

**THE LDP AND THE HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS ELECTION
OF 1989**

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled "LDP AND THE HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS ELECTION OF 1989" submitted by Mr. Sunil Kumar Prashad is in partial fulfilment of Master of Philosophy of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree to any other University and is his own work.

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PREFACE

The House of Councillors election held in July, 1989 was an important turning point in the post - Second World War politics of Japan. For the first time in its history the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lost its majority strength in the Upper House. The loss of the LDP's majority meant that it would have to face serious obstacles in the sphere of law - making. The protracted process of moulding consensus on a variety of national issues would be further complicated by the drastically reduced strength of the LDP in the Upper House. The dissertation attempts to examine the causes of the defeat of the LDP in the Upper House election of July 1989. It also makes a detailed analysis of the LDP's campaigning style and its performance in both the prefectural as well as national constituencies. An attempt is made to evaluate the joint efforts made by the three main opposition parties, the JSP, the DSP, and the Komeito, to defeat the LDP.

The introductory chapter briefly discusses the role and position of the Upper House in the Japanese political system. It also critically examines how the one party (LDP) domination of both the Houses of the Diet has diluted whatever little power that Upper House enjoys formally. The defeat of the LDP in July '89 brought back some of the lost "glory" to the Upper House. The chapter also contains a

brief account of the performance of the LDP in the Upper House elections since 1956.

The second chapter deals with major issues that exercised the minds of the voters at the time of the Upper House election and which played a decisive role in the defeat of the LDP. Several causes contributed to the failure of the LDP in the Upper House election.

One major Question was the issue of ethics in public life. To be sure, there had been in the past, several financial scandals involving the LDP. But those controversies had not immobilised the LDP to the extent that the Recruit scandal did. The Lockheed scandal of 1974-75, for instance, had been confined by and large to the faction led by Tanaka Kakuei, the then Prime Minister. The Recruit problem, on the other hand effected all factions rendering the party apparatus out of the gear. The scandal spilled over to bureaucrats and others. The general public was disgusted with the LDP's total disregard for ethics in public life.

Another major issue was controversial 3% consumption tax which enraged the Japanese tax - payers. The LDP's decision to gradually liberalise the Japanese agricultural market alienated the farmers, its traditional votebank. Lastly, the rise of women power also contributed a lot to the defeat of the LDP in the Upper House election. The

JSP chairwoman Doi Takako fully exploited the women's anger against the corrupt and unethical behaviour of the LDP leaders and was successful in translating this into a grand victory for her party.

The third chapter analyses the results of the Upper House election of 1989. It discusses the performance of the LDP and other parties in the election and makes comparison with the previous elections. It also briefly discusses the campaign strategies of the various political parties. The election results did not surprise anyone. As expected, the LDP was defeated and lost its majority in the Upper House.

Finally, the present work is based on the source materials available in the English language. When one depends upon English source materials, one comes across several practical difficulties. The author is still not in a position to consult Japanese language materials but has made an honest effort to consult translations of those materials wherever available, in addition to seeking the advice of those competent in the Japanese language. A word about the Japanese names in the dissertation. They are written as the Japanese themselves do with the surnames first.

CHAPTER -I

INTRODUCTION:LDP'S POSITION IN THE HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTION

Before dealing with the Liberal Democratic Party's position in the House of Councillors on the eve of the July, 1989 election and its performance, it would be a fruitful exercise to discuss briefly about the balance of power between the two Houses of the Diet. This would give an insight into the importance of the Upper House in the Japanese parliamentary system and its relevance in the present context when for the first time the LDP has lost control over it.

DIET UNDER THE 1947 CONSTITUTION :

The new-post-war Constitution fashioned largely by the American Occupation authorities was promulgated by the emperor on 3 November 1946, and came into effect on 3 May, 1947. The new constitution is founded on three main ideals: popular sovereignty and the symbolic role of the emperor, pacifism, and respect for fundamental human rights.¹ The

1. Kishimoto Koichi, Politics in Modern Japan: Development and Organisation (Tokyo, Japan Echo Inc., 1988), 3rd edn., p. 42

principle of popular sovereignty is enshrined in the body of the constitutional emperor who rules with the aid and advice of the cabinet which is responsible to the Diet, the supreme law making body in Japan.

Chapter IV of the Constitution, containing Articles 41 to 64 deals with the composition, powers, and functions of the Diet. Article 41 says, "the Diet shall be the highest organ of the state power and shall be the sole law making organ of the state."². The National Diet is a bicameral legislature. Article 42 provides for two houses viz, the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors³.

Both the House of Councillors (Upper House) and the House of Representatives(Lower House) are popularly elected as provided in Article 43. While the Lower House is constituted every four years (unless dissolved earlier by the cabinet) , the Upper House is a permanent legislative body. According to Article 46, members of the Upper House are elected for a six year term, half of whom are elected every three years⁴. At present, the number of seats in both

2. Constitution of Japan, in Facts About Japan Series (Tokyo, The International Society for Educational Information, Inc., 1986), p. 4.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Houses of the Diet, as fixed by the Public Office Election Law, is 512 for the House of Representatives and 252 for the House of Councillors⁵.

THE HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS : POWERS AND FUNCTIONS:

The Occupation authorities considered the House of Peers, predecessor to the House of Councillors of the present Diet, as undemocratic. Hence, under the democratisation programme launched by the Americans, the Upper House came under attack. On the recommendation of the Occupation authorities, Prime Minister Shidehara Kijuro appointed a Constitution Problems Study Committee in October 1945. Its chairman, Matsumoto Joji, thought of slightly reformed version of the House of Peers-consisting both elected and appointed members. But, the Americans considered direct elections as the fountain of a truly democratic legislature⁶. After a long drawn out debate, the final draft for a bicameral legislature was passed by both the Houses of the Meiji Diet on 25 December 1946. The House of Peers ceased to exist when the House of Councillors Law was promulgated on 24th February 1947⁷.

5. Koichi, n. 1, p. 51.

6. Robert E Ward, "The Origins of the Present Japanese Constitution", The American Political Science Review, Vol. L, No 4, December 1956, pp. 980-1010.

7. Ibid.

The main purpose behind establishing the Upper House was that "it would show sound judgement and be a stabilizing force should the Lower House run to the extremes. The belief was that those elected from the nation at large would be individuals who had distinguished themselves in their various professions and would, therefore, lend their weight and prestige to the deliberations of the Diet.⁸ It was also anticipated that the Upper House would be free from partisan politics. Since the stability of the popularly elected Lower House would be dependent on the frequently changing balance of power among various political parties, thus, subjecting it to premature dissolution, the Upper House would provide continuity and stability to the Diet by being a permanent House. This way it could take effective measures in times of crisis⁹.

The Constitution has given equal powers to both the Chambers of the Diet in some respects. Any constitutional amendment must be initiated by a concurring vote of two

8. Herbert Passin, "The House of Councillors: Promises and Achievements", in Michael K. Blaker, ed., Japan at the Polls: The House of Councillors Election of 1974 (Washington, D.C., American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1976), p. 6.

9. Nobutaka Ike, Japanese Politics: Patron-Client Democracy (New York: Stanford University, 1972), 2nd edn., p. 26.

thirds of all members of each House, according to Article 96¹⁰. According to Article 54, when the House of Representatives is dissolved, the House of Councillors is closed at the same time. But the Cabinet can summon the House of Councillors for emergency session. Any measure initiated or action taken during such emergency session will automatically lapse or become null and void, if it is not passed by the Lower House within ten days after the summoning of the next session of the Diet. This article has never been put to use so far because no such circumstance has arisen¹¹.

The above mentioned real powers of the Upper House are more than dwarfed by the enormous powers enjoyed by the Lower House. The Constitution provides that the House of Representatives take precedence over the House of Councillors if the two Houses disagree on a proposed legislative bill. If an agreement is not reached even by a Joint Committee of both the Houses and the Upper House fails to take final action within 60 days after the receipt of a bill passed by the House of Representatives, time in recess

10. Constitution of Japan, n. 2, p. 5.

11. Hans H. Baerwald, Japan's Parliament: An Introduction (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 17-18.

excepted, the latter can take it as rejection by the former and the same bill can be passed by a majority of two thirds or more of the members present in the Lower House (Article 59)¹².

The hold of the Upper House over the passage of bills relating to the budget and treaty is still weaker. According to Article 60, the budget must first be submitted to the House of Representative. Upon consideration of the budget, when the House of Councillors make some amendements or recommendations, and no agreement is reached between the two Houses even through a Joint Committee of both the Houses provided for by the law, or in the case of failure by the House of Councillors to take final action within 30 days after the receipt of the budget passed by the House of Representatives, the period of recess excluded, the decision of the Lower House shall be the decision of the Diet. Thus, a budget can be delayed by the Upper House at the most for 30 days- reducing its financial powers to an absolute zero. The procedure for the passage of the budget is also applicable in case a treaty is not ratified by the House of Councillors within 30 days (Article 61), unlike the American Senate whose ratification is absolutely essential.¹³

12. Koichi, n. 1, p. 160.

13. Kishimoto Koichi, "Diet Structure and Organisation", in Francis R. Valeo and Charles E. Morrison, ed., The Japanese Diet and the US Congress (Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), p. 57.

From 1947 when the new Constitution came into effect until the end of 1987, some 750 treaties and agreements were presented before the Diet for consideration and approval. However, no treaty has been rejected so far, though some treaties have been temporarily put into the cold storage and put to vote in the following session of the Diet¹⁴.

The provision for the Joint Committee option has been ignored for years now. If a budget or treaty is rejected by the House of Councillors, the executive wing of the government which controls the Lower House simply waits for the 30 day period (excluding time in recess) to be over. This practice has come to be known as "automatic passage" of the budget and "automatic approval" of treaties. The "automatic passage" provision was put to use for the first time for the budget approval in 1954 which remains a unique case till now. The automatic approval of Japan-US Security Treaty in 1960 earned massive unpopularity for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. At least 13 treaties have been approved automatically so far¹⁵.

14. Koichi, n. 1, p. 61.

15. Ibid, p. 62.

This shows the inherent weakness of the Upper House. Again, the House of Councillors can only delay the designation of the Prime Minister for 10 days at the most. After this deadline a person designated as Prime Minister by the Lower House becomes the choice of the Diet (Article 67)¹⁶. The House of Councillors and the House of Representatives had serious differences between them regarding the choice of the Prime Minister after the Cabinet headed by Tetsu Katayama resigned in February 1948. The House of Councillors designated Yoshida Shigeru while the House of Representatives named Ashida Hitoshi as Prime Minister. When even after the Joint Committee negotiation could not come to an agreement, the choice of the Lower House -Ashida became the Prime Minister¹⁷.

Though Article 66 makes the Cabinet responsible to the Diet, Article 69 gives only Lower House the power to remove a cabinet. Article 69 says, "If the House of Representatives passes a non-confidence resolution, or rejects a confidence resolution, the Cabinet shall resign en masse, unless the House of Representatives is dissolved within ten days"¹⁸.

16. Constitution of Japan, n. 2, p. 5.

17. Koichi, n. 1, p. 74.

18. Ibid, p. 161.

The House of Councillors is, thus, a silent watcher in this most vital function of the Diet's control over the Cabinet. The powerlessness of the House of Councillors has led Hans H. Baerwald to comment that, "the House of Councillors will remain what it has been thus far: a pale carbon copy of the House of Representatives¹⁹.

HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS: ILLUSIONS AND REALITIES-

When the House of Councillors came into existence, it was expected that it would be non-partisan in its functioning and would consider bills from analytical perspective rather than from a narrow party viewpoints. It was also hoped that only individuals of great talent from different fields would be elected to the Upper House²⁰. If the national constituency system was to favour the well qualified nationally famous leaders from all walks of life, the local constituencies would favour another wanted group, the locally well known individuals. Whatever limited power that the constitution granted to the Upper House was diluted beyond recognition by the inability of the candidates to finance their campaign in the national constituency which made them dependent on political parties.

19. Baerwald, n. 11, p. 29.

20. Bradley M. Richardson and Scott C. Flanagan, Politics in Japan (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), pp. 40-45.

Due to acute lack of financial and organisational resources, contest for the national constituency has been influenced by political parties and special interest groups such as big business and labor organisations. In the 1960s and onwards celebrities like famous sportstars, writers, T.V. personalities film stars and so on came to occupy the House of Councillors on their own popularity²¹. Individuals with great talents and experience, but relatively unknown to the public, are forced to seek financial and organisational support of one or the other party if they want to enter the House of Councillors. Since most of the Upper House candidates are elected on party tickets or with the outside support provided by the latter, they have to pay back their "debt" by voting on party lines.

The House of Councillors had 250 seats when it was first established. But when the island of Okinawa became an integral part of Japanese territory, the total number of seats rose to 252 where it exist today. Out of the 252 seats of the Upper House, 152 members are elected from 47 prefectural electoral districts. Now there are 26 single member constituencies, 4 three-member constituencies, 2

21. Ibid,

four-member constituencies and 15 two-member constituencies. Four member constituencies are Tokyo and Hokkaido, and three-member constituencies are Aichi, Osaka, Hyogo and Fukuoka. Only one half of the total membership of the Upper House, that is 126 seats (50 from national constituency and 76 from the prefectural districts) comes up for election every three year²². Till 1983, rest of the 100 seats were elected from the nationwide constituency by direct single entry ballot. The system was too cumbersome for both the voters, who had to choose among hundreds of candidates, and the candidates, who had somehow to make their views known to the voters spread across Japan. For this reason it was substituted with a fixed-list proportional representation system under which voters cast their ballot for a party, which gains a share of the seats according to a ranked list of candidates, compiled in advance. This system was first implemented in the 1983 election for the Upper House²³.

The transformation from candidate to party voting in the national constituency has completely damaged the non-

22. Hans H. Baerwald, "Japan's House of Councillors Election: A Mini Revolution?", Asian Survey, Vol. 29, No. 9, September 1989, p. 837.

23. Koichi, n. 1, p. 125.

partisan character of the Upper House.. The incredibly high cost of political campaign has effectively prevented the Upper House from attracting non-partisan and independent candidates whose objective analysis of national issues could have enabled the Upper House to play a constructive role. The Upper House has come to reflect the same characteristics that mark the Lower House. Consequently, the House of Councillors has been criticized for contributing least to the legislative process apart from further time consuming delays. If the Councillors, in the end, are to vote a bill on the basis of party compositions in the Lower House, and have no final authority to make changes in the bill, then its very existence is of little relevance to the Diet's legislative function.

The result of the first Upper House election in 1947 was quite encouraging. Of the 250 seats, independents captured 111 seats (57 of the total 100 national Seats and 54 of the total 150 local prefectural seats). It did not take much time for the independents to form an informal grouping after the constitution of the new Upper House. This grouping was called Ryokufukai (The Green Breeze Society). This name was given by the writer Yamamoto Yuzo, a member of the Upper House elected from the national constituency²⁴.

24. Passin, n. 8, p. 12.

The members of the group were not affiliated to any political party, but still formed the largest grouping in the House of Councillors. They played a very important role in the Diet legislation.

But the golden period of independent Councillors was short lived. A brief look at the statistics reveals this development . In 1947, 111 independents had been elected with 59% of the votes in the national constituency and 34% in local constituencies. By 1974, only 7 independents remained in the House of Councillors. In that year, the independents garnered 12.6% votes in the national constituency and only 4.9% of votes in the prefectural constituencies. Many of them immediately joined or simply 'associated' themselves with one or the other political party after the election²⁵.

The massive financial and organisational strength of political parties especially the Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Socialist Party posed a challenge to the independent candidates with no financial and organisational structure whatsoever. Obviously , the independents received serious setbacks in Upper House elections.

25. Ibid, p. 13.

The lure of cabinet posts and other political offices attracted independents to join the ruling party or give whole hearted support to it . In this way, independent members of the Upper House surrendered themselves to the money power and other attractions of the ruling LDP.

For the independents, effective campaigning for the Upper House election is difficult both in the national as well as prefectural constituencies. Each of the Upper House constituencies have within it Lower House districts controlled by Lower House members whose support structures ,connections and roots are quite powerful. Dueto the latter's hold over the Lower House constituencies, the independents have to seek support from them. As a quid-pro-quo, the independents compromise their independence and vote with the parties which supported them, in the House of Councillors. The iron grip of the political parties' over the prefectural constituencies could be gauged from the fact that they grabbed far more votes in the prefectural constituencies than in the national constituency. In contrast, the independents got more votes in the national constitutency than in the prefectural constitutences.²⁶.

26. The Diet, Elections, and Political Parties, in About Japan Series, (Tokyo: Foreign Press Centre, 1985), pp. 106-7.

Though Upper House enjoys a fixed 6 years term and cannot be dissolved unlike the Lower House which can be dissolved any time, the Councillors still do not speak their minds on non-party lines because of their affiliation with various political parties and powerful interest group who help them win the election and only they can help them in future elections also.

In the first few years after 1947, the Ryokufukai, the Communists and other parties together forced the conservative controlled House of Representatives to accept some suggestions made by them. The government had to compromise in order to ensure smooth sailing of important bills. All these took place in the early 1950s. But the revision of the Japan-US Mutual Security Treaty in 1960 by the LDP dominated Diet with the ruthless use of force marked the end of the 'golden-period' of the House of Councillors. The July 1989 House of Councillors election has brought back its lost glory.

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND ITS MONOPOLY OVER THE HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS:

The conservative merger in 1955 led to a system where the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) obtained a long term monopoly of power. the political contests came to be focussed on the factional politics within the LDP - a result

of intense interfactional war to select its own member as the Prime Minister²⁷. The LDP's character as an association of various factions has its roots in the circumstances of the party's formation. The LDP was created on 15 November 1955, through the merger of two major conservative parties of the time, the Japan Democratic Party (Nihon Minshuto) which, under the leadership of Hatoyama Ichiro formed the base for the second Hatoyama cabinet, and the Liberal Party, led by Ogata Taketora and earlier by Yoshida Shigeru²⁸.

A chief feature of the Japanese political system since 1955 has been the preponderance of power exercised by the LDP. One need not go into the causes responsible for the LDP's monopoly of power. It started as a party patronised largely by the farming as well as business interests. But gradually as Japan set out to record spectacular economic progress in the 1960's and 1970's the party also tended to widen its constituency. As Bradley M. Richardson points out, "The party manipulated its distributive, please all policies to create a sense of obligation and indebtedness among

27. Ju-ichi Kyogoku, The Political Dynamics of Japan, Nobutaka Ike, trans., (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1987), p. 11.

28. Koichi, n. 1, p. 94.

important segments of the population. The party also tried to project the image that it was the legitimate and permanent ruler of Japan that there is no other party that can rule Japan effectively".²⁹.

The LDP has built-up impressive votebanks in the form of Koenkai, associations supporting individual politicians through which demands ranging from personal, regional, to the occupational have been heard and fulfilled. The LDP leaders are very responsive to their Koenkai especially to the important persons within each Koenkai, who are very influential in their respective agricultural and other associations³⁰.

The whole electoral system has been heavily weighted in favour of conservative rural constituencies which have always returned LDP politicians in large numbers³¹.

29. Richardson, n. 20, p. 72.

30. Watanuki Joji, Politics in Postwar Japanese Society, (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1977), pp. 20-21.

31. J.A.A. Stockwin, Dynamics and Immobilist Politics in Japan, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1988), p. 5.

While the LDP has witnessed major ups and downs in previous four decades, it has by and large maintained a secure position in the Upper House . It did not face any challenge in the Upper House. But the outcome of the July 1989 election added a new dimension to the declining political fortunes of the LDP. It is necessary at this point to have a cursory understanding of the LDP's position in the Upper House since 1956.

HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS ELECTION:1956

In the 1956 Upper House election the LDP won 61 seats out of the total of 127 seats at stake(48%). It grabbed 19 seats in the national constituency with 39.7% of the votes cast. It secured 42 seats and 56% votes in the local constituencies. The Japan Socialist Party won 21 seats in the national constituencies and 28 seats in local constituencies. Ryokufukai won five seats in the national constituency and none in local constituencies³². Please see Table-1 in the following page for LDP's performance since 1956 to 1983:

32. Diet, Elections and Political Parties, n. 26, pp. 106-7.

Table - 1

LDP's Performance In The House of Councillors 1956 - 1983:

Year	National- Constituency			Local-Constituencies			Total Seats Won
	Seats up For Election	Candidate Elected	Votes(%) of the total	Seat up for Election	Candidate Elected	Votes(%) of the total	
July 8, 1956	52	19	11,356,874 (39.7%)	127	42	14,353,960 (48.4%)	61
June 2, 1959	52	22	12,120,597 (41.2%)	127	49	15,667,021 (52.0%)	71
July 1, 1962	51	21	16,581,636 (46.4%)	127	48	17,112,986 (47.1%)	69
July 4, 1965	52	25	17,583,490 (47.2%)	127	46	16,651,284 (44.2%)	71
July 7, 1968	51	21	20,120,089 (46.7%)	126	48	19,405,545 (43.9%)	69
June 27 1971	50	21	17,759,395 (44.4%)	125	41	17,727,263 (43.9%)	62
July 7, 1974	54	19	23,332,773 (44.3%)	130	43	21,132,372 (39.5%)	62
July 10, 1977	50	18	(35.8%)	126	45	(39.5%)	63
June 22 1980	50	21	(42.0%)	126	48	(63.2%)	69
June 26 1983	50	19	(38.0%)	126	49	(64.5%)	68

Sources: Diet, Elections and Political Party, in About Japan Series, (Tokyo: Foreign Press Centre, 1985), p. 106.

Michael K. Blaker, Japan At The Polls: The House of Councillors Election of 1974, (Washington D.C., American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1976), pp. 132-39.

1959 ELECTION:

The LDP made an impressive improvement in the Upper House election held in 1959. Compared to earlier tally of 61 seats, it won 71 out of 127 due for election. It got 41.2% votes in the national constituency and 52% votes in the local constituencies and won 22 seats and 49 seats respectively. The JSP secured second place with 17 national and 21 local seats. The Ryokufukai got 6 seats in all. For the first time the LDP got absolute majority in the Upper House³³.

1962 ELECTION:

In this Upper House election, LDP's strength dropped by 2 seats to 69. It got 21 seats and 46.4% votes in the national constituency and 48 seats and 47% of votes in the local constituencies. The JSP again stood second with 37 seats³⁴.

33. Ibid,

34. Ibid,

1965 ELECTION:

The 1965 Upper House election saw the restoration of the LDP's fortunes by an increase of two more seats. The voting pattern changed this time. Breaking the tradition, it got 47.2% of votes in the national constituency (25 seats) and 44.2 % in the local constituencies (46 seats), i.e. it received more support in national than in local constituencies.

The socialists got 36 seats. A significant gainer was the new Clean Government Party (Komeito). It garnered 11 seats out of which 9 were national seats³⁵. It was an impressive debut for the party.

1968 ELECTION:

In this election, the LDP got the same number of seats, 21 and 48, in the national and local constituencies respectively as in 1962 election. It again got more votes (46.7%) in the national constituency than in the local constituencies (44.9%). The JSP suffered serious setback. Its tally of 36 seats in the last election fell to 28 this time. As if the JSP's loss were the DSP and Komeito's gain, the latter two improved their tally with 7 and 13 seats respectively.³⁶.

35. Ibid,
36. Ibid,



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1971 ELECTION:

In this Upper House election the LDP again polled more votes in the local constituencies than in the national constituency. It got 21 seats (44.4%) in the national constituency and 41 seats (54.7%) of the local constituency seats. However, its total tally went down to 62 seats from the previous total of 69 seats. The JSP's electoral fortunes improved to 39 seats. The Komeito suffered a serious defeat. It could get only 10 seats compared to the earlier 14. It seems that the JSP made inroads into the LDP hold over the local constituencies. While the JSP improved its tally from 16 seats in 1968 to 28 this time, the LDP lost 7 seats in the local constituencies from the previous 48 seats to 41 seats this time³⁷.

1974 ELECTION:

This election to the House of Councillors was a landmark in the Japanese electoral politics. The LDP got the lowest number of votes in the local constituencies (39.5% since it came into existence) . It got 19 seats and 44.3% of the votes in the national constituency and 43 seats

37. Ibid,

in the local constituencies. While JSP's fortune fell to 28 seats, the Komeito gained four seats more than the previous 10 seats. However, the most impressive gain was made by the Japan Communist Party which won 13 seats - the highest so far³⁸.

The LDP, alarmed by the setback it received in the December 1972 Lower House election, made an open appeal to the big business for help. Each LDP candidate in the national constituency was assigned co-ordinated support from a sector of industry, with all big corporations in that sector contributing to the candidates' campaign. The majority of the voters were very critical of the campaign which was so blatantly financed by the big corporate magnates. The LDP campaign in this election was nicknamed "Kigyo-gurumi senkyo" (campaign backed by business)³⁹. The LDP's strength in the Upper House was reduced to a meagre 129 seats (including those who supported the LDP) and opposition had 122 seats - a lead of mere 7 seats. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Upper House

38. Michael K. Blaker, Japan at the Polls: The House of Councillors Election of 1974, n. 8, p. 92.

39. Diet, Elections and Political Parties, n. 26, p. 53.

called "equilibrium politics". Despite media exaggerations, the traditional sectors like the farming lobby were still generating votes for the LDP⁴⁰

1977 ELECTION:

The LDP's performance was no better in the 1977 Upper House election too. Its strength in the local constituencies remained at the same level of 39.5% of total votes. However, it could collect 45 seats in this category, two seats more than the previous tally of 43. It got 18 national seats and 35.8% votes. Its over all performance improved by just one seat to 63, giving it a bare majority in the House. The JSP and the Komeito got 10 and 9 seats respectively in the national constituency and 17 and 5 seats respectively in the local constituencies⁴¹

1980 ELECTION:

The 1980 Upper House election was simultaneously held with the Lower House. The LDP got an all time high of 63.2% votes in the local constituencies and 48 seats. At the national level also, the party garnered 42% votes and 21 seats. With 69 seats the LDP again got a comfortable

40. Ibid, p. 106-7.

41. Ibid,

majority in the House. The JSP recorded an all time low electoral tally of 21 seats (9 national and 13 local) The Komeito got just 12 seats, 2 less than before , while independents got eight seats⁴². With the reduced strength of the opposition and some independents safely in the LDP camp of 69 Councillors, the latter returned to the golden era of ruthless majority in the House.

1983 ELECTION:

This time the LDP got 19 and 49 seats respectively in national and local constituencies ⁴³. It received 38% votes in the national and 64.5% votes in the local constituencies. The JSP and the komeito got 22 and 14 seats respectively. The 1983 election did not make any drastic change in the composition of the House of Councillors⁴⁴.

1986 ELECTION:-

Nakasone Yasuhiro, the then Prime Minister, ordered simultaneous elections for both Houses of the Diet on 6 July 1986. The April 29 birthday of Emperor Hirohito, May first week gathering of leaders of seven industrialised nations in Tokyo, Prince and Princess of Wales's visit in the middle of

42. Ibid,
43. Ibid,
44. Ibid,

May, Nakasone thought, would project the LDP in a favourable light and set the stage for the election⁴⁵.

On the appointed day, 6 July, voters turned out in large numbers. It is well-known that the LDP gains from a higher turn out because its candidates attract more of the uncommitted floating voters. The 1980 "double election" had already vindicated this fact. In the House of representatives election, it won 300 seats, an all time high since it came into existence. In 1980 "double election" also the LDP had got 284 seats.

The trend was same in the Upper House Election. The LDP won 22 seats in the national constituency with 38.6% of the votes. It swept 50 seats in the local constituencies with just 45.1% of popular vote. The large difference could be explained only by the LDP's victories in the single-member constituencies (23 out of 26) and two-member (19 out of 30) districts. Thus the LDP got 72 seats in total. The JSP got just 20 seats in all. The Komeito and the Japan Communist Party got 10 and 9 seats respectively⁴⁶. (see Table-2).

45. Hans H. Baerwald, Party Politics in Japan, (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), pp. 175-76.

46. Ibid,

Table - 2

-1986 Upper House Election Results :

Type of Constituency :	No. of Total Seats :	LDP :	NLC :	JSP :	Komeito :	DSP :	JCP :	Others :
National Proportional Representation :	50 :	20 :	1 :	9 :	7 :	3 :	5 :	3 :
4-Member (2) :	8 :	4 :	0 :	1 :	1 :	0 :	2 :	0 :
3-Member (4) :	12 :	4 :	0 :	2 :	2 :	1 :	1 :	2 :
2-Member (15) :	30 :	19 :	0 :	8 :	0 :	1 :	1 :	1 :
1-Member :	26 :	23 :	0 :	0 :	0 :	0 :	0 :	3 :
Total :	126 :	72 :	1 :	20 :	10 :	5 :	9 :	9 :

Source : Hans H. Baerwald, Party Politics in Japan (Boston, Allen and Unwin, 1986), pp. 181-83.

Thirty five years of monopoly rule by the LDP has been attributed to division and weakness among the opposition parties and the LDP's factions that have provided the party with enough flexibility to adapt and adjust itself to Japan's rapidly changing socio-economic environment. However, the LDP hegemony over the House of Councillors, if not the whole of the Diet, was shaken to its roots in the July 1989 elections. The question of ethics in public life became a dominant issue before the Japanese electorate. Though the LDP had faced charges of corruption in mid-1970s, public anger did not make any change in the LDP's electoral fortunes. But this time other serious issues like the 3% consumption tax and the agricultural liberalization policy got enmeshed with the question of public ethics and intensified the antipathy of voters. In the next chapter, attention will be focussed on the major issues that loomed large before the electorate.

CHAPTER - II

ISSUES BEFORE THE ELECTORATE

Several important issues agitated the minds of the Japanese voters during the Upper House election of 1989. Of these, three issues - ethics in public life, the 3% consumption tax, and the liberalisation of agricultural policy, cut across narrow party barriers and provided a broad base for the opposition parties to conduct the election campaign. The new strength displayed by the Japanese women added an additional dimension to the Upper House election. Questions relating to Japan's foreign policy almost did not figure before the eyes of the Japanese voters. The LDP had initiated unpopular policies and was also found involved in various scandals in the past, but the election outcome never effected its monopoly position in both the House of the Diet. But this time, the voters took these issues very seriously to the extent of unseating the ruling LDP from the Upper House. An analysis of the major issues in the 1989 Upper House election is made in the following pages.

1. RECRUIT SCANDAL:

The most important issue which enraged the Japanese electorate was the Recruit scandal which brought the question of public ethics to the forefront. The Recruit scandal was a manifestation of the blatant disregard of the Japanese politicians for public ethics.

It would be in order to briefly examine the Recruit controversy. The Recruit Corporation Chairman, Ezoë Hiromasa, alongwith company's directors sold shares in Recruit Cosmos (a real-estate subsidiary of the same group), to prominent politicians and senior government officials. When the price jumped after registration, as expected, the purchasers were able to acquire wind fall capital gains by selling off their shares¹.

This transaction between the Recruit Corporation directors and the political leaders and bureaucrats came to light through the Asahi Shimbun's reports. Almost every highly placed member of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), via his secretary or a family member took enlisted stocks in this way from the Recruit Corporation. The list

1. Masumi, Ishikawa, "Reckonig with Reruit", Japan Quarterly, Vol. 36, No. 2, April-June, 1989, pp. 136-40.

of politicians who purchased Recruit shares included a former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, the then Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru, the LDP's Secretary General Abe Shintaro, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Finance Minister Miyazawa Kiichi, the LDP's Policy Research Council Chairman Watanabe Michio, and the Chief Cabinet Secretary Fujinami Takao².

What created a massive furore was not the insider trading in stocks but the return of favours which included the bending of rules governing job-listing publications and access to discriminatory purchase of a super-computer³.

In terms of money involved, the Recruit scandal was much smaller than the Shipbuilding scandal of 1954 and the Lockheed scandal of 1976. In order to know why the public was so furious over the Recruit scandal, it would be necessary to have a brief look at the Lockheed scandal of 1976 which involved astronomical amount of money. Looking at the buying power, the amount of money gained by the individual recipients of the Recruit shares were trifling

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2. Masumi, Ishikawa, "Why the LDP Debacle ?", Japan Quarterly, Vol. 36., No. 2, Oct-Dec., 1989, pp. 386-87.
 3. Hans H. Baerwald, "Japan's House of Councillors Election: A Mini Revolution ?", Asian Survey, Vol. 29, No. 9, Sept. 1989, p. 835.

compared to the windfalls reaped by officials in such affairs as the Shipbuilding scandal of 1954, or the Lockheed scandal of 1976.

However, Recruit's effect on public feeling and voting pattern proved serious than that of the Lockheed scandal, in which a former Prime Minister, Tanaka Kakuei, was charged with receiving some 500 million Yen in bribes from an American aerospace corporation, Lockheed Georgia company, while he was in office⁴.

The number of people involved in the Recruit was larger than in all the earlier scandals which involved few top brass leaders only. The public was furious over the crookedness of the politicians. Buying shares is a sort of gamble. And any gamble that is certain to be won is crooked regardless of the amount involved. This was very true with what went between Recruit Cosmos and various political leaders and bureaucrats. The public saw Ezoie Hiromasa, Chairman of the Recruit Corporation, as using shares to extract favours from political leaders and bureaucrats at the helm of power. Thus, people in power took advantage of

4. Oda Susumu, "Recruit and the changing Popular Mood", Japan Echo, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1989, pp. 51-52.

their official status to do what an ordinary person could not do. This was the source of the people's rage, which was directed at the LDP as a whole because of the great number of leaders involved with the Recruit⁵.

Prime Minister Takeshita Naboru admitted before a Diet Committee on April 11 that he had collected a total of 151 million Yen, both directly and indirectly from the Recruit Cosmos between 1985 and 1987⁶. On April 18, former Vice Education Minister Takaishi Kunio was indicted by the Tokyo Public Prosecutor's Office for accepting bribes from Recruit Co. in return for preferential treatment. Ezo and Kobayashi Hiroshi, former president of First Finance Company, an affiliate of Recruit, were also indicted on 18th April, 1989, on charges of bribing a total of five persons including Chairman of Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation, Shinto Hiroshi, and Kato Takashi, former Vice-Labor Minister⁷.

Ikeda Katsuya, former Deputy Secretary General of the Komeito was charged with having blocked an initiative in a

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5. Kosaka Masataka, "Ruling Party Loses Its Touch", Japan Echo, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1989, pp. 7-9.
 6. The Japan Times, 22 April, 1989.
 7. The Japan Times, 6 May, 1989.

House of Representatives Committee for removing an agreement on the annual start of company recruitment of fresh graduates, which would have damaged Recruit Corporation's business of publishing a job information magazine in return for lucrative Recruit shares⁸.

On 29th May, after months of public trial and investigation, the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office announced the closure of probe of the Recruit shares for political-bureaucratic favour scandal, with the final indictment of 16 individuals⁹. The indictment forced Takeshita to resign from the post of the Prime Minister. Eleven Diet members including Miyazawa, Abe, Kato, Takeshita and the former Prime Minister Nakasone, could not be indicted due to lack of sufficient proof despite their alleged acceptance of pre-flotation Recruit Cosmos' shares that were certain to bring them huge profits after the company went public. The Prosecutors could not prove that the shares were bribes that secured political favours for the job placement conglomerate¹⁰. The LDP's image suffered a serious damage due to the Recruit scandal. This was amply

8. The Japan Times, (Weekly Overseas Edition), 3 June, 1989.

9. The Japan Times, 10 June, 1989.

10. Ibid.

indicated in some of the opinion polls conducted by different newspapers. The LDP's popularity ratings touched its all time low. Poll results of a Yomiuri survey held in 23rd December 1988 showed support for the Takeshita cabinet at 31.9% down from a high of 50.6% in September. Disapproval rate was at 50.6%, up a full 7.6 points. Significantly, however, of those who disapproved, only 35.4% cited political ethics as a reason, while 55.8% referred to the government's tax reform package, which included the new consumption tax. As yet party support remained unaffected with the LDP claiming 43.5%, the JSP 13.6% and the number three party Komeito 3.2%¹¹.

Just a month later, according to the results of a January 1989 Yomiuri survey the cabinet approval plunged to 27.4% while the disapproval reached 55.0%. At this point 41.8% of those who disapproved cited political ethics, more than in the previous survey, but Recruit was still a long way from overtaking the tax issue, which was now a source of discontent of those who disapproved of the government. According to a March 2 Yomuri poll, the Takeshita cabinet approval rating sank to 21.3% and disapproval soared to a

11. Susumu, n. 4, p. 53.

shocking 62.2%¹². The JSP's popularity went high with the JCP, the DSP and the Komeito making significant gains in public approval.

More important than these opinion polls were the real election results of some by-elections. In a February 12 House of Councillors by-election for the Fukuoka prefectural district, traditionally loyal to the LDP, the ruling party's candidate lost to a JSP candidate¹³. In the March 19 gubernatorial election in Chiba prefecture, a conservative incumbent (supported by the LDP), Numata Takeshi was reelected with a very narrow victory over a JCP candidate Ishii Shoji¹⁴. Keeping in mind the fact that Chiba prefecture is a traditionally conservative region and one of the ruling party's strong holds, Ishii's performance could be interpreted as a strong reminder that distrust of the LDP was spreading all over Japan. In the Miyagi prefecture gubernatorial election held on the same day, conservative backed independent candidate Suzuki Seiki was defeated by the JSP supported independent candidate Honma Shuntaro¹⁵.

12. Ibid.

13. Mainichi Daily News, 14 February, 1989.

14. Japan Newsletter, (Kyodo News Service), 24 March, 1989, p. 1.

15. Ibid, p. 2.

On June 25, Ofuchi Kinoku of the JSP defeated the LDP candidate Kimi Hideo in the Upper House by-election in Niigata prefecture¹⁶. These results indicate that the vast majority of voters were using their votes to register protest against the LDP's involvement in the scandal and other unpopular policies.

One of the main reasons why the Lockheed scandal could not generate as much public anger as the Recruit was that the kind of transaction that triggered the Lockheed scandal was far beyond the understanding of ordinary individuals. But the Recruit scandal involved the kind of money play with which small business proprietors and farmers have grown familiar during the recent economic boom. The nation's increasing affluence, which allowed many people to relate to the Recruit transactions on a more personal level, both heightened their interest and made them more susceptible to envy the easy money officials and political leaders made.

At the heart of the controversy was the huge amount of funding Japanese politicians need to support their political activities. The Recruit scandal threw a flood of light on the evils generated by the exorbitant cost of Japanese

16. Japan Newsletter, (Kyodo News Service), 30 June, 1989.

politics. The transfer of large sums from individual corporations and industries directly into the hands of politicians and bureaucrats quid-pro-quo and the recipients respond to these demands, a political scandal is the ultimate product.

In a bid to check political corruption, a method was designed after the Shipbuilding scandal of 1954 whereby companies channeled their political funds through a business organisation, Keidanren (Japan Federation of Economic Organisations) after collecting contributions from corporations and delivering them in a lump sum to the political parties for which they were intended. This was an attempt to prevent individual corporate donors of political fund from developing any personalised relationship with the political party, the beneficiary which then had to pay back by way of decisions that would favour the former. However, a suspicion was there among the small entrepreneurs and the members of the political left, that since the funds were channelled through Keidanren, it would only benefit the big business and help keep the LDP perpetually in power ¹⁷.

17 Ibayashi Tsuguio, "Political Corruption and the Business Establishment", Japan Echo, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1989, p. 47.

Though it was a success, still the companies felt that they received no direct thanks from the political beneficiary for their huge contributions.

As a result, the business again started channelling the funds directly into the pockets of the LDP factions and leaders by purchasing tickets for political fund-raisers. Recruit scandal was a product of the same fund-raising activities ¹⁸. On 4th July, 1975, the Political Funds Control Law was revised. The revised Law restricts corporate and similar donations. "Under the new regulations: (1) the maximum a company, labor union, industrial or professional association, or similar organisation may donate to political parties or fund raising organisations ranges from 7.5 million Yen to 100 million Yen annually, depending on the size of the organisation, and only half ^{of} that amount may be donated to factions and individuals, (2) the maximum a person may donate to political parties or fund raising organisations is 20 million Yen annually, and the maximum donation to factions and individuals is 10 million Yen; and (3) no group or individual may donate more than 1.5 million annually to any individual political entity other than a

18. Ibid, p. 48.

party or fund raising organisation. According to the Law, recipients are required to report each contribution"¹⁹. The outcome of this revision was the elimination of Keidanren's role in the contribution gathering process.

However, the necessity for funds has continued to grow with the sharp escalation of election campaign cost. As a result, politicians and factions have turned increasingly to fund raisers. Fund-raisers are usually buffet style parties held at a hotel, either in honor of a politician or faction or to commemorate publication of a book²⁰.

The majority of political funds come from corporations; business, professional, and agricultural associations and organized labor. These and the medical fraternity has always remained a vital source of political fund for the LDP. The JSP and the DSP have always depended enormously on the member unions of the labor federations Sohyo and Domei, respectively, for financial support ²¹.

The unethical and illegal relationship between the corporate magnets, bureaucrats and the political leaders is

19. Kishimoto Koichi, Politics in Modern Japan: Development and Organisation, (Tokyo: Japan Echo Inc. 1988), 3rd edn., p. 137.

20. Ibid,

21. Ibid, p. 138.

an inevitable outcome of the existence of thousands of rules and regulations which put obstacles in the path of smooth functioning of the business activities. Corruption results when businesses solicit the aid of politicians and others in shortcutting these obstacles. And that's exactly what happened in case of the Recruit scandal. The scandal became a national obsession for the Japanese till the election for the Upper House in July 1989. The people demanded a government that respected ethics in public life. The common man believed that the Recruit scandal heralded the end of the ruling party's guilded politics because it demonstrated the extent to which politicians could be corrupted²². This demaged the LDP'S electoral prospects seriously enough to lose the Upper House election for the first time.

Another reason as to why the LDP could not regain its fast decreasing popularity was that it suffered from lack of leadership.

After the resignation of Takeshita Noboru on 25th April, 89²³, the LDP was thrown into a serious crisis. Due to the absence of any anti-mainstream group within the party

22. K.V. Kesavan, "Political Watershed - 1989", Japan Quarterly, Vol. 37, No. 1, Jan-March, 1990, p. 31.

23. Japan Newsletter, (Kyodo News Service), 26 May, 1989.

which could take over leadership, the LDP went on a massive search for a leader who could restore the party's image. But it was no easy task because almost all top leaders were involved in the Recruit scandal in one way or the other. The only leader who was left untouched by the scandal was Ito Masayoshi. But he was not ready to take the leadership role without any real power²⁴.

Ito knew that the ills of the LDP were so serious that he could not cope with the task. He did not wish to be a mere rubber stamp in the hands of the party bosses. He insisted on the implementation of certain changes. To raise the image of the LDP among the voters, he suggested that-

- (a) All members of the diet who were involved in the Recruit scandal should resign from it;
- (b) The LDP should abolish factions which was one of the sources of inter-party fighting and corruption; and
- (c) The LDP should give party posts to younger leaders²⁵.

But the suggestions went unheeded. The party bosses remained complacent and showed keenness only to retain power in their hands. They chose Uno Sousuke as the party president. Their main aim was that Uno, being a weak

24. Kesavan, n. 22, pp. 32-33.

25. Ibid.

political personality, would depend upon them for his very survival. Uno's capacity to initiate political reforms and take any firm action against those involved in the Recruit scandal was paralysed by his "dummy-status" as he was just a stop-gap arrangement made by the warring factions still in search of a more agreeable leader. But even before the new Prime Minister could settle down properly, there were serious press reports involving him in a personal scandal with a geisha²⁶. This disclosure completely paralysed the LDP as there was a national furore over the sex scandal. The scandal not only damaged Uno's position, but also made it impossible for the LDP to face the election with any confidence.

2. 3% Consumption Tax :

Another issue which agitated the voters' mind leading to the defeat of LDP in the Upper House election was the 3% consumption tax, which came into effect on 1 April, 1989. Every Japanese felt the bitter pinch in his pocket due to this tax, unlike the Recruit scandal which just added to his dislike of politicians who had no regard for public ethics.

26. Mainichi Daily News, 8 June, 1989.

The idea of introducing a general consumption tax was first mooted by the late Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi in 1979 to find a new source of funds to put the government finances on a sound footing and to cope with the ageing of the population ²⁷. Ohira's plan was rejected by the voters in the House of Representatives election held in October 1979. The LDP failed to secure even half the total number of seats in the House ²⁸.

Mindful of the LDP's bitter experience under Ohira, former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro had promised not to impose any major tax during the 1986 simultaneous election of the Lower and Upper House of the Diet²⁹. This categorical statement by Nakasone ensured a landslide victory for the LDP. The Japanese people were taken for a ride by the Takeshita administration which introduced the 3% consumption tax despite the earlier assurance given by the Premier Nakasone not to levy any general consumption tax. According to the LDP's Reserach Commission on the Tax System, chaired

27. The Japan Times, (Weekly Overseas Edition), 15 April, 1989.

28. Masamichi Inoki, "Can the LDP Recover ?", Japan Echo, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1989, pp. 11-12.

29. Hans H. Baerwald, "Japan's House of Councillors Election: A Mini Revolution ?", Asian Survey, Vol. 29, No. 9, September 1989, p. 834.

by Sadanori Yamanaka, the new 3% consumption tax "aimed at adapting Japan's taxation to the needs of an aged society and to the country's economic and social internationalisation, as well as at creating a fairer and simpler tax system that will provide a balanced coverage of income, consumption and assets ³⁰.

In 1987, the Nakasone administration introduced legislation for a consumption tax. The bill was fiercely criticised by the opposition parties and the people. The opposition parties succeeded in blocking its passage. Determined to see that the bill was passed by the Diet despite earlier setback, the Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru introduced a modified version of the consumption tax bill in the Diet session that started in July 1988. After repeated extensions of the session, the LDP finally rammed the bill through the Diet on 24 December, 1988³¹. The 3% consumption tax came into effect on 1 April, 1989.

Most of the indirect taxes were to be abolished and absorbed into the new indirect tax system. The 3% consumption tax would be levied at each stage of the sale of goods and services by a business entity³². Opposition to the

30. Liberal Star, 10 July, 1989, p. 1.

31. The Japan Times, 26 December 1988.

32. Liberal Star, 10 July, 1988, p. 2.

consumption tax stemmed not merely from the people's disgust with the LDP's failure to keep its promise. It was also the unfairness of the introduction of 3% consumption tax in the name of "tax reform" that led to the intense hatred of LDP by the people.

The VAT (Value Added Tax) imposed in 12 EC nations employ an invoice system. In principle, the VAT is collected at each separate transaction as merchandise travels from the manufacturer to the consumer. The consumer pays the tax to the retailer, and the responsibility for paying the tax to the government lies with the firm that manufactures the product or provides the service. While appearing complicated at first glance, this system, in which the amount of tax is clearly entered on an invoice at each transaction up to the point of sale, means that the entire process of tax from the consumer to the national treasure can be clearly tracked³³.

The new tax system does not make use of invoices. The sellers just have to calculate their total revenue and pay 3% tax on it. Another feature of the tax is that business

33. Hayabusa Nagaharu, "A Tax Reform Fraud ?", Japan Quarterly, Vol. 36, No. 2, April- June, 1989, pp. 129-30.

with annual sales below 30 million Yen in other words, roughly two-third of the nation's businesses are exempted from this 3% tax on their annual revenue income through sales. Further, businesses with sales below 500 million Yen are given the choice of a simplified tax calculation system that allows them to calculate the tax against their profit margin at a flat rate of 20% (10 per cent wholesalers) and pay the 3% tax on this figure. It means that the government will accept payment from them of not 3% but 0.6% (or 0.3% from the wholesalers). This way more than 30% of all businesses are eligible for this simplified system³⁴.

Tax evasion occurs even in western countries with an invoice to track each transaction. In Japan, where invoices are not used under the new tax system, evaders will have a field day. The Japanese sellers just have to conceal their own income to avoid tax payment- thus approximating the 3% tax paid by millions of consumers with no clue left with the government. But a VAT tax evader in European countries can be tracked by the government easily with the help of invoice records and thus can be heavily fined.

34. Ibid,

It was this unfairness in the new tax system that caused the people to come out of their homes to protest against the ruling LDP's failure or unwillingness to plug the loopholes in the new tax system. However, aside from publicizing offenders' names Takeshita's reforms had no real teeth for dealing with tax evasion³⁵.

The consumers have to pay 3% tax on all goods and services they buy or use. However, there is no certainty that the tax paid by consumers will find its way into the government treasury. Tax evasion is bound to be rampant, unless consumers take the trouble to determine whether the store where they are buying are tax-exempt (sales upto 30 million Yen annually) or eligible for the simplified tax. They will never know whether the taxes that they are paying, will reach the government or simply inflate the merchants' pocket.

For example, if a person wants to hire a taxi, he will have to pay a 3% tax on top of the actual fair. If the taxi owner's annual revenue income is less than 30 million Yen, then he is tax exempt, under the new tax system. Thus, the money paid by the person as consumption tax will go to

35. Ibid.

the taxi-owner's pocket. The ultimate beneficiary of this tax system would be business and the loser would be the consumer who pays 3 % consumption tax. A sort of Anti-Consumption Tax Movement had sprung up all over Japan. The DSP, the JSP, the Komeito, and other minor parties banded together to oppose the new tax tooth and nail³⁶. Women's groups and consumers' organisations demanded in succession the abolition of the consumption tax³⁷. The consumption tax issue brought the opposition parties together and encouraged them to work out electoral understanding and chalk out appropriate strategy for facing the Upper House election. The personality of Doi Takako in particular came to be projected as the rallying point of the discontented tax payers.

The opposition parties drew the attention of the public to the fact that despite Nakasone's 1986 election promise not to impose the consumption tax, Takeshita violated the promise by ramming the Consumption Tax Bill through the Diet. They further argued that this "rude behaviour" on the part of the LDP politicians showed that

36. Inoki Masamachi, "Taking the Democratic Socialists to Task ", Japan Echo, Vol. 17, No. 2, 1990, p. 26.

37. Japanese Women, September 1, 1989, p. 3.

they did not care about the legitimate sentiments of the voters who had given an overwhelming mandate to them in 1986 simultaneous elections. In fact, the opposition made the consumption tax - central theme of their election campaign. The support for the opposition parties, particularly the JSP headed by Doi, grew at the cost of the LDP³⁸.

Had it not been for the intense unpopularity of the 3% consumption tax among the public, the Recruit scandal might not by itself have dealt a heavy blow to the electoral fortunes of the LDP in the Upper House election of July 1989. In fact, the tax issue formed the backbone of the anti-LDP campaign and other issues simply piled-on to make LDP more unattractive and unpopular.

Liberalization of Agricultural Policies:

Farmers had been LDP's most loyal voters right from the beginning when the party came into existence in 1955. Farmers' relationship with the perpetually ruling LDP has been mutually beneficial. While the LDP has protected the farmers' interests by heavily subsidizing farm products and keeping the Japanese agricultural market closed to the

38. Sato Seizaburo, " The Upper House Election: Mobocracy Triumphant ", Japan Echo, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1989, pp. 32-5.

cheap farm import, the farmers have reciprocated by always voting for the LDP . However, in the face of extreme pressure from the US and other countries exporting agricultural products, the LDP decided in June 1988 to gradually open the agricultural market. This enraged the farmers whose negative voting proved to be very expensive for the party in July 1989 election.

One should bear in mind that the importance of agricultural, forestry and fishing industries to the Japanese economy has been declining atleast since 1955 .In that year, 23% of the GDP was produced by these industries, but by 1984 their share was just 3.2% . In 1965, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries products accounted for 7% of the value of Japan's exports and 42% of its imports, but during the next 20 years declined o 1% and 20% respectively ³⁹

It would be interesting to discuss here briefly how the LDP 's dependence on farmers' support had gradually decreased over the years and the consequent broadening of

39. _____ "Japanese Agricultural Policies: A Time of Change", (Policy Monograph No. 3, Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics, Canberra, 1988), p. 2.

the party's electoral support base. In the first few years after the Second World War, Japan experienced severe food shortage. The government spent a huge amount of money to subsidize the farm products. This was done to give farmers a very high procurement price for their produce as an incentive to boost Japan's agricultural output. In the name of self-sufficiency in basic food-items like rice, the heavy subsidy was continued even when Japan was experiencing high economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s. This ensured farmer's total support for them. A mutual relationship had developed between the LDP and the farmers. Through out the 1960s & 1970s massive shift in population from rural to urban areas was taking place. Despite these demographic changes the rural constituencies remained overrepresented in the Diet.

This development caused the LDP to shift its agricultural policy. The party wanted to distribute public money on other sections of the population to broaden its mass support base. This was evident from the government's gradual decrease in the subsidy given to the farmers. Subsidy increased by 29% in 1972, 27% in 1974, 17% in 1978, 7.5% in 1981 and 0.0% in 1983⁴⁰. Though this caused

40. Gerald L. Curtis, The Japanese Way of Politics, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 48.

unhappiness among the farmers, they had no other choice except to vote for the LDP. Slowly but surely, the LDP became less a political party of farmers and more a "catch-all" party in which farmers interests were balanced with those of other sections of the Japanese people . The LDP started, in the early 1980's, spending heavily on public works which created numerous sources of employment- especially in the construction sector. The people benefiting from the government spending definitely became sympathetic towards the LDP.

The LDP's effort to broaden its mass base was also evident in other areas. In 1967, 1972 and 1976, the number of Lower House seats was increased to permit the creation of new constituencies in the heavily populated metropolitan cities to give urban voters greater representation. But, the rural constituencies still continued to be overrepresented⁴¹.

Then came the landmark decision of the Supreme Court, wherein in July 1985, asked the government to make appropriate changes in the constituencies to make them more representative. The Supreme Court warned that if its decision was not implemented , the results of the 1986 election would be declared null and void . Thus, in early

41. Ibid,

1986, the Diet passed a bill which increased representation in 8 urban districts by one seat each and reduced one seat each in 7 rural and urban constituencies⁴². Even so, the imbalance between the rural and urban constituencies continue to exist glaringly.

Major agricultural countries ,especially the US have consistently criticised Japanese government for heavily subsidising farm products, particularly rice. The US has been demanding the opening up of Japanese agriculture market for a long time so that the huge trade surplus that Japan enjoys at the former's cost could be narrowed or somewhat balanced. Kakizawa kozi, a LDP member in the House of Representatives, called for the liberalization of agriculture. He argued that though Japan is an economic superpower the living standard of an average Japanese is lower than that of in many western countries. This is becacuse of the high price of food items in Japan. Should imports of farm products be deregulated, foreign foods, high in quality but low in price would be easily available in Japan also. Thus, the agricultural liberalization would benefit Japanese consumers. He wholeheartedly supported the recent decision to liberalise orange and beef imports⁴³.

42. Kishimoto Koichi, n. 19, p. 127.

43. Kozi Kakizawa, "Liberalisation: For", Liberal Star, 10 July, 1988, p 14.

On the same issue, a contrary view was presented by Ota Seichi, a member of the Lower House. 12 June 1988 must go down in history as a day of humiliation for the Japanese people. On this date the US-Japan negotiations on agricultural liberalization were settled. Japan agreed to liberalize its beef and orange markets. Ota said this because he thought that the US itself was responsible for creating the conditions that make agriculture in Japan inefficient and therefore make liberalization so difficult to implement. Under the Agricultural Land Law enacted during Japan's Occupation, a de-facto ban was placed on the leasing of farmland. For that reason, the accumulation and disposal of farmland which took place rapidly in the US in post-war years, did not occur in Japan. Herein lies the root cause of the inefficiency of Japanese agriculture⁴⁴.

LDP'S promise of eternal protection of agricultural produce from foreign competitors could not be fulfilled because of the - increasing pressure from Canada, Australia, United States and other major exporters of farm produce to Japan. LDP's decision to liberalise agricultural market in a

44. Seichi Ota , "Liberalisation: Against", Liberal Star, 10 July, 1988, p. 15.

piece-meal manner started in June 1988, when it signed an agreement with the US to allow importation of beef and oranges to Japan. Beef and oranges became a symbolic issue in Japan, just as tea in the American colonies after the Boston Tea Party of 1773 . This aroused the resentment of the farmers. The farmers wondered whether rice would be the next item to be liberalized to please the Americans⁴⁵.

The agricultural policies of the Socialists were curiously more conservative than those of the LDP. The JSP demanded the increase in self- sufficiency rate of grain from 30 % at present to 60%. It would mean reducing Japan's current imports by 12 million tons, or a 43% cut back in foreign food sales to Japanese market, which would give a severe blow to the hard-won concessions gained by exporting countries from the ruling LDP. By calling for publicly financed beef production ranches in Japan- the JSP tried to increase its vote bank and to wean away the farmers from the LDP. It is interesting to note that on the one hand it opposed 3% consumption tax and called it an unbearable burden on the general tax payers. But on the other, it not only supported the protection of agricultural market with

45. Sato Seizaburo, n. 38, pp. 33-34.

heavy subsidies but also demanded subsidies to be extended to other farm products in the name of self-sufficiency⁴⁶. This contradiction in JSP's position only indicated its keenness to make new inroads into the conservative rural voters.

Farmers were angry with the governing LDP which had initiated liberalisation of the farming sector. Alarmed by the growing resentment of the farmers, the LDP desperately made efforts to assuage them. It did not cut down the procurement price of rice in 1989⁴⁷. Unfortunately, this measure came too late. 31 farmers' organisations from 17 rural prefectures had already declared their disenchantment with the LDP.⁴⁸ Price freeze was the last ditch effort by the ruling LDP to regain its electoral support among the farmers. A survey conducted by a private body, Action Committee for Protecting People's Food and Reconstructing Agriculture, in March and April, reported that it found 75.5% of the respondents to be against the liberalization of agricultural market⁴⁹. Opening of the farming sector to the foreign competitors for select items like beef and oranges

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46. Mainichi Daily News, 22 July, 1989.
47. Mainichi Daily News, 15 June, 1989.
48. Mainichi Daily News, 15 June, 1989.
49. Mainichi Daily News, 11 June, 1989.

and a promise by the LDP to the foreigners to expand this policy to gradually cover other food items proved to be disastrous for them. The LDP, as noted earlier, suffered serious setbacks in various local elections and the same controversial issue played an important role in bringing down the LDP in the July election for the Upper House.

4. Women Power-

Another factor which contributed to the unpopularity should be seen in the resentment of the Japanese women. No sooner had Uno assumed charge as the Prime Minister then he was found involved in a sexual scandal of worst magnitude. The Japanese media lost no time in highlighting the scandal. On 4 June, the Sunday Mainichi magazine disclosed that Uno allegedly paid a geisha for a four months sexual liasion with him four years ago. This was supported by the geisha herself who described Uno as bullying, vain, self-aggrandizing, and as never having experienced a loving relationship⁵⁰. Traditionally, geisha are not prostitutes but well trained -artistes who entertain gentlemen with professional skills of dancing, playing musical instruments

50. Mainichi Daily News, 8 June, 1989.

as well as with wit and sincerity. She is not expected to make public her relationship with the patron⁵¹.

Opposition members grilled the Prime Minister about his sex scandal in the Diet and the Japanese women folk were understably furious at him ⁵². Manae Kubota , Socialist member of the House of Councillors, asked Prime Minister Uno Sousuke during the Diet Session on June 9, 1989, to ascertain the truth of his alleged affair with a geisha reported in a Japanese weekly magazine, which if true, could constitute a violation of Japan's Anti-Prostitution Law. Disgusted and angry with Uno's refusal to comment on the charge, several women's organisations and groups, including the IWI Liaison Group, the Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Asian Women's Association, protested that the Prime Minister, as head of the Headquarters for Promotion of policies for women, should be responsible for protecting women's human rights. They said, the tendency towards the commercialization of sex violates human dignity and should be socially eliminated⁵³.

51. Mainichi Daily News, 15 June, 1989.

52. Mainichi Daily News, 11 June, 1989.

53. Japanese Women, 1 September, 1989., p. 3.

A Nihon Keizai Shimbun survey published in the paper's July 12 evening edition, asked what response was appropriate for a legislator revealed to have committed sexual indiscretions, 39.7% of women in their early twenties called for resignation, significantly more than 26.6% who felt it was a personal matter requiring no action; another 28.5% thought a public apology would suffice. Older women's attitude was even more critical. 52.4% demanded resignation, 12.7% called for a public apology and 27.3% demanded no action ⁵⁴.

Chairwoman of the Japan Socialist Party, Takako Doi, exploited the geisha affair to the hilt. JSP got the women's support, which later got translated into concrete votes, almost on a silver platter. For the duration of the campaign Uno was unable to stump for LDP candidates outside of his own constituency. He spent nearly the whole campaign mutely holed up in the Prime Minister's official residence in Tokyo.

The LDP's chances of winning public support and a victory in the coming House of Concillors election became

54. Shinohara Hajime, "The Day the Mountains Moved", Japan Echo, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1989, p. 20.

thinner and thinner with the outbreak of one after another scandal. Prime Minister Uno's sex scandal could be aptly branded as the last straw that broke the camel's back. And the result of the Tokyo Metropolitan election held on 2 July clearly showed where the LDP was heading for - a disastrous performance in the Upper House election. The results of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election is given in the Table-3 below :-

Uno's unethical sexual relationship with a geisha gave the Japanese womenfolk a chance to think about their own status in the Japanese society afresh. A wave of feminist tide swept Japan. The LDP became the most unpopular lot in the women's eyes. The strength of this reaction was apparent in the result of 2 July election for the Tokyo's Metropolitan Assembly. A record 61% of the eligible women voters cast their ballots⁵⁵. It was speculated that women took a stronger interest in politics in this election - because of the 3% consumption tax, Recruit scandal and the then Prime Minister's sex scandal. Of the total of 33 women candidates, a record 17 of them were elected compared with seven in the last election four years ago.

55. The Daily Yomiuri, Editorial, 4 July, 1989.

Tokyo Election Results

Parties	Seats won	Incumbent	Women Candidates		Former Seats	Candidates Contested
			Former	New		
LDP	43 (1)	41	0	2	63	71
JSP	29 (3)	10	3	16	12	32
Komeito	26	24	0	2	29	28
JCP	14 (3)	12	0	2	19	43
DSP	3	2	1	0	3	8
Shimpo	1	0	0	1	0	3
Minor parties	2 (1)	0	0	2	0	21
Independents	10 (4)	2	0	8	0	38
Total	128(17)	91	4	33	126	246

Note : The number in parantheses represents no. of elected women.

* The Daily Yomiuri, Tuesday, July 4, 1989.

As if Uno's sexual scandal was not enough, one more blunder was committed by the LDP. To add fuel to the fire, on 7 July, Horinouchi Hisao, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said, "Women are useless in the world of politics. Doi Takako will not be equal to the task of Prime Minister because she is not married and has no children⁵⁶". Hisao was speaking to a gathering of supporters of a local LDP for the Upper House election in Touin in Mie prefecture. The statement was visited by massive protest from various women's organisations and opposition parties led by the JSP. Doi emerged as the symbol of the hopes and aspirations of the Japanese women. She carefully nurtured the support of the Japanese women who voted massively in favour of the opposition parties in the forthcoming Upper House election of July 1989.

56. The Japan Times, 9 July, 1989.

CHAPTER -III

ANALYSIS OF THE LDP'S PERFORMANCE IN THE UPPER HOUSE ELECTION OF 23 JULY, 1989.

The results of the Upper House election which were announced on 24th July did not surprise many in Japan. The defeat of the LDP had been predicted by several opinion polls conducted by the media. In addition, as has been noted earlier, the LDP had fared very poorly in several by-elections held in the preceding five months.

The Upper House by-elections in Fukuoka Prefecture (on 12th February '89) and Niigata Prefecture (on 25th June '89) and Miyagi and Chiba Prefectures' gubernatorial elections (on 19th March '89), all pointed to the sharply declining popularity of the LDP. Further, the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election in which the LDP suffered a serious setback was a clear forerunner to the Upper House election.

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY OF THE LDP AND OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES :-

Demoralising defeats for the LDP in various by-elections caused serious concerns in the minds of the LDP leaders. On the other hand, the opposition political parties felt greatly encouraged. Both sides worked out their election campaign strategies with great care and caution. The LDP

adopted a very low key campaign marked by a sense of desperation. The party announced its plan of fielding 25 candidates in the National constituency and 54 candidates in the prefectural constituencies¹.

One aspect of the LDP campaign should be seen in its total failure to project itself to the voters. As has been seen earlier, most of the leading lights of the party had been implicated in the Recruit scandal and could not do any campaigning. What was extraordinary was that the party president Uno Sousuke himself was not confident enough to lead the electoral campaign. The LDP candidates were disinclined to invite him to their constituencies as they feared that his presence would harm their electoral prospects².

In one of the very few speeches he delivered in Tokyo (5th July, 1989) during the election campaign, Uno warned the voters to make a right choice, otherwise they might end up with a government whose policies would not only halt the rapid techno-economic progress of Japan but also reverse the trend. He called upon the voters to choose a party keeping

1. Mainichi Daily News, 20 July, 1989.
2. The Japan Times, 6 July, 1989.

in mind the practical realities facing the nation rather than be influenced by some abstract and outdated ideology. He also apologised for the Recruit scandal involving many top LDP leaders³.

In an attempt to win over the voters, he urged the need to preserve Japan's free democratic system. He promised to introduce a series of political reform bills in the extraordinary session to be called just after the Upper House election. The LDP leaders assured the public that in order to bring about political reforms, a Political Reform Committee had been constituted under the chairmanship of former chief Cabinet Secretary- Gotoda Masaharu. The Political Reform Committee, the LDP leaders told the public, was busy with several issues concerning serious issues like- the establishment of a code of political ethics; reform of the election system; regulatory measures over political funds; reform of the Diet; etc ⁴.

Besides these, it also deliberated on measures to be implemented promptly such as controls on parties and receptions, a reduction of seats in the House of Representatives, and the abolition of the practice of giving money gifts ⁵.

3. The Japan Times , 6 July, 1989.

4. Liberal Star , Vol. 18, No.206, Tokyo, 10 March, 1989.

5. Ibid.

About the 3% Consumption tax which had generated so much anger among the people, Secretary General of the LDP-Hashimoto Ryutaro said, on 16th July 1989, that the government and the LDP's committee on tax system would review the consumption tax by evaluating complaints from consumers. He strongly criticised the opposition parties for behaving "irresponsibly" by not coming up with any alternative sources of revenue to replace the 3% consumption tax which they wanted to be abolished⁶.

In one of the last ditch efforts to pacify its traditional voters the LDP leaders promised the farmers that they would not liberalise the Japanese agricultural market any further. Alarmed by the decision of the thirty-one farmer's organisations from seventeen prefectures not to vote in favor of the ruling party in the forthcoming Upper House election, the LDP took a decision not to cut government's purchase price of rice for the year 1989⁷.

The strategy adopted by the 4 main opposition parties needs to be understood. Sensing a favourable electoral climate, they stepped up their effort for mutual cooperation. The leaders of the JSP, the Komeito, the DSP,

6. Mainichi Daily News , 17 July, 1989.

7. Mainichi Shimbun , 15 June, 1989.

and the USDP held a series of meetings and worked out their election strategy in a careful manner. On 7th April 1989, the heads of the JSP, the Komeito, the DSP and the SDF (Social Democratic Federation-Shaminren) met in Kyoto and deliberated on a joint electoral strategy. The JSP chairperson Doi said, in a press conference after the meeting, "Now is the time to put an end to the LDP's long rule over Japanese politics, and for the nation it is the opposition parties' responsibility to do so"⁸. The opposition leaders called for the immediate resignation of the then Prime Minister Takeshita and the dissolution of the House of Representatives for a snap general election⁹. They agreed to endeavour to form a coalition government in the future, for the withdrawal of the 3% consumption tax, and the preservation of ethics in public life. They also vowed to keep Japanese agricultural market closed to foreign agricultural products and initiate political reforms to check corruption¹⁰.

The sharp differences among various opposition parties over the defense issue prevented them from uniting together.

8. The Japan times, (Weekly Overseas Edition), 22 April, 1989.

9. Ibid.

10. Mainichi Shimbun, 8 July, 1989.

Unarmed neutrality is a basic JSP tenet. The other two parties, namely the Komeito and the DSP, argue that the realities of world politics should take precedence, and both unconditionally accept the existing defense agreement with the United States. The JSP's reluctance to accept the Security Treaty, a strong Self Defense Forces and the nuclear power has been a major obstacle to a complete coalition with the Komeito and The DSP - supporters of these issues¹¹.

However, the opposition parties agreed to at least be united in their stand on the immediate issues of ethics in public life, the 3 % consumption tax and the agricultural policy.

The opposition parties carried out their election strategy skilfully. They fielded joint candidates in 37 prefectural constituencies. The Rengo, (Japan Private Sector Trade Union Confederation) which was formed in 1987 as an umbrella organisation for the private-sector labor movement, played an important role in keeping the opposition parties together¹². Representing more than eight million

11 Fukatsu Masumi, "Dio Takako Tackles the obstacles to Power," Japan Quarterly, Vol.37, No.1, Jan- March 1990, pp. 26-28.

12. K.V. Kesavan, "Political Waterhed-1989, "Japan Quarterly, Vol. 37.No.1,Jan-march, 1990, p.34.

workers the Rengo has become a political force in its own right¹³. Keeping in view the massive vote bank of Rengo, the JSP, the Komeito, the DSP and the USDP made electoral arrangements with the former. These parties agreed to support 11 out of the 12 Rengo candidates in the fray. As a quid-pro-quo, the Rengo ensured these parties the votes of its member unions. No agreement on a joint candidate could be reached in Okayama because the JSP was reluctant to part with a seat it was so sure of winning¹⁴.

The opposition parties were taking full advantage of the favourable political climate to enhance their positions. This can be clearly seen in the large number of candidates that they set up for the Upper House election. The JSP which had just 22 seats (9 national and 13 prefectural) coming up for re-election fielded 25 candidates in the national constituency and 30 candidates in the prefectural constituencies¹⁵. The Komeito, which had 12 seats coming up

13. Shindo Muneyuki, "The Danger of a Grand Coalition," Japan Echo, Vol. 17.No. 2, 1990, p. 34.

14. Masuzoe Yoichi, "Politics in Transition: Three Leaders speak out," Japan Echo, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1989, pp. 34-35.

15. The Japan Times, 26th July, 1989.

for election, fielded 17 candidates in the national constituency and 5 candidates in the prefectural constituencies. The JCP, which had 8 seats at stake, set up 25 candidates in the national constituency and 45 candidates in the electoral districts. The DSP, which had 6 seats at stake, fielded 17 candidates in the national constituency and 8 candidates in the prefectural constituencies¹⁶.

Other parties fielded 276 candidates in the national constituency and 89 candidates in the prefectural districts. A total number of 43 independent candidates contested in the local prefectures. Not a single independent candidate contested in the national constituency¹⁷.

The most effective of the opposition parties election campaign was that of the JSP. Under the new and dynamic leadership of Doi, first woman ever to become leader of a political party in Japan¹⁸ the JSP set the tone for the opposition campaign. Doi became the symbol of the rising power of the Japanese women. Unlike Uno, who was so unpopular that he was not permitted to campaign for the LDP, the JSP supremo Doi toured the whole country and received

16. Ibid.

17. The Japan Times , 7th July 1989.

18. Masumi, n. 11, p. 24.

tremndous reception wherever she went¹⁹.

In one of her election speeches, Doi told the voters, "This election is a plebiscite on the consumption tax. Let's implement politics that does away with the tax"²⁰. Doi particularly poured scorn on the 3% consumption tax. She alleged that the LDP had broken its earlier promise that it would not introduce the tax. She complained that the LDP, by going back on its own promise, had clearly lost the people's faith. Infact, the issue of the 3% consumption tax formed the backbone of the JSP's anti-LDP compaign. Doi, by virtue of being the leader of the largest opposition party capitalized on the women's anger against the LDP. She assured the farmers that she would work for a total ban on the import of foreign agricultural products into Japan.

In one of her tactical moves, Doi withdrew a JSP condidate Sakurai Kijun of Shizuoka constituency from the election for stopping a Shinkansen train in a town where it was not supposed to stop. This move further enhanced the JSP's popularity among the people. Doi criticised one of the LDP member Horinouchi Hisao for making derogatory

19. Ishikawa Masumi, "Why the LDP Debacle ?," Japan Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1989, p. 389.

20. The Japan Times , 23rd July, 1989.

remarks against her in particular and the women folk in general. She took full advantage of Uno's sexual scandal and whipped up Japanese women's sentiments against the highly unethical character of the LDP leader.

Ishida Koshiro, chairman of the Komeito, delivering a final speech in Nagoya said, "We cannot depend on a party whose leader cannot even appear in public to get support for its policies. The Recruit scandal and the 3% consumption tax resulted from the LDP's attitudes that failed to consider peoples' lives.²¹". The Komeito played an important role in denouncing LDP's money-power politics, the 3% consumption tax and the agricultural liberalization policy. It promised to carry out political reforms to clean the politics. The DSP also joined the fray.

Not to be left behind, and also in order to reap a share of the bumper anti LDP mood among the voters, the JCP criticised the LDP politicians for being extremely corrupt and unethical. The JCP did not have any electoral understanding with other opposition parties. It ploughed a lonely furrow. The secretary General of the JCP Kaneko Mitsuhiro demanded that the political donations contributed by religious, labor, and business organisations and

21. Ibid.

corporations, including money received by selling fund-raising party tickets, should be banned through implementing political reforms, because they were the sources of money politics and corruption²². He also called for the withdrawal of the 3% consumption tax which had put heavy burden on the general taxpayers. The Tiananman Square massacre, which took place in Beijing on 4 June, 1989, badly damaged the image of the JCP. The JCP leaders were put on the defensive by their opponents. The JCP promised to work for the comprehensive political reforms to wipe out loopholes in the election processes in Japan²³.

In fact, the whole election campaign carried out by the opposition parties was basically negative in character. All of them harped on the weaknesses and blunders committed by the ruling LDP. They could not project themselves as a worthwhile alternative to the corrupt LDP. But the widespread anti-LDP mood of the Japanese electorate helped them defeat the LDP.

22. Mainichi Daily News , 17th JULY, 1989.

23. Ibid.

PERFORMANCE OF THE LDP AND OTHER PARTIES IN THE 23
JULY, 1989 UPPER HOUSE ELECTION-

Due for election in the triennial polls were 126 seats, half of the 252 seats of the second chamber of the Diet, with 76 elected from the 47 prefectural constituencies and 50 from the national proportional constituency. The most publicised Upper House election in the post-war Japanese political history attracted a large number of candidates. A record number of 670 candidates contested the election. Of them, 385 were contesting from the national constituency and 285 from prefectural constituencies. An unprecedented number of 146 women contested the election indicating clearly their rising power.

A nationwide survey conducted by the Mainichi Newspapers between 14 and 16 July predicted that the LDP would win 38 seats out of the total of 126 at stake. It predicted 49 seats for the JSP. According to the same poll, the JSP would be the major beneficiary while the JCP was expected to lose some of its seats²⁴.

24. Mainichi Daily News , 20th July, 1989.

It is necessary to examine the performance of the LDP both^m terms of seats and votes in the Upper House Election:

The LDP could win only 36 seats out of the 66 it held earlier. In the national constituency, the party secured only 15 seats out of 25 it contested. In the prefectural constituencies, it won only 21 out of the 53 seats it contested²⁵. The LDP's tally of 36 seats was far lower than 72 seats it captured in the previous 1986 simultaneous elections²⁶. Its lowest tally so far was 61 seats in 1956 election²⁷. For a detailed comparison, please see Table-1 given below.

In terms of votes, the party secured a mere 27.43 percent in the national constituency and 30.7 percent in the prefectural constituencies²⁸. This was a very depressing outcome if we look at the 38.6 percent and 45.1 percent votes it captured in the 1986 Upper House election in national and prefectural constituencies respectively²⁹. Please see Table-2 for statistics on the percentage of votes received by each party in 1986 and 1989 Upper House elections.

25. The Japan Times , 26th July, 1989.

26. Kishimoto Koichi, Politics in Modern Japan: Development and Organisation (Tokyo, Japan Echo Inc., 1989) 3rd edn, pp. 132-33.

27. Ibid.

28. Japan Newslettter , Kyodo News Service, Tokyo, Vol 39, No. 29, 28th July 1989.

29. Baerwald, Hans H., Party Politics in Japan, (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), pp 175-76.

Table - 1

LDP's Performance in Upper House Elections : 1956 - 1989

(Figures inside the brackets are % of total seats won)

All Constituencies

Year	Candidates elected
1956	61/127 (48.0%)
1959	71/127 (55.9%)
1962	69/126 (54.3%)
1965	71/127 (55.9%)
1968	69/126 (54.7%)
1971	62/125 (49.6%)
1974	62/130 (47.6%)
1977	63/126 (50.0%)
1980	69/126 (54.7%)
1983	68/126 (54.0%)
1986	72/126 (57.0%)
1989	36/126 (28.7%)

Sources : Kishimoto Koichi, Politics in Modern Japan : Development and Organisation , (Tokyo, Japan Echo Inc, 1988) 3rd Ed., p.132.
The Japan Times , 26 July, 1989.

Table - 2

House of Councillors Popular Vote

	National Votes collected	Constituency		Prefectural Votes collected	Constituencies	
		1989 %of Votes	1986 %of Votes		1989 %of Votes	1986 %of Votes
LDP	15,123,910	27.43	38.58	17,466,312	30.70	45.07
JSP	19,353,414	35.10	17.20	15,009,451	26.38	21.51
Komeito	5,988,143	10.86	12.97	2,900,738	5.10	4.40
JCP	3,874,289	7.03	9.47	5,012,205	8.81	11.42
DSP	2,687,414	4.87	6.87	2,066,185	3.63	4.56
Rengo	_____	_____	_____	3,878,783	6.82	_____
Others	8,113,240	14.70	_____	10,558,029	18.56	13.04
Total	55,140,410	100.00		56,891,703	100.00	100.00

Source - The Japan Times , 25th July, 1989.

The LDP got a massive jolt in the 26-single member constituencies. It scraped through just 3 seats out of the 25 it contested (one candidate had to be withdrawn from the contest due to pressure from the LDP leaders because he had remarked that women were not suited for politics). These three seats were from Toyama, Wakayama and Saga. All the seats were won by the opposition candidates - 12 seats went to the JSP (including 3 unaffiliated), 10 seats to opposition backed Rengo and one to the Niin Club (Second Chamber)³⁰. Traditionally, these thinly populated rural constituencies had, with few exceptions, voted for the LDP. But the 1989 election broke that tradition rudely. The LDP had won 23 seats in the 1986 Upper House election³². The LDP won 14 seats (one Unaffiliated LDP) in the 15 two-member constituencies. The LDP could not win more than one seat in any of these 15 two-member constituencies. The rest of the 16 seats were shared by the JSP (14) and one each by a Rengo candidate and an independent. In the two four-member constituencies, the LDP secured one seat each from Hokkaido and Tokyo. In the four three-member electoral prefectures, the LDP captured one seat each in Aichi, Hyogo, and Fukuoka.

30. Hans H. Baerwald, "Japan's House of Councillors Election: A Mini Revolution?", Asian Survey, Vol. 29, No. 9, September, 1989, p. 838.

31. Ibid, p. 839.

32. Koichi, n. 26, p. 132.

It did not win any seat in the Osaka constituency³³. Table - 3 given below shows seats won by the LDP in 1986 and 1989 Upper House elections in the national constituency and a break-up of seats in various prefectural constituencies.

The most characteristic feature of the Upper House election result was the revolt of farmers who overwhelmingly voted against the LDP, their traditional party of choice. The LDP was rudely reminded by the farmers that their votes could not be taken for granted if there was any tinkering with the traditional agricultural policy of the government.

Apart from the revolt of the rural voters, another contributory factor to the LDP's defeat was the full support extended by women to the opposition parties especially Doi's JSP. The Recruit scandal, the 3% consumption tax, agricultural liberalisation policy and Uno's sexual scandal - collectively dealt a heavy blow to the LDP's performance in the Upper House election.

The net outcome of the LDP's defeat was that it lost the majority in the Upper House for the first time. Its total strength in the Upper House dropped to 109 seats, 18 seats short of the barest majority. This was an unprecedented defeat for the LDP. The result demoralised the whole party.

33. Baerwald , n. 30, p. 839.

Table- 3

LDP's Performance in the Upper House Elections of 1986 and
1989:

Type of Constituency	No. of total Seats		Seats Won		Popular vote 1986/1989	% of total votes	
	1986	1989	1986	1989		1986	1989
National constituency	50	50	22	15	22,132,573/ 15,123,910	38.58	27.43
Prefectural constituencies.							
No. in the bracket indicates total number of constituencies:							
4- Member (2)	8	8	4	2	17,466,312 (1989)	45.07	30.70
3- Member (4)	12	12	4	3			
2- Member (15)	30	30	19	13			
1- Member (26)	26	26	23	3			
Total Seat	126	126	72	36			

Sources- Barewald, Hans H, "Japan's House of Councillors' Election: A Mini-
Revolution?," Asian Survey ,Vol.29, No.9, September 1989, pp-837-41
-The Japan Times, 25 July, 1989.

THE JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY:

The JSP was the happiest among all the parties with the outcome of the election. The JSP fielded 55 candidates and won 46 seats, though, only 22 of its seats were up for election. It won 20 seats in the national constituency out of the 25 it contested and 26 seats in the local prefectures out of the 30 it contested³⁴. The party made a clear gain of 24 seats over its earlier performance. With 22 seats not up for election, the JSP's new strength was boosted to 66, compared with the pre-election tally of 42 seats³⁵. The JSP got the largest share of 35.1 percent of all votes cast in the national constituency, compared with 27.3 percent captured by the LDP³⁶. Women's vote contributed a great deal to the massive victory of the JSP. Out of the total of 22 women elected to the Upper house 11 belonged to the JSP. In the 2nd July, Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election that preceded the Upper House election, the JSP's electoral fortunes had risen at the expense of the LDP³⁷.

34. The Japan Times, 26th July 1989.

35. Japan Newsletter, Kyodo News Service, Tokyo, Vol. 39, No. 29, 28 July 1989, p.1.

36. Ibid, p. 2.

37. Hisae Sawachi, "The Political Awakening of Women," Japan Quarterly, Vol. 36, no.4, Oct-December 1989, pp. 381-385.

Seven independent candidates backed by the JSP won the election, boosting the party's tally to 53. The JSP's new strength of 73 (7 independents included) is smaller than the LDP's 109, but in combination with the other opposition parties - the Komeito, the DSP, and the Rengo, a new majority could be forged in the Upper House to give a tough time for the LDP. In a nutshell, the Upper House election of 1989 was a big bonanza for the JSP³⁸. Table-4 contains party-wise distribution of seats after the Upper House election of 1989.

The Komeito, the second biggest opposition party, won 10 seats out of the 22 seats it contested. It lost two seats in the election, as 12 of its seats were up for election. It captured 6 seats out of 17 it contested in the national constituency and 4 seats out of 5 it contested in the prefectural districts³⁹. The Komeito's best performance so far had been 14 seats in 1974, 1977, and 1983 Upper House elections. Its worst performance was in 1962. It had won 10 seats in 1986 election. Its present overall strength in the Upper House has been reduced to 20 from its earlier tally of 22⁴⁰.

38. Masumi, Ishikawa, "Why the LDP Debacle?" Japan Quarterly, Vol. 36, No.4, Oct-december 1989, pp. 388-90.

39. The Japan Times, 25th July, 1989.

40. Koichi, n. 26, p. 132.

Table - 4

Result of the Upper House Election - 23 July, 1989:

Parties	National Constituency	Prefectural	Total	Total	Seats up for election	Seats not up for election	Pre-election Strength	Post-election strength
: Contested	: Won	: Cont- : ested	: Won	: Cont- : ested	: Won	: elect- : ion		
LDP	: 25 15	: 53 21	: 78 36	: 36 66	: 73 73	: 142	: 109	
JSP	: 25 20	: 30 26	: 55 46	: 22 20	: 42	: 66		
Komeito	: 17 6	: 5 4	: 22 10	: 12 10	: 22	: 20		
JCP	: 25 4	: 45 1	: 70 5	: 8 9	: 17	: 14		
DSP	: 17 2	: 8 1	: 25 3	: 6 5	: 11	: 8		
Rengo	: 0 0	: 12 11	: 12 11	: 0 1	: 1	: 12		
Other Parties	: 276 3	: 89 12	: 365 15	: 7 4	: 17	: 23		
Independent	: 0 0	: 43 0	: 43 0	: 5 4	: 0	: 0		
Total	: 385 50	: 285 76	: 670	: 126 126	: 126	: 252	: 252	

Source: The Japan Times, 26 July, 1989

The JCP won 5 seats out of its 8 seats which came up for re-election. It set up 25 candidates in the national constituency and won only 4 seats. Out of the 45 seats it contested in the prefectural constituencies it won only one seat ⁴¹. The JCP's worst result had been 2 seats in 1956 election and the best was 13 seats in 1974 election. It had won 9 seats in the 1986 election ⁴². The 1989 election was a disaster for the JCP.

The DSP had fielded 25 candidates and 6 of its 11 seats came up for election in 1989. The party garnered 3 seats in all, 2 in the national and 1 in the local constituency. Thus, it lost 3 of its earlier seats. The party now has just 8 seats. The party now has just 8 seats in the Upper House compared to 11 in the earlier ⁴³.

Rengo (Japanese Private Sector Trade Union Organisation), a completely new entrant into the Upper House election of 1989 was placed third in terms of the number of seats following the JSP (46 seats) and the LDP (36 seats). This newly formed labor organisation won 11 seats out of the 12 it fielded, all in the prefectural constituencies ⁴⁴. This was an impressive beginning for a new organisation.

41. The Japan Times, 25th July, 1989.

42. Koichi, n.26, p. 132.

43. The Japan Times, 25th July, 1989.

44. Ibid.

Other parties fielded 276 candidates in the national constituency and won just 3 seats. They won 12 seats out of 89 seats they contested in the prefectural constituencies. Now their strength in the Upper House is 23 seats compared to 17 earlier⁴⁵. Out of the 43 independents who contested in the election, not a single candidate succeeded. In the 1986 election, 6 independents had won.

The analysis of the outcome of the Upper House election clearly shows the serious setbacks suffered by the LDP. The major gainers were the JSP and the Rengo. The defeat of the LDP had not only brought its numerical strength down in the Upper House but had also effected changes in the 16 Standing Committees and 9 Special Committees. Due to shift in the balance of power in the Upper House, the LDP now chairs only 8 out of 16 Standing Committees compared to its previous chairmanship of 10 Committees. The LDP controls 6 out of the 9 Special Committees of the Upper House compared to 7 earlier. Please see table 5 and 6 in the following page for a clear picture of the LDP's strength in the various Standing Committees and the Special Committees. The net outcome of the Upper House election is that it has really

45. Ibid.

ceased to be a rubber stamp. The LDP will have to keep the opposition parties in good humour to get its bill passed. The opposition parties will extract concessions from the LDP as a quid-pro-quo for their support to the LDP's bills.

As has been seen in the first chapter, the Upper House is inferior to the Lower House in many respects. However, as long as the LDP commands a majority in the Lower House it need not worry too much about the Upper House because of its inherent weakness vis-a-vis the Lower House. But still in Japan , the tendency to mould decisions on the basis of consensus is so strong that the LDP cannot lightly disregard the views of the Upper House.

Table - 5

LDP 'Strength In The Upper House's Committees - 1987 & 1989:

Names of the Standing Committees	Total No. of Members	LDP Strength	
		1987 (Chairmanship)	1989 (Chairmanship)
1. Cabinet	20	12 (LDP)	9 (LDP)
2. Local Administration	20	12 (LDP)	9 (JSP)
3. Justice	20	10 (Komeito)	7 (Komeito)
4. Foreign	20	12 (LDP)	9 (LDP)
5. Finance	25	14 (LDP)	11 (LDP)
6. Education	20	12 (LDP)	9 (LDP)
7. Social & Labour	21	12 (LDP)	9 (JSP)
8. Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries	25	14 (LDP)	11 (LDP)
9. Commerce & Industry	21	12 (LDP)	8 (LDP)
10. Transportation	20	12 (Komeito)	8 (Komeito)
11. Post & Telecommu- nication	20	12 (LDP)	8 (JSP)
12. Construction	20	11 (LDP)	9 (JSP)
13. Budget	45	26 (LDP)	20 (LDP)
14. Audit	30	17 (LDP)	14 (JSP)
15. House Management	25	15 (LDP)	11 (LDP)
16. Discipline	10	6 (JCP)	4 (JSP)

Source: Yomiuri Shimbun, 27 July 1989

Table - 6

LDP'S Strength in the Upper House Special Committees after July 1989:

Special Committees	Total No. of Members	LDP Strength 1987 Chairmanship	1989 (chairmanship)
1. Science & Technology	20	12 (Komeito)	9 (Komeito)
2. Environment	20	11 (LDP)	9 (JSP)
3. Disaster Policy	25	15 (LDP)	11 (LDP)
4. Election System	25	15 (LDP)	11 (LDP)
5. Okinawa & Northern Territories	20	11 (LDP)	9 (LDP)
6. Research on Diplomacy & Comprehensive Security	30	17 (14)	14 (LDP)
7. Research on citizen's Life & Economics	23	17 (LDP)	13 (LDP)
8. Energy Policy	25	15 (JSP)	11 (JSP)
9. Pollution	20	11 (LDP)	9 (LDP)

Source: Yomiuri Shimbun, 27 July, 1989

CHAPTER - IV

CONCLUSION

The Upper House election of 1989 was a landmark in the history of the Japanese political system. It was different from all other past elections in that the LDP's majority strength in the Upper House was broken for the first time since 1955. In the past, despite being an elective body, the Upper House elections had not generated so much heat and interest. This was partly because of its inferior status in the legislative sphere. But this time, the Japanese voters were really disgusted with the corrupt practices of the LDP leaders and their disregard for public ethics. The public resentment hardened further because of the 3% consumption tax, so they wanted to register their resentment in a tangible form.

But the defeat of the LDP indicated sharply the negative votes cast by the people who were angry with the party. The opposition parties effectively took advantage of this factor and worked out an electoral understanding. But their success could not be construed as a positive endorsement of their programmes. It was more a defeat for the LDP than a victory for the opposition.

One should not ignore the rude shock that the LDP received from the voters. But the opposition could not keep up their tempo, and their failure to win the February 1990 Lower House election clearly proved this fact. In July 1989, they had made a temporary political understanding. It could not be sustained for too long and contradictions among them soon became too glaring. The DSP and the Komeito felt that they had much more in common with the LDP than with the JSP and a couple of changes made by the JSP in its approach to Japan's defense and nuclear issues did not adequately satisfy them. When they faced the Lower House election in February 1990, they, unlike in July 1989, did not project themselves as a cohesive and united team.

Further the electoral system governing the Lower House is entirely different and favours the LDP. The total number of 512 Lower House seats are divided among 130 medium-sized (three, four, and five member) constituencies. The LDP is much better placed than the opposition parties in managing the Lower House election because of its powerful local support groups (Koenkai) which are spread throughout Japan. All this, however, should not blind one to the new balance of power that presently exists between the two Houses of the Diet.

The LDP still faces serious obstacles in the process of formulating bills and getting them approved by both the Houses of the Diet. The LDP has to work very hard to get the support of the Upper House for various legislative measures. The opposition parties can use their majority, with a certain degree of cooperation among them, as a bargaining chip to extract concessions from the LDP. While the opposition parties might ask the LDP to support some of their bills in the Lower House in exchange for the support they would extend to the LDP bills coming in the Upper house. The LDP is now facing more pressure to strike compromises with the opposition parties in the Upper House. For instance, the controversy relating to the United Nations Peace Corp bill brought into sharp focus the delicate balance of power between the LDP and the opposition parties.

Notwithstanding the inherent weaknesses of the Upper House it could still cause considerable delay to the passage of important bills proposed by the ruling party. It is also pertinent to remember that the traditional concept of consensus building normally precludes the LDP from steamrolling its decisions. Rather, it compels the LDP to enter into protracted negotiations with the opposition parties for mutual accommodation. This delicate political situation has indeed enhanced the importance of the two centrist parties—the DSP and the Komeito.

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