessary element (Shevtsova 2007: 27).

But in the case of Putin's eight years of political leadership it depicted a picture of an unconditional hegemony of absolute supporters of the regime, with a slight number of opposition but loyal to him. The KPRF held the opposition role in its full manner, but, it paid due respect and benevolence to the authorities, by not moving any resolution against the government or tried to criticise the government beyond parliament. "The pro-Presidential majority was represented by

United Russia, which absorbed the now defunct Yedinstvo and Fatherland- All Russia" (Ross 2011: 434).

As for critics of the authorities, such as the Union of Right Forces (SPS) and Yabloko, the elections in 1999, 2003, and 2007 showed a steady decrease in their influence on the Russian electorate. The other group the SPS, which earlier backed up by the middle class and a few Russian oligarchs gradually lost the trust of this group of voters especially business people in the center and the provinces.

Yabloko's constant fluctuation between the interests of the "intelligentsia in worn-out shoes" (the term was coined by Dmitry Rogozin who referred to the part of society that was hit particularly hard by the reforms) and the wealthy business community weakened the party's influence on groups of voters who might have proven a potential opponents to the government (Shveitser 2009: 38). Human rights campaigner, Yabloko's gradually lost its significance in the eyes of voters after the end of human rights violations in Chechnya. Both parties due to a consistent conflict between their leaderships never succeeded in resolving the problem of consolidation at Parliamentary or Presidential elections. In addition, the government skillfully wooed away the SPS and Yabloko functionaries who were ready to cooperate with the ruling regime in line with the classical principle coined by Russian 19th-century playwright Alexander Ostrovsky in one of his plays: "Truth is good, but happiness is better" (Balzer 2003: 189).

The 2003-2007 elections to the State Duma, in spite of all, maladies, regarding the vote count accuracy, proved that the stabilized conditions of the socio-economic situation in Russia and its foreign policy voters tend to back the authorities or those who have government support. Putin's broadly publicised solidarity with the United Russia, which proved himself not only as a party of efficient managers but also as a party leader which survived during the period, with the strategy of identification of United Russia. The local authorities enabled the party to secure a relative and later an absolute majority of mandates in the State Duma (Moraski 2007: 537). Thus, the State Duma acquired the act of balancing of the executive branch and effectively removed the conflict between the two branches of power, which had been permanently on the agenda in Yeltsin's

time. The Presidential administration also successfully implemented a project for creating another pro-Kremlin party known as Just Russia, led by the speaker of the Federation Council (the upper house of the Russian parliament) Sergei Mironov, who remained very loyal to the President. Just Russia is an amazing mix of former nationalists from the Rodina party, ex Communists from the Party of Pensioners, and members of Mironov's former Party of Life (Shevtsova 2007: 27).

The Russian version of social democracy gained support in the Socialist International and other European reformist organisations. Putin barred candidates and even whole parties which the Russian authorities viewed as suspicious. During election campaigns, the mass media was wholly controlled by the government, which regulated and supervised the promotions of elections materials of political parties that were critical for the presidential regime. Even the other parties not enjoyed equal conditions when organising pre-election rallies or marches. (Millar 2000: 676). The rule courts of any level were overwhelmingly against the political opposition. The courts passed prohibitive or, at best, restrictive practices or acts in regard to parties that had not paid their loyalty or allegiance to the government. The orders were based in convenience with the government and also passed by the State Duma in 2002 and later amended repeatedly. The government in accordance with the universally accepted democratic norms, set a minimum number of party members (it amounts to 45,000 at present) and obliged parties to have branches in more than a half of the administrative entities of the Russian Federation. There were several biased checks on the parties to see that they comply with these criteria, this let the authorities influence the legitimacy of parties that could not rebel against the government for example, at least theoretically it was directed towards rival pro-Kremlin parties.

If we compare with the European legislation on political parties the major difference was the abolition, under a pretext of combating separatism, of the institution of regional parties, which could rival federal parties at local government bodies (Blazer 2003: 197).

Another difference was that in contrast with the Western European political practice, the Russian authorities did not allow parties to be set up along confessional or professional lines. Political

activity was totally banned at enterprises and colleges. On the whole, if analysed the law on political parties totally prohibit Russian citizens to set up political parties that would express or state their public sentiments. In the first decade of the 21st century both at the level of artificial and natural decrease in the number of political parties in Russia has necessitated limited mutual integration between party leaders and top state officials (Kynev 2011: 15).

The Russian political system in the 2008 Presidential election nearly gave birth to two equally powerful figures namely Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev. This factor has somewhat loosened the rigid structure of a “Presidential republic,” which was set up long back in Yeltsin’s period. While the President (Medvedev in this case) has kept his image of neutrality, despite formal invitations from United Russia, Putin on the other hand has developed his reputation of quasi-party membership (Ross 2011: 437). He agreed to become the chairman of United Russia without becoming its formal member.

This situation, unprecedented in European political practice, is explained by a desire to have political support for a possible comeback to the top state post and by a fear of being identified with the party, whose functionaries, primarily at the regional and local levels, may become involved in high-profile corruption scandals. The above suggests the conclusion that the Russian authorities need these pseudo parties to keep up a semblance of democratic respectability. The authorities do not wish to fully distance themselves from the party system in the hope that loyal parties would be a sort of “safety cushion” in the event of a dramatic worsening of the social and economic situation. Thus the parties would channel the spontaneous discontent of the population into moderate parliamentary activity (Shveitser 2009: 43).

The authorities believe that this strategy can work in the center. At the local level, the utmost importance is political party “safeguards” in the regions, where local leaders of the party power are answer to the population. Their role is “akin to that of a lightning rod they must deflect spontaneous public protests”. In order to create a resemblance of parties’ participation in forming local government bodies, winners of local elections were permitted to suggest candidates for the governors’ post. If the possible scenario of responses by the “party of power” is reviewed, it

might be concluded that spontaneous discontent of the population during acute stages of the economic crisis, was a result of a possible split of United Russia and Just Russia into smaller parties, which the authorities may have failed to forecast. The oligarchic state officials, business people (both from the private and public sectors) and security agencies are unlikely to fully control their positions in a critical situation (Shevtsova 2007: 38). At serious turns of the crisis, individual members of this triumvirate may withdraw and propose to the population to present their own vision of ways to overcome the crisis, posing as new leaders within the narrow spectrum of parties. This development leads to be just one step away from the collapse of the entire power vertical, developed by the government with so much rigor and effort. Therefore the political elite close to the Kremlin would try this if there is enough time for that, in order to find a compromise solution to reform this power vertical and prevent it from dismantling (Kynev 2011: 32).

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION MARCH 2000

The 1999 Duma election weakened the Presidential positions of all main opposition candidates Luzhkov, Yavlinsky, Primakov and Zyuganov. The amalgamated electoral system of Russia encouraged the development of fusion or mixture of political parties, Parliamentary parties and Presidential catch-all groupings. The system prevented parties from developing effectively in any of the direction. Interestingly, Vladimir Putin who won the overwhelming majority in parliamentary election was not even a candidate. The election did some remarkable things such as it provided the presidency with a strong base in the Duma, silenced the main opposition figures, and also boosted the prestige of Putin. On December 1999, seizing the opportunity, Yeltsin resigned and Putin became acting president which gave him the powerful advantage of incumbency in the rescheduled presidential elections of 2000. In Putin, Yeltsin saw the fulfillment of his long term desire of ensuring a smooth transition to someone who would ensure his personal security and elite continuity (Badan 2000: 31).

Yeltsin and its associated political regime were powerful enough and proved successfully that it was able to reproduce itself; although the change of leader brought some modifications. In the 1990s, the essentials of the political system established survived the succession. Through the

series of political crises, sackings, resignations and dramatic upheavals since 1995 there lay a more profound struggle for the succession. On 31 December 1999, Yeltsin, in his resignation speech, spoke about his desire to set the precedent of the 'civilised voluntary transfer of power' after the elections originally timetabled for June 2000 (Roy 2000: 440). There was no danger of Russia returning to the past, and thus, Yeltsin argued, I have achieved the main task of my life' and thus he did not want to impede the smooth transition to a new generation of politicians. There was 'no reason to hang on to power when the country had a strong person worthy of becoming president. Yeltsin's premature exit meant that there would be no democratically elected leader transfer power to another in direct accordance with the expectations laid down in the constitution in Russia. Instead, there was an attempt to obtain the choice of the voters by transferring power to a designated successor for whom the most benign electoral environment had been established.

Putin was undoubtedly as a symbol of confidence and stability and promised to maintain Russia's system of power in between radically renovating the state system and developing political and legal reform. He committed himself to the maintenance of the existing constitution, although he did not deny some institutional innovation without changing the broad framework. There was a remarkable difference between Putin and his opponents. As an acting President he set the terms of the debate and presented himself as a statesman while his opponents struggled for votes (Aleksander 2011: 127).

Putin enjoyed the advantage of two powerful posts acting President and Prime Minister which made it clear that he was far from being an ordinary candidate. His programmes encompassed almost every conceivable shade of opinion which did not allow any space for a coherent alternative. An open letter to the electors in late February contained no more than generalities. Putin's first round victory (although by a relatively narrow margin) emulated Yeltsin's triumph in the 1991 presidential election and endowed Putin's presidency with extra legitimacy (Sakwa 2008: 180). Like Yeltsin's 1996 election, the result was tainted by accusations of malpractice, above all in places like Dagestan where straightforward ballot-stuffing allegedly took place, and elsewhere the use of administrative pressure by officials has been documented.

STATE DUMA ELECTION 2003

Altogether 5 blocks and 18 political participated in the election. The 'against all' category was left behind from its own representation by 4.7 percent of the votes showing clearly the protesting mind of the votes on the voting choices given to them while the turnout was at 54.7% representing the return in match with the levels of December 1999, in comparison to the level of 1999 and 1995 with percentage of 61.7% and 64.4% respectively. It was found that total 7.7 million of vote were cost which clearly shows that only 12.9% of vote was collected by 'against all' category in single mandate district. United Russia becomes the greatest winner in the election by taking 37.4 percent of the PR vote and 120 single mandate seats and in no time another 60 independents joined it.

The social democratic Yabloko failed to cross the 5% representation threshold by gaining only 4.3% of the votes. In the race of worse performance, neo liberals SPS gathered only 4% of votes. This result completely squeezed off liberals parties out of Duma. Earlier 49 and now the only managed to take 7 constituency seats. United Russia and Rodina were the parties established just before the election to draw away the votes from the communists. Conservatives traditionalist votes dropped down due to the passionless campaign. The CPRF and joined hands with the newly established United Russia and Rodina. This showed a confused and passion less campaigned of CPRF as they were left with marginalised electorate. The CRPF hardly managed to get half of seats in parliament as 52 out of 125 with only 12.7% of the votes compared to 24.3% in 1999. The elections wiped out CPRF like its French counterpart a generation earlier. And this all was because the authorities sought to link the communists to oligarchs which considerably supported the CPRF.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION MARCH 2004

Putin emerged and accepted as powerful leader won the second Presidential term. The victory of Putin was due to several factors. Some of the factors like withdrawal of some of leading candidates and attempt made to boycott the election tarnished the victory of Putin. Gari Kasparov headed, 'Committee 2008' was formed between the period of Duma election and

presidential ballot. This was mainly a group of radical critics of the President's administration which is an attempt to create an alternative to Putin's regime. It worked on a strategy to boycott election so that less than 50% of votes would turn out it as invalid. Independent courts, free mass media and source of finance free from Kremlin influence were the three essential ingredients for a free election which the country lacked i.e. why Yavlinsky made a claim that free, equal and politically competitive elections were impossible. It was also suggested that the party in case lacked the resources to collect the required two million signatures. Putin argued that those advocating abstention were 'cowards and the idea was harmful and even stupid, all proposed by looses. The inability to agree on a common candidate ship for the Presidency was revealed due to split of SPS and divisions of liberal's camps.

Galazev presented himself as a credible successor and an independent leader. He was also former co-leader of Rodina with Rogozin and was only other strong candidate than Putin in 2008. Kremlin turned from ally to an enemy due to high ambitions of Galazev's. Galazev was replaced from head post of Duma fraction because Kremlin secretly encouraged Rogozin to become the sole leader of Rodina. This weakened Galazev and affected his position severely. A significant media coverage was given to Nikolai Kharitonov for not pulling out the race and doing remarkably well in the campaign. He was the second rank figure represented by the communist because Zyuganov leader of CPRF refused to participate in the election. Berezoskly from London backed the former speaker of Duma, Ivan Rybkin., but he did not succeed. A term, rybkinisation was raised due to his withdrawal in mysterious circumstances and a five day disappearance in Kiev.

Due to the withdrawal of experienced candidate like Yavlinsky and Zyuganov and weak opposition Putin fought a non campaign election. He worked out with a strategy which was extremely effective. The dismissal of Mikhail Kasyanor as PM and appointment of technocrat Mikhail Fardkov at head of reduced cabinet gave a clear signal of Putin's intension in his served term and distancing himself from the ideology of Yeltsin's family. On 14 March in voting for Putin, not only an individual but also the consolidation of a system and development of a programme was supported from the electorate.

A significant improvement was seen in the election as his victory was far from unexpected. He won over 53% of vote. The enthusiastic use of administrative resources was sign of high turnout in some regions while ballot box stuffing reports were obtained from Tatarsan and elsewhere. However the general election is that Putin got majority of support from the Russians by winning in every single region by gaining. Putin became aspirations for a better life of the Russians and as the symbol of national unity.

STATE DUMA ELECTIONS 2007

On 2nd December 2007, Duma legislative elections were held. A total of eleven parties were included in the ballot, including United Russia, which was supported by Vladimir Putin, President of Russia. Elections were to be held on 450 seats in the State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly of Russia. The United Russia won 64.3% of the votes becoming the largest party. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation 11.6%, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia 8.1%, and Fair Russia won 7.7% (See table 5.4) and none of the other parties won enough votes to gain any seats (CDPSP 2008:1-5).

The elections have received criticism mostly from some of the western countries, opposition parties and media despite 400 foreign election monitors were present at the polling stations. As per observers the election was not fixed but it was media coverage favored United Russia. However, Election commission agreed to examine these allegations. The Kremlin determined that the elections were fair responding to the allegations laid by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The 2007 election were executed under a law adopted by President Vladimir Putin in 2005, which followed proportional representation. He said it would reduce number of parties in Duma which in result will strengthen the Russian party system. In previous elections, half of the seats were filled by proportional representation and another half by first past the post system. Parliamentary elections of 2007 was first since 1993 which lacked against all option on the ballot

and the first, where there was no such provision to have minimum number of voters for election to be valid.

The 225 single member districts were abolished in 2007 elections. In 2003, 100 of these seats were won by independent or minor party candidates. All the seats were awarded by proportional representation. The eligibility to win seats were raised from five to seven percent. In 2003 four Parties, each of them exceeded seven percent of list vote, and collectively won 70.7 percent of total Duma vote.

Only registered Parties were allowed to compete with the condition that they cannot form bloc to improve their chances of clearing threshold percentage. Some others provisions were like, parties had to represent 60 % of participating citizens and at least there must be two Parties in the Duma. A total of 11 Parties were eligible for elections and seats were allocated on the basis of their ranking, and divided among each regional group of candidates for the party in proportion to the votes received by that party in each region (Article 83: Methodology of Proportional Distribution of Deputy Seats). If any member resigns, his/her seats will automatically be forfeited. Candidates can take part in the debates and has chance to represent his/her Party's agenda, challenging opponent with questions televised in state channels. United Russia refused to participate in debates to allow more time for promotion clips.

STATE DUMA ELECTION 2011

On 4 Dec 2011, legislative elections were held in Russia. This time the United Russia won elections with 49.32 percent of vote taking 238 seats out of 450 seats. The percentage goes down from 64.3 percent of votes in 2007 elections to 49.32 percent in 2011 elections but United Russia still won a majority of seats in the Duma. However, few Parties like (Communist Party, Liberal Democratic Party and A Just Russia) all managed to get new seats compared to 2007 elections. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation received 19.19% of the vote and 92 seats, while A Just Russia received 13.24% and 64 seats, with the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia getting 56 seats with 11.67% of the vote. Yabloko, Patriots of Russia and Right Cause did not cross the 7% election threshold (CDPSP: 2011: 3).

The election got various assessments from organizations like (Commonwealth of Independent state, Organisation for security and co-operation etc) and critical from some European Union representatives and the United States. Reports of election fraud led major protests in Moscow and St. Petersburg. However, the United Russia and government were supported by rallies of youth organizations, “Young guard”. Later the actions provoked the fear of “anti orange protest including one on the Poklonnaya hill in Moscow, the largest protest action of all the protests so far according to the Police” (CDPSP 2011: 5).

The Central Electoral Commission, on 3rd Feb 2012, issued a report revealing that only 195 reports out of 1686 reports, it received were true (after investigation). A third of ten actually has questions on unclear points and only sixty claimed falsification of results. On 4th Feb 2012, the investigation committee of the office of the prosecutor general of Russian federation announced that the majority of video alleging falsifications were in fact falsified themselves (Kynev 2011:27). Seven percent is the threshold for eligibility to win seats. Also, a Party receiving between five to six percent will get one seat and those receiving between six to seven percent will get two seats in Duma. Relatively little sign of campaign activity was an ground like few posters, few gathering at non- United Russia rallies, few street agitators etc. Debates were often briefed and aired in odd times of day which not always feature to figures from party but also featured strange pairing of parties.

GOLOS association watchdog, the largest independent organization reported on campaign violations. Its online service recorded 5300 complaints of electoral law violations. Most of them were linked to United Russia and about a third of them were about employee and students who were pressurised to vote for United Russia (ibid 2011: 29). On 2nd November, GOLOS was fined by Moscow court regarding violations of electoral law of Russia in which the organization had portrayed an unnamed Political Party in bad light which later an identified as United Russia. On 1 December 2011 prosecutors in Moscow served GOLOS with papers and alleged that the organisation had portrayed an unnamed political party in bad manner which turned out to be the United Russia.

On 8th December, the “Life News” claimed that it had access to 60 MB of correspondence between GOLOS and USAID (a federal government agency of the United States). GOLOS administration and its activities showing how fund received from USAID by GOLOS were spent. It also showed how activists make money for working on report about violation. The Yabloko and Liberal Democratic had been banned from witnessing the sealing of ballot boxes and gathering footage by the ruling United Russia alleging that they broke campaign law by disturbing leaflets and newspapers and that at some polling stations the voters were ordered to vote for the Communist party with threats of violence (Sangtu 2011: 35).

The results published by central election commission differed from results that were recorded by observers with the official numbers showing the United Russia high in a factor of two or three. In Moscow, citizen observer the opposition activist group estimated that United Russia had stolen popular votes from opposition parties. In Saint Petersburg, independent activist group Right to elect attempted to register all differences between observers' protocols and the data of the Central Election Commission (Ross 2011: 442). They found that comparable shares of differences in votes were favoured not only the United Russia, but CPRF and LDPR parties as well (2.68%, 1.49% and 2.67% respectively)

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) international observer founded numerous violations of electoral law. They found that the preparations for the elections were technically well managed and they were marked by a "convergence of the State and the governing party". They complained about "undue interference of state authorities", "partiality of most media" and "lack of independence of the election administration". According to the OSCE, the provision of denying registration to some political parties weakened political competition. The OCSE concluded that "the necessary conditions for fair electoral competition were not provided." However, international observers from the Commonwealth of Independent states reported that the elections "were held legally and without serious violations." The government's control over the Central Electoral Commission and the segregation of many

election observers from participation in monitoring, voting, it is extremely difficult to examine the amount of distortion in the election.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION MARCH 2008

Dmitry Medvedev was elected as the President of Russia in 2008. Putin headed the United Russia list and got elected to the Duma thus facilitating his becoming prime Minister after completing two terms and transferring power to Medvedev. “Five political parties (United Russia, Fair Russia, Agrarian Party, Civilian power, Russian Ecological Party “The Greens”) received 71% of the vote, and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and the Democratic Party of Russia only got 29% votes” (CDPSP 2008:1-5).

Conflicting reports were given by the official monitoring groups and the fairness of the election was disputed. Some reported that the election was free and fair, while others reported that not all candidates had equal media coverage and also Kremlin opposition parties were treated unfairly. The monitoring groups founded various other irregularities. Vladimir Churov, the head of the electoral commission and the European election monitoring group PACE concluded that the results reflected the will of the people. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) election monitoring group refused to monitor the election because of "severe restrictions on its observers by the Russian government", which the Russian government vehemently rejected.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION MARCH 2012

On 4 March 2012 election Russian Presidential elections were held. The term was extended for six years. One independent and four representatives of registered parties were collectively the five officially registered candidates. On 24th of September 2011, Putin accepted the proposal of presidency given by Dmitry Medvedev at United Russia Congress in Moscow. Putin thereafter offered Medvedev to stand for Prime Minister post of Russia at the end of his presidential term.

All independent parties were asked to register by 15 December and a candidate nominated by parties has to register by 18th of January. The final list was announced on 29 January (EFDS 2012:15). Following presidential election was announced by Dmitry on national television, thereby inviting the citizens of Russia to vote on 4th March 2012. Putin secured a second term in Kremlin by achieving 63.64% of votes. Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe observers assessed the voting on the Election Day positively overall, but assessed the vote count negatively in almost one-third of polling stations due to procedural irregularities. The next presidential election will be in 2018.

In order to present his manifesto in 2012 Presidential campaign, Putin published seven articles in different Russian newspapers. The topics of the articles were the ethnicity issue, economic tasks, democracy, social policy, military and foreign policy during the campaign. Putin made a single outdoor public speech at a 100,000-strong rally of his supporters in the Luzhniki Stadium on 23 February, Russia's Defender of the Fatherland Day. He presented the goals that are yet to be achieved and the problems that were solved in a decade. Putin, in his rally speech called to love your motherland, to unite together and work for good work. He also said that as Russians have their own free will so no foreign interference in Russian affairs will be allowed. He also compared the present political situation with 1812 when the first fatherland war was held. Putin cited Lermontov's poem Borodino and ended the speech with Vyacheslav Molotov's famous Great Patriotic War slogan "The Victory Shall Be Ours" (CDPSP 2012: 5).

Though all competitors got access to media but OSCE found that Putin was given a clear-cut prominence. According to Tonino Picula, the Specialist Coordinator to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission, "there were serious problems from the very start of this election. The point of elections is that the outcome should be uncertain. This was not the case in Russia. There was no real competition and abuse of government resources ensured that the ultimate winner of the election was never in doubt." The OSCE observers concluded that though the election was assured positively overall but due to procedural irregularities one-third of polling stations were assessed negatively. The OSCE called for a thorough investigation and urged citizens to actively oversee future elections in order to increase confidence. Overall allegations were made on Putin that his supporters had been driven around in coaches in order to vote for him in multiple

constituencies which was documented by installed video monitoring system in most voting stations (EFDS 2012:22).

Pravda put forward an allegation that workers of industrial with a continuous-cycle production have violated the law by making them work in polling centres, but this accusation was countered by Valentin Gorbunor the chairman of the Moscow Election Committee by saying that this was a normal practice and it did not violate any law. A member of public chamber of Russia, Iosif Diskin said that there were special observers who controlled that workers had legal absentee certificates (CEC 2013:85). The director of NGO “Citizens Watch”, Georgy Fyodorov marked the statement of GOLOS about carousel voting in Strogino as false. It never addressed the fact about electoral fraud presented by GOLOS. Again GOLOS came forward saying that one third of electoral commission had negative voting due to procedural irregularities.

Putin, in a talk with journalist dismissed the claim put on him of inflation of 10% of votes by him. "It's possible there were irregularities, probably there were some. But they can only influence hundredths of a per cent. Well, maybe one per cent; that I can imagine". The Communist Party of India did not accept the result. Around 15,000-20,000 protesters on 11 March 2012 demonstrated in Novy Arbat street against Putin's rule and due to the irregularities caused in polling leading him to win. The protest took place in Moscow and 8,000-20,000 protesters participated. Around eighty people were injured in confrontation with police and four hundred fifty were arrested on 6 May and one twenty on next day. In spite of all protests and street walks from non- supporters Putin was inaugurated on 7 May 2012 (CEC 2013:109).

Table 5.1 Result, Presidential election 26 march 2000

| Candidates | Vote (%) | Number of Votes |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Vladimir Putin | 52.94 | 39,740,434 |
| Gennadii Zyuganov | 29.21 | 21,928,471 |
| Grigorii Yavlinsky | 5.80 | 4,351,452 |
| Aman Tuleev | 2.95 | 2,217,361 |
| Vladimir Zhirinovskiy | 2.70 | 2,026,513 |
| Konstantin Titov | 1.47 | 1,107,269 |
| Ella Panfilova | 1.01 | 758,966 |
| Stanislav Govoruknin | 0.44 | 328,723 |
| Yurii Skuratov | 0.42 | 319,263 |

| | | |
|------------------------|------|-----------|
| Alesei Pokberezkin | 0.13 | 98,175 |
| Umar Dznabrailov | 0.10 | 78,498 |
| Against All Candidates | 1.88 | 1,414,648 |

Source: Sakwa, Richard (2008) *Russian politics and society*, London and New York: Routledge.

Table 5.2 Result, state Duma election, 7 December 2003

| Party | Votes (PR) | % of Turnout | PR List Seat | SMD | Total Seats |
|---|------------|--------------|--------------|-----|-------------|
| United Russia | 22,779,279 | 37.57 | 120 | 103 | 223 |
| CPRF | 7,647,820 | 12.61 | 40 | 12 | 52 |
| LDPR | 6,943,885 | 11.45 | 36 | 0 | 36 |
| Motherland | 5,469,556 | 9.02 | 29 | 8 | 37 |
| Yabloko | 2,609,823 | 4.30 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Agrarian party | 2,408,356 | 3.97 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Russian party of pensioners and Party of social Justice | 1,874,739 | 3.09 | 0 | - | - |
| Party of Russian revival Russian Party of Life | 1,140,333 | 1.88 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| People's Party | 714,652 | 1.18 | 0 | 17 | 17 |
| Yedenenie | 710,538 | 1.17 | 0 | - | - |
| New Course | 509,241 | 0.84 | 0 | - | - |
| Holy Russia | 298,795 | 0.49 | 0 | - | - |
| Russia Ecological Party | 253,983 | 0.42 | 0 | - | - |
| Development of Entrepreneurship | 212,825 | 0.35 | 0 | - | - |
| Great Russia-Eurasian union | 170,786 | 0.28 | 0 | - | - |
| True Patriots of Russia | 149,144 | 0.25 | 0 | - | - |
| United Russian Party 'Rus' | 148,948 | 0.25 | 0 | - | - |
| Party of peace and Unity | 148,208 | 0.25 | 0 | - | - |
| Democratic Party of Russia | 135,294 | 0.22 | 0 | - | - |
| Russian Constitutional Democratic | 113,184 | 0.19 | 0 | - | - |

| | | | | | |
|---|------------|------|-----|------|-----|
| Party | | | | | |
| Party SLON | 107,444 | 0.18 | 0 | - | - |
| People's Republican party of Russia | 80,416 | 0.13 | 0 | - | - |
| Other Parties | - | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Against All | 2,851,600 | 4.70 | - | - | - |
| Independents | - | - | - | 67 | 67 |
| Total | 59,684,768 | - | 225 | 222* | 450 |

Source: Sakwa, Richard (2008) *Russian politics and society*, London and New York: Routledge.

Table 5.3 Result, Presidential election, 14 March 2004

| Candidates | Vote (%) | Number of Votes |
|--------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Vladimir Putin | 71.31 | 49,565,238 |
| Nikolai Kharitonov | 13.69 | 9,513,313 |
| Sergei Glazev | 4.10 | 2,850,063 |
| Irina Khakamada | 3.84 | 2,671,313 |
| Oleg Malyshkin | 2.02 | 1,405,315 |
| Sergei Mironav | 0.75 | 524,324 |
| Against All | 3.45 | 2,396,219 |

Source: Sakwa, Richard (2008) *Russian politics and society*, London and New York: Routledge.

Table 5.4 State Duma election Result 2Dec 2007

| Party | Votes | % | Seats |
|---|----------|-------|-------|
| United Russia | 44714241 | 64.30 | 315 |
| Communist party of the Russian federation | 8046886 | 11.57 | 57 |
| Liberal Democratic party of Russia | 5660823 | 8.14 | 40 |
| Fair Russia | 5383639 | 7.74 | 38 |
| Agrarian party of Russia | 1600234 | 2.30 | - |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------|-----|
| Yabloko | 1108985 | 1.59 | - |
| Civilian power | 733604 | 1.05 | - |
| Union of Right forces | 699444 | 0.96 | - |
| Patriots of Russia | 615417 | 0.89 | - |
| Party of social justice | 154083 | 0.22 | - |
| Democratic party of Russia | 89780 | 0.13 | - |
| Invalid ballots | 759929 | 0.70 | - |
| Total turnout | 69537065 | 63.78 | 450 |
| Eligible voters | 109145517 | 100.00 | - |

Source: Eurussia Centre Report “The Electoral System of the Russian Federation”, April 2011.

Table 5.5 State Duma election Result 4 Dec 2011

| Party | Votes | % | Seats |
|--------------------|----------|---------|-------|
| United Russia | 32379135 | 49.32 % | 238 |
| Communist Party | 12599507 | 19.19 % | 92 |
| A Just Russia | 869522 | 13.24 % | 64 |
| LDPR | 7664570 | 11.67 % | 56 |
| Yabloko | 2252403 | 3.43 % | 0 |
| Patriots of Russia | 639119 | 0.97 % | 0 |
| Right Cause | 392806 | 0.60 % | 0 |

Source: Central Election Commission of Russian Federation.

Table 5.6 Result, Presidential election 2 March 2008

| Candidates | Votes | % |
|-----------------|----------|-------|
| Dmitry Medvedev | 52530712 | 71.25 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------|-------|
| Gennady Zyuganov | 13243550 | 17.96 |
| Vladimir Zhirinovskiy | 6988510 | 9.48 |
| Andrey Bogdanov | 968344 | 1.31 |
| Invalid ballot | 1015533 | 0.9 |
| Total turnout | 74746699 | 69.7 |

Source: Eurussia Centre Report “The Electoral System of the Russian Federation”, April 2011.

Table 5.7 Result, Presidential election 4 March 2012

| Candidates | Vote | % |
|-----------------------|----------|--------|
| Vladimir Putin | 46602075 | 63.6 % |
| Gennady Guganov | 12318353 | 17.2 % |
| Mikhail Prokhorov | 5722508 | 8.0 % |
| Vladimir Zhirinovskiy | 4458103 | 6.2 % |
| Sergey Mirinov | 2763935 | 3.9 % |

Source: Central Election Commission of Russian Federation.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF ELECTORAL FAIRNESS

Opposition

The Levada Centre in November 2010 put forward the question whether Russia needs an opposition now. Of its respondents 55% answered yes, 16% no, while 29% declared they had difficulty answering the question. Yearly polls over the past seven years proved that there is sturdy support for the role of a political opposition. While most Russians would welcome an opposition there is a significant minority opposed to any opposition parties.

Table 5.8 (1) Does Russia need an opposition now?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 55% |
|-----|-----|

| | |
|------------|-----|
| No | 16% |
| Don't know | 29% |

Source: Levada Survey 22-25, Oct 2010-N 1600 <http://www.levada.ru/press/2010111705.html>

Table 5.8 (2) Does Russia currently need political opposition?

| | July,04 | July,05 | July,06 | July,07 | July,08 | July,09 | July,10 |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Definitely Yes | 32 | 34 | 27 | 25 | 27 | 25 | 23 |
| To some extent | 29 | 30 | 29 | 34 | 34 | 32 | 44 |
| Probably not | 12 | 9 | 14 | 9 | 14 | 15 | 12 |
| Definitely not | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 4 |
| Don't know | 22 | 23 | 24 | 27 | 17 | 29 | 16 |

Source: Levada Survey 22-25, Oct 2010-N 1600 – <http://www.levada.ru/press/2010111705.html>

ROLE OF MEDIA

Russia has undergone radical changes in the last three decades. The Soviet regime was an authoritarian system with the rule of one party, had significant amount of control over the lives of the citizens. Censorship was thorough and implemented all through the society. Art, culture, music, foreign and domestic news were subject to censorship before being put before the audience. The media was seen as the prolonged arm of the Communist Party, and information as a privilege has to be censored (de Smaele 2006: Simons and Strovsky 2006: 189).

The years under Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin President of the Russian Federation have been labelled as the golden era for mass media in Russia (Belin 2002: 22). Although the press was

given far more freedom than under the Soviet era, the Kremlin still outlined what kind of information should be dispensed. But in contrast to the omnipresent censorship in the Soviet Union, the limitations for the media became reduced when Mikhail Gorbachev permitted the broadcasting of debates among Party officials and when Boris Yeltsin granted some measure of freedom of the press. Under Gorbachev and Yeltsin, Russia developed pluralistic and more independent media.

In the era of Putin in power, the media was affected by the change in the Russian society at political and economical level. Among scholars studying Russia and Russian politics, many have considered whether Russia, after a decade in the 1990's with media freedom, is moving towards a more authoritarian political system, controlling the media. The Russian media outlets today are under the control of the authorities, both at the regional and central. Some independent media radio stations, printed press and online media exist, but had maintained very few listeners and readers.

Political parallelism is the degree and nature of the links between the media and the political parties or the extent to which, the media system reflects the major political divisions in society (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 21). This variable is in many ways going to the core of the Russian media system. The ownership structures in the media foster a strongly intertwined connection between the media and the government party. When major political parties or opposition parties are not granted access to the media, the media system as an institution supporting democracy is weakened. Information is constricted and the public cannot easily inform itself fully about issues on the agenda.

All information available was controlled by the Party and no criticisms were allowed. During the so-called golden period, Russia saw the first independent media outlets. But soon it became evident that the owner of those independent newspapers and television channels had political agendas, and used their media as channels for the realization of their goals. In the late 1990s, each television channel endorsed a party or president candidate, something that was easily comprehended by the audience. In the elections from 1999 till 2008, those television channels

which have survived are those that give more coverage to the governmental presidential candidates and the governmental party than to the oppositional voices (Hopstad 2011: 50).

Sarah Oates in her book *Television, Democracy and Elections in Russia* argues that the “*political parties and the media enjoy a close, symbiotic relationship in any political system. However, evidence suggests that by the Russian presidential elections in 2004 this connection had become closer to the Soviet propaganda model than to one resembling the interaction among parties, candidates, the media and the electorate in developed democracies*” (Oates 2006: 66). Finally we can say that the media is much more concentrate on promoting the actions and policies of the government rather than bringing out the deeper truth. The opposition parties and activists are either ignored or found no place in the media.

Table 5.9 Survey on opinion about political parties:

Oct 2009: How do you think about the Communist Party (CPRF)?

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Very positive/ fairly positive | 34% |
| Indifferent | 38% |
| Rather negative/Very negative | 21% |
| Not aware about their existence | <1% |
| Difficult to answer | 7% |

How do you think about United Russia?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Very positive/ fairly positive | 59% |
| Neither one thing or the other indifferent | 23% |
| Rather negative/Very negative | 12% |
| Not aware about their | >1 |

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| existence | |
| Difficult to answer | 6% |

How do you think about the party LDPR?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Very positive/ fairly positive | 26% |
| Neither one thing or the other indifferent | 40% |
| Rather negative/ very negative | 28% |
| Not aware about their existence | >1 |
| Difficult to answer | 6% |

How do you think about the party —Fair Russia?

| | |
|--|----|
| Very positive/ fairly positive | 28 |
| Neither one thing or the other indifferent | 44 |
| Rather negative/ very negative | 15 |
| Not aware about their existence | 3 |
| Difficult to answer | 10 |

How do you think about the party —Right Cause?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Very positive/ fairly positive | 7% |
| Neither one thing or the other indifferent | 37% |
| Rather negative/ very negative | 21% |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Not aware about their existence | 18% |
| Difficult to answer | 17% |

How do you think about the party Yabloko?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Very positive/ fairly positive | 8% |
| Neither one thing or the other indifferent | 41% |
| Rather negative/ very negative | 31% |
| Not aware about their existence | 4% |
| Difficult to answer | 16% |

Source: Levada Survey – 16 – 19 October 2009 - N 1 600

<http://www.levada.ru/press/2009102905.html>

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

Democracy is most cherished phenomenon of modern world. Political Parties are central and essential component of the democracy. It can be argued that the true spirit of democracy lies in political parties. In other words political process is incomplete without them. The development of Political Parties in the modern world is closely linked to the emergence of constitutionalism and representative government. In representative democracy elections constitute the process which provides citizens an opportunity to choose their representatives, both the ones who form the government and who sit in the opposition. Today political parties are found in almost every type of political system, whether it be advanced liberal democracies of west or socialist and third world states, but their origins are essentially western.

A Political party is ‘an organised partnership based on ideological unity, which considers itself separate from other parties by a specific programme and which actively and constitutionally participates in politics. Its final aim is to secure political power and use this power for making and implementing authoritative values for the entire society’.

Apart from that, a democratically elected Political Party has three other important characteristics. First, within the broad spectrum of ideological unity it tolerates/permits and accepts the existence of other parties/groups as parts of the whole. Second, in the struggle of power all political parties acknowledge each other as competing parties and together constitute the party system. Third, each political party claim for the commitment to defend the interests of the whole community i.e. the national interests and due to this feature the party system works as a shared field of activity.

Undoubtedly, today the party politics has become a universal phenomenon. However, every political system has evolved into a party system of its own, whether it relates to the one-party system, bi-party system or multi-party system and Russia is no exception. There are manifold determinants of the party structure. Political parties may vary from religious and social to economic and political aspects of their formation. For example, some political parties have their origin grounded in a religious faith like Christain Democrats in Italy and Germany, Komei-to in Japan; whereas some political parties trace their allegiance to ethnic or racial interests viz. Tamil Federal party in Sri Lanka is purely founded on the racial and ethnic character. In spite of the

variation of the determining factors of party structure, they can be classified broadly in three factors depending upon their historical, socio-economic and ideological aspects of formation.

Political system of Tsarist Russia can be best described as unrestrained despotism. Until 1864 there were no representative institutions at all. Decembrists were the first to put strong resistance against the existing system in 1825. Later, industrial development substantially increased the size of urban bourgeoisie and the working class, which led to the emergence of a more dynamic political atmosphere and development of workers' parties. Hence the credit for establishing political parties in Russia goes to the working class and peasants.

The first Russian Marxist group was formed in 1883 by George Plekhanov also known as the father of Russian Marxism. The political party Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, was established in 1898 with the unequivocal agenda of uniting the diverse revolutionary groups and organizations into one unified political party. Although, this was a great beginning but the real turning point of Russian political system was her defeat to Japan in 1905 war. It swept a strong anti-Tsarist wave in the whole country and a number of political parties like, the Constitutional Democratic Party, the Octoberist Party and the Union of Russian People etc. emerged on the political scene.

Year 1917 was most significant in the history of Modern Russia. The two events of that year completely turned the course of the Russian history. First was collapse of Tsarist autocracy in February and establishment of provincial government, and second, October revolution (also known as 'Bolshevik revolution') and emergence of Bolsheviks in state affairs under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin. Bolsheviks were in the favor of a state based on Marxist philosophy. They established the Russian Communist Party, later in 1952 renamed as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It was organized on the principle of 'Democratic Centralism', which represents hierarchical structure of the party. In this system the higher party bodies are elected by the lower bodies. Besides that all units of the party have intra-party democracy. It meant that the members may have discussion on the matters at their organizational level and also elect and remove their office bearers. The lower units are bound to the verdict of higher unit, thus concentrating all the powers at the top level. According to Lenin's description,

the Communist Party was the 'vanguard of the revolution'. The party, more or less, dominated the political scene of Soviet Union till 1990. The constitutional amendment of 1990 amended Article six of the Soviet constitution and ended the dominant status of the party from every spheres of life.

The fall of USSR in 1991 was the beginning of a new epoch in the Russian political system. The structure of international system was changing swiftly and the democratic norms and values were emerging. The newly independent countries of the Soviet Union were incorporating these norms and values in their constitutions. Russia was not an exception to this trend. It also provided substantial space for western liberal democratic values. However, nature and extent of internalization of those norms and values into political parties, party system and overall political culture is questionable. A stable party system, open debate and transparency are fundamentals of a stable democratic system. In such a system governments work in the interest of the population and fulfill their wishes.

Transformation of the Russian political atmosphere was clearly reflected in the 1993 Constitution that set out the stage for a multi-party system. It stated that elections are the legitimate method of expression of peoples' wishes. Present study was limited to the development of party system from the adoption of new constitution in 1993 to 2012. This timeframe was divided into two phases, 1993-1999 and 2000-2012. In the first phase (1993-1999) the Communist Party of Russian Federation was the largest party with a nationwide presence, an ideological affiliation and a clear vision for the future of Russia. Though, during this period several other parties also participated in the electoral fray; but they lacked countrywide presence and did not sustain for a long time. Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, regarded as a nationalist party, took part in all the elections during the period; but with every election weekend its influence. Yabloko of Grigori Yavlinsky - committed to radical economic reforms - was never in a position to influence major policy decisions. Parties such as the Unity Party - a fervent advocate of free society and Fatherland-All Russia, which had faith in market economy participated only in the 1999 election. Both the political parties have performed poorly in the election.

The period (1993-1999) also witnessed continuous confrontation between the President and the Parliament. The new institutional structure bestowed unprecedented powers to the President, especially in the area of law making, which created an apprehensive situation whenever, the parliament tried to assert its position. In spite of the establishment of new institutional setting, President Boris Yeltsin failed considerably in creating healthy democratic environment which required overcoming the shortcomings of pre-1991 communist system. During his tenure phenomenon of 'Party of Power' emerged. Party of power is the party that backs the President and in return enjoys some say in the policy making.

In the post 1999 election period United Russia an amalgamation of Fatherland-All Russia and Unity Party emerged as the most powerful political party named United Russia and has dominated the Russian politics till today.

Thus, post-Soviet Russian political system largely remained as one party dominant system, similar to Rajni Kothari's description of Indian system as Congress System. However, the role of other political parties cannot be ignored because it was their participation that made elections successful. Seven Duma and five presidential elections were held in this period (1993-2016). Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000 and contrary to his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, recognized the significance of political parties and tried to strengthen them. Under the Presidency of Putin, Russia witnessed significant economic development. It improved the socio-economic condition, especially of higher and middle classes of the population and brought the survivability for the low income strata. President has been on the top of the power pyramid - shaped in Yeltsin period - and was structured in accordance with the Presidential administration.

Putin's open solidarity towards United Russia - that presented itself as a well-organized party which it was during the stabilization period, and the full identification of local powers by the party enabled it to guarantee a relative and later an absolute majority in the State Duma. Thus, the State Duma attained the reputation of a driving belt of the executive branch and efficaciously eliminated the struggle between the two branches of power that had been perpetual feature of the Yeltsin's time. Putin's eight years of political leadership depicts a picture of absolute hegemony and unconditional control of the regime, with a small opposition but loyal to him. The KPRF held the opposition role in full manner, but, it paid due respect to the authorities, by not moving

any resolution against the government or criticizing the government beyond the parliament. The Pro-Presidential majority in the Duma was represented by United Russia.

In the 2008 Presidential election, the Russian political system witnessed the emergence of two equally powerful political figures namely Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev. This factor has somewhat loosened the rigid structure of a “Presidential republic”- set up during Yeltsin period. Despite, formal invitations from United Russia, President Medvedev maintained his neutral image; whereas Putin developed/established his reputation of quasi-party membership by agreeing to become the chairman of United Russia even without becoming its formal member. Contrary to European political practices, this condition illuminates a longing to have political support for a probable comeback to the highest state post and simultaneously to be free from the distress of being branded with the party, whose functionaries- chiefly regional and local levels, may be involved in high-profile corruption scandals.

In 2008 election Dmitry Medvedev was elected as the President of Russia. After completing two terms as the president, Putin transferred power Dmitry Medvedev. Thereafter he headed the United Russia list and got elected to the Duma thus facilitating his becoming Prime Minister. Meanwhile the term of President was extended from four to six years. On 24th of September 2011, Putin accepted Dmitry Medvedev’s proposal of presidency at United Russia Congress in Moscow. In return he offered Medvedev to stand for the Prime Minister’s Post after concluding his presidential term. Consequently, in 2012 Presidential election, Putin was again elected as the President.

Hence, Russia has undergone radical changes in the last three decades. The Soviet regime was an authoritarian system with the rule of one party having significant of control over the lives of the citizens and press as well. Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin period have been labeled as the golden era for mass media in Russia. Although the press had far more freedom than the Soviet era, the Kremlin still delineated dispersion of information. During Putin period media was affected by the changes in the Russian society at political and economical levels and was controlled by the Party and open criticisms was not allowed.

An analysis of the above details reveals that political parties in Russia have largely failed in articulating the wishes of the people, due to number of reasons. First, marginal role of political parties in the government formation and decision making process. Second, excluding the dominant ruling party, no other party was able to offer a better alternative to the people. Even the ruling parties failed significantly to live up to the expectations of the people. Third, in post 1991 period most of the voters could not relate to the agendas and programs of the parties and decided to support one or other candidate just before voting. In sum the study confirms and validates first hypothesis that “The concentration of power in the institution of presidency has limited the role of political parties as it is the legislature which provides them scope to influence government formation and policy making”.

The 1993 Constitution has given the President unprecedented power of law making and veto over parliamentary acts, thus powers of the parliament marginalized. During Yeltsin era, ‘Party of power’ used its proximity to the executive power undemocratically. However, his successor Putin successfully reformed this system. Actually, in the Russian system President has an overarching authority over Parliament. President appoints the Prime Minister of the country with the consent of Duma but any time could circumvent the suggestion of Duma. It clearly reflects the limited role of political parties in government formation and decision making.

The study also validates second hypothesis that “The emergence of Vladimir Putin as the leader marked the beginning of charismatic leadership with increasing control over government and media, thereby facilitating the victory of the ruling establishment in all subsequent election”. The study finds that media- which plays a role in Russian system is largely biased and facilitates victory of the ruling party. Despite all complains of misuse by the ‘party of power’, it plays an important role in the elections by promoting favored candidates. The media outlets, at present, are under the effective control of regional and central authorities. Though, some independent media radio stations, printed press and online media exist but with limited audiences. From 1999 onwards, only those television channels have survived that gave coverage to the candidates supported by the party of power. Putin’s period had marked drastic transformation in the Russian

party system. However in reality, he only gave a drive to the situation that had begun to shape during the time of his predecessor.

In sum, present Presidential system of Russia is authoritarian one and could be challenged only when a viable multi-party system, in which political parties hold a nationwide influence and the ability to sustain in the electoral fray for a long time, would emerge. Besides this, there is a dire need to strengthen other institutions of the state that can check and balance each other.

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