In Search of the Facades of Political Marketing and the Ramifications for Strategic Action Orientation of Political Parties in India

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Abstract:

The present paper aims to identify the facades of political marketing from the perspective of a developing nation. In this exercise, the authors have executed a questionnaire followed by statistical analysis in order to come to meaningful conclusion about the facets of political marketing from the Indian perspective. In order to understand the perspective of political marketing and to obtain the opinions of marketing experts, two sets of respondents have been considered namely faculty members of marketing and marketing professionals. In this exercise, we have obtained nine facades of political marketing by using principal component analysis. Secondly, the relevance-practice contrast of political marketing has been established through two-tailed paired t-test and ramification for action orientation of political parties has been discussed. It has been observed through the analysis of the responses of the marketing experts that a gap exists between the relevance of the facades of political marketing and the extent to which these facades are practised by political parties in India.

1. Introduction and Background:

Political marketing connotes the observed expansion of the domain of marketing. However, experts believe that the expansion of the domain of marketing is not simplistic in nature (Enis 1973). Other experts also posit the expansion of the domain of marketing to diverse areas which has increased the relevance of marketing from the socio-political perspective (Keith 1960;

Kotler and Levy, 1969; Shostack 1977; Arndt 1978). In this perspective, the inclusion of the term "idea" in the list of 'things to be marketed' in the definition of marketing by American Marketing Association paved the way for the different extendible domains where marketing tools and techniques can be applied (Wring 2007). The gradual developments and expansion in the concepts of marketing accentuated the process of applications of marketing in the field of politics. Political organisations i.e., political parties, subsequently started to market themselves to voters by utilising marketing tools and concepts. This application formally connotes the concept of political marketing (Menon 2008). Experts like Newman (2002) are of the opinion that political marketing emerged as a separate academic discipline over more than two decades and the publication of the Journal of Political Marketing played a pivotal role in the advancement of this academic field (Newman 2002). The political parties in other countries became aware of the application of marketing on the basis of the prevalent political context in order to accrue electoral success. This has also been observed from the perspective of developing nations as well. However, the nature and context of political marketing vis-à-vis the socio-political milieu of nations vary. Thus, contextual factors play a significant role in shaping the facets of nations. In this perspective, it remains to be seen how marketing aspects are relevant in case of a developing country like India.

In developing countries like India, the mainstream political parties tried to discretely promote through different innovative techniques in recent elections (Phadke 2016; Ghoshal & Balachandran 2015; Sheth 2014). This has also been observed in the recently concluded general elections in India. However, the application of political marketing in the Indian context was not observed to be prevalent across different categories of political parties. The Indian political parties need to accept and embrace political marketing in view of its increasing relevance in the global context (Arun 2019).

Marketing orientation within political parties is the primary prerequisite in order to apply the concept of marketing in politics. This orientation will enable the political parties to consider voters as consumers of their political service. The satisfaction of these consumers should be given utmost importance. The objective of consumer satisfaction can be achieved by identifying the factors which can influence satisfaction in a given context. This identification will enable political parties to formulate effective marketing

strategies. This is very similar to marketing research conducted by the business organisations. In the context of political marketing, it is political marketing research. There have been maiden efforts in developing economies by 'Psephologists' to predict the result of the elections on the basis of voter surveys and qualitative analyses (Roy and Sopariwala 2019). However, there is deficient evidence that highlights any concerted effort on the part of political parties to understand the behaviour of the voters in a systematic manner.

2. Theoretical Contextualization and Literature Review

As already discussed, extant research works substantiate the growing emergence of political marketing as a separate field of study (Kotler and Levy 1969; Wring 2007; Newman, 2002). In this context, Researchers like O'Cass highlighted the extended domain of marketing embracing politics because an exchange actually takes place when a voter casts his or her vote for a specific candidate (O'Cass 1996). Kotler and Levy (1969) argued that political contests should be a key interest area for the professionals in marketing. Newman (1981) cited a number of consumer-related approaches to understand, predict, and explain the behaviour of the voters (cited in Newman & Sheth 1985). Furthermore, Kotler (1999) also underscored that conceptual framework of brand management could be applied to understand and manage the attitude and behaviour of the voters in a political context without much modifications (cited in Peng and Hackley 2009). Thus, the term "political consumers" defines the electorate or voters better in the field of political marketing. Newman and Sheth (1985) examined seven "distinct and separate cognitive domains" of political marketing. Another important study tried to examine with the help of statistical techniques the gender differences in "voting behaviour", "intensions" and "beliefs" (Newman and Sheth 1984). Recently a study was conducted in England to understand how voters make decisions with the help of cognitive process (Lau, Kleinberg, and Ditonto 2018).

The existing literature is therefore indicative of the fact that research works have been undertaken mostly in developed nations. Moreover, no research work identifies the factors that affect the voting decision from the perspective of developing nations, in general and India, in particular. The theoretical justification of this procedure comes out of the similarities between service organisations and political parties. Marketing a political party has similarities

with marketing of services such as accountancy and legal advice than with selling physical products (Harrop 1990, p. 278). In this perspective, some researchers opine that intertwined aspects like homogeneity, intangibility, perishability and variability which are primarily associated with the marketing of services have been considered relevant with respect to political marketing (Baines, Payne and Egan 2001; Newman 1988). Since some important characteristics of service marketing resemble the characteristics of political marketing, political marketing needs to be examined in the light of the basic service marketing framework. It is very important for a service marketer to identify the important facets of service marketing and deliver on these facets. If the facets are not given due importance and are not practised by the service organisations, the gap between what is required and what is actually done widens and eventually the probability of ineffectiveness increases.

There is no palpable study on political marketing in the perspective of developing economies which substantially identifies the important facades of political marketing. In order to address this gap, the factors identified from foreign literature need to be validated in order to effectively identify the Indian perspective. In this paper, we have considered the Indian perspective of India since it is the world's largest democracy possessing certain unique aspects and it has been considered as a "land of contrasts and contradictions" vis-à-vis other nations across the globe (Bose, 2013). Literature highlights that the dynamics of exchanges in politics have similarities with service marketing where the product is largely indescribable, multifarious, and not easily recognised by the customers (Scammell, 1999). In this perspective, the present paper sets for the agenda to disaggregate the facets of political marketing on the basis of opinions of experts in the field of marketing in view of their extant domain knowledge in the field with respect to the Indian perspective in order to examine the relevance of political marketing from the perspective of developing nations.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction and Questionnaire Construction

In order to identify the facets of political marketing, the opinions of marketing experts have been considered since they are intellectually competent on marketing aspects of service organisation and can provide valuable insights regarding the activities of the political parties which would enable effective conceptualization of the concomitant issues. Accordingly, the questionnaire has been prepared to seek opinion of the marketing experts.

The political marketing questionnaire (PMQ) for the present research work has been prepared in the light of the 7Ps perspective of service marketing (Lovelock and Wirtz 2016). The statements in PMQ have been grouped according to their relations with the 7Ps framework. The marketing experts have been requested to assess each statement in terms of (i) the relevance in the Indian context and (ii) the extent to which the aspect is practised in Indian political context. The opinions of the experts on both relevance and practice have been obtained on a 5-point continuous scale. Since the facets of political marketing from Indian context were never justified before in any literature, it becomes essential to justify some of the important facets presented in the questionnaire identified through the sources mentioned earlier. Aspects like the past credentials and credibility of rank and file of the political parties, content of the manifesto, honesty and clean image of the party leader, party policy an ideology, research in political marketing, voter segmentation, different promises made to different groups of voters, imparting training to party workers (Denver and Hands 2007); structure and process of political parties (Butler and Collins 1994); political parties' activities which enhance the reputations and image of the nation (Hansen 1999; Wring 1997; Caywood and Laczniak 1989; Smith and Hirst 2001; Newman 1994; Brennan and Henneberg 2008). Other aspects like fulfilment of promises (Cwalina, Falkowski, and Newman 2015); conferences as one of the features of service of the political parties (Bhagyaraj and Dhinakar 2017); campaign materials used in Indian elections (Karan, 2008); statements used by political leaders (Saxena 2017); performance of political leaders in the debates and discussion (Temple 2013) have been considered in the questionnaire.

The issue of political advertising in different media before elections (Kaid 2012) is considered in the questionnaire. Furthermore, literature says that communication through social media by political parties is becoming very important in today's world but it is not going to replace the traditional form of communication like election rallies with the voters (Stier, et. al. 2018). Thus, the effect of election rallies has been considered in the questionnaire. Furthermore, the other issues considered in the questionnaire are creativity in political advertisements and innovative promotional activities (Peng and Hackley 2007); charismatic leadership (Needham 2006); symbols signifying a political party (Lynch, Baines and Egan 2002); influence of social media on voting behaviour (Effing, Hillegersberg, & Huibers 2011); messages of

the campaign and appropriate languages for the campaign (Marland 2003); linkage with the corporate sector (Gomez 2002). Political parties are also sometimes criticized for favouring a particular religion or community for securing votes and literature highlights the issue of appeasement (Sarwate 2008). Political parties contest on issues relating to corruption and since it is the result of ambition, political leaders are definitely not free from these vices (Harris 2001). Some other aspects considered are dispute and indiscipline (Gupta 1989; Krehbiel 2000); inter-party alliance and collaboration (Badigannavar 2016); good governance (Eshuis, Braun and Klijn 2013); presence of educated and unblemished people in the party administration (Albritton and Bureeku 2007); workers' involvement in violence and intervention in personal and family matters (Urdal, 2008; Bhattacharyya 2009).

4.2 Sampling Frame and Data Collection

In order to obtain the views of marketing experts, we have considered two sets of respondents namely faculty members of marketing and marketing professionals. While both have domain knowledge in the field of marketing, the faculty members are considered competent on the theoretical aspects while the professionals are assumed to possess an understanding of the practical aspects. Thus, a unique blend of the two aspects is expected from the responses. Accordingly, a list of the faculty members of marketing of the randomly selected universities and institutes in India has been prepared from the information available in the websites of the universities and management institutes. The faculty members have been assigned a particular serial number. Eventually, 146 faculty members have been randomly selected using simple random sampling without replacement technique. All the randomly selected faculty members were sent the questionnaire either via e-mail or by post. Personal visits were also conducted in order to enhance the response rate. In case of marketing professionals, a list of companies based on overall performance was prepared. Each company has been assigned a serial number and 20 companies have been selected from the list using random sampling procedure. The names and contact details of the marketing professionals of the randomly selected companies have been obtained from the company websites. Each and every marketing professional has been assigned a serial number. 72 names were randomly selected from the list of marketing professionals following simple random sampling without replacement. All the 72 marketing professionals were sent the questionnaire by e-mail and by post.

4.3 Techniques for Identification of Facades of Political Marketing and the Concomitant Aspects

In order to identify the facades of political marketing on the basis of the extraction of factors, the basic objective is to reduce a large number of aspects into factors connoting the facades of the same. In this process, factor analysis on the basis of principal component analysis using Varimax rotation has been used (George and Mallery 2006; Field 2009). The extraction of the number of factors has been determined on the basis of Kaiser's criterion which involves factors above the Eigen value of 1 (Kaiser 1960; Yong and Pearce 2013). In this exercise, factor analysis has been carried out following iteration and the facades have been established when all the values of all the identified aspects of political marketing have factor loading greater than 0.5. In undertaking factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity have been appropriately addressed following standard procedure (George and Mallery 2006; Hair et al. 2006). In the context of the factors extracted, variance explained has been considered which signifies the relative significance of each factor in explaining the variance linked with the set of variables that being examined in the study (Hair et al. 2006).

Subsequent to the identification of factors an effort has been made to examine the difference between the relevance of the identified façades and the practice of the same facades in terms of the view of the experts. It has already been mentioned in the previous section that the questionnaire was constructed to obtain the opinions of the marketing experts. Paired-samples t-test was carried out to test whether there is any statistically significant gap between relevance and practice of the identified facades on the basis of opinion of experts in the field of marketing. Paired-samples t-test is usually carried out on individuals of groups who undergo both conditions of the variable of interest (George and Mallery 2006). Since the opinions of only the marketing experts on relevance and practice have been considered, Paired-samples t-test seems to be most appropriate statistical tool in this context. The difference between relevance and practice of the identified facades from the marketing point of view would indicate that what is relevant from a marketing point of view may not be practised by the Indian political parties. This, would in other way, enable us to identify the gaps in political marketing practices in India. This would be effective for suggesting the

areas of political marketing vis-à-vis the strategic action orientation of political parties in India.

4.5 Reliability and Validity

Chronbach's Alpha measurement has been used in measuring the construct reliability of the items of the factors extracted and the values on the higher side signify higher "internal consistency" of the item used in the questionnaires (Cortina 1993; George and Mallery 2006). In general, it is to be considered within the acceptable range and the value of Chronbach's Alpha is accepted up to 0.6 (Hai, et al. 2006). The computation of the reliability of the facades would in other way, signify the strength of a particular factor of political marketing. It is also opined by the experts that validity of a research instrument can be assessed with the help of non-quantitative techniques. Here, the researcher has preferred to use "content validity" (Kothari 2004). Since the questionnaires have played a very important role in this research work, content validity is found to be the most appropriate one in assessing the degree to which research instruments cover all the aspects of this study. The reliability values of each factor (facade) are mentioned in figure 1.

5. Facades of Political Marketing vis-à-vis Strategic Action Orientation of Political Parties in India: Important Ramifications for Developing Nations

5.1 Results of factor analysis and extraction of the facades of political marketing

On the basis of the predetermined sample respondents, responses were collected from the faculty members of marketing and marketing professionals. As previously discussed in the methodology section, the initial phase, mean and standard deviations of all the 57 items were determined. Items have been subsequently removed phase-wise, on the basis of designated mean values, standard and anti-imaging technique in factor analysis. Then, factor analysis was run in the next stage and the process of iteration was been continued until all the remaining items had a factor loading value greater than or equal to (e"0.5). The eventual result of the factor analysis comprised 43 items that congregated into nine factors and the rotation converged in 45 iterations. The results of KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity have been exhibited in table 1 below.

Table 1: KMO Measure of sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.695
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2009.251
	Df	903
	Sig.	.000

It is evident from table 1 that we have obtained satisfactory values of KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity. In the light of the satisfactory results of KMO measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, we shall now examine the different factors in the light of the views obtained from experts. On the basis of the items that signify the factors (facade), these have been named as shown in figure 1. Additionally, an effort has been taken to compute the reliability of the extracted factors and these have been referred to as factor (facade) reliability and these have also been exhibited in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Political Marketing Facade Radar
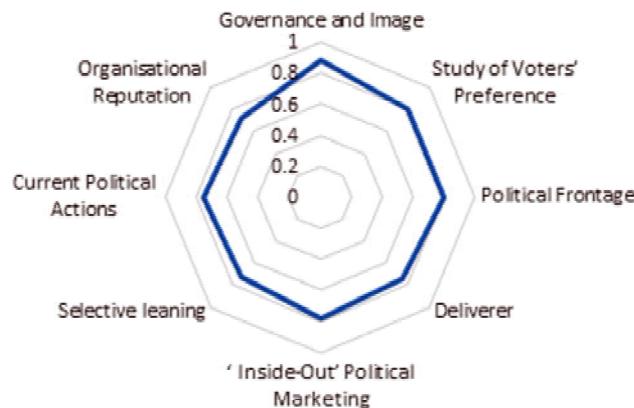
Factor 9 is comprised of a single item and hence the eight factors referred to as facades have been exhibited. The basic issues associated with each façade and the items that constitute the respective façade have been discussed in following subsections.

The first façade of political marketing pertains to G*overnance and Image*. This facade accounts for 28.843% of the variance explained and has a reliability value of 0.880. The factor appears to be relevant in the Indian context and the way political parties address this factor would probably increase the gap between the relevance and practice. Corruption in the political parties has been a very big issue in different elections and if strong action is not taken against corrupt members, image transparency of the political parties is likely to be affected. Indiscipline in different forms by the party workers or leaders can have some negative impact on the image of a political party. Action taken against those who are involved in act of indiscipline would improve the image of the political party. Good governance can address these issues. In India, political parties are frequently criticised for sometimes patronising those individuals who are involved in antisocial and criminal activities. The Image and transparency of a political party becomes to some extent believable if the party administration comprises educated and unblemished people. If the political parties change the allies in different situations on the basis of issues not very convincing for voters, there is a chance that the credible image of the political parties may get tarnished. Party activists working under a strong organisation can devote themselves to be continuously in touch with the electorate to recognise and understand their problems.

The second facade, *Study of Voters' Preference*, has emerged as another relevant and important factor when political parties market themselves to political consumers. This factor accounts for 7.72% of the variance explained and has a reliability value of 0.799 as exhibited in figure 1. Political parties need to test the acceptance of the candidate to the voters before nominating the candidate in a constituency through scientific survey in the constituency. Otherwise, voters, despite their overall preference for the political party, may not elect the candidate. Now a days, political parties in India take the help pf professional organisations to appropriately study and address the voters' preferences. In general, Indian political parties are not observed to follow any formal process to apply this technique to segment the voters with the help of relevant variables. Marketing-oriented companies monitor the changes in taste and preference of the consumers and make the required changes in the offerings and thereby undertake marketing research on a regular basis (Hunt & Arnett, 2004). Political parties in India should also

monitor the changes in the needs and wants of the common man. Political parties can understand the problems of the common man through appropriate political marketing research. Continuous survey of the electorate on important issues arising out of the changing political environment, analysis of the responses in a scientific way, and giving proper importance to the opinions of the voters may be useful in addressing the problems of the common man. If activities of any political party contribute towards the enhancement of national image, the image of that political party is likely to improve in the minds of the electorate.

The third facade, *Political Frontage (*variance explained: 6.30%, façade reliability value: 0.795), encompasses the aspects which involve party activities through its leaders, activists, and sympathisers and how it is communicated to the electorate. Reactions of the party leaders on sensitive issues are becoming very crucial at times in the creation of the image of the party. It is observed that insensitive remarks by the party leaders on important as well as sensitive issues in media or while addressing people in a rally hurt the voters. Different news reports mentioning insensitive remarks on women, religion, caste, opposition, other eminent leaders, national icons are the evidences that party leaders frequently make these mistakes. Electronic media play a pivotal role in influencing the opinion of the voters. Discussions on different important issues in the electronic media before elections are very crucial in mobilising the opinions of the electorate. Activists, sympathisers, and political leaders of different political parties participate in these discussions and deliberations and logically acceptable views of the participants are very important in influencing voters. Political parties should, at first, accept the importance of electronic media in influencing voting decision. It can possibly be argued that political parties should be conscious before promising something unachievable. Political stand of the political party should not confuse the electorates, specifically the supporters. It is therefore the responsibility of the political parties to elucidate their stand on important political issues to the voters. If activists are confused, it is difficult for them to convince the voters about the stand of the political party.

The fourth facade, named as *Deliverer* is considered to be another relevant factor in political marketing from the perspective of developing nations. Political parties accomplish their activities through active involvement of their activists. Party offices are located in different localities in order to

implement different kinds of area-specific party activities and to keep in touch with the local people. Local people, on the other hand, expect the activists of the political parties to solve the day-to-day problems. In this perspective, the examples of states like West Bengal, Kerala, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, etc can be cited. There are voters who are loyal supporters of some political parties. They do not change their voting decision even if some wrong steps are taken by political parties. On the other hand, some voters in different constituencies can change their voting decision based on issues which arise just on the eve of elections. Furthermore, the assistance from the party activists in difficult times or modest behaviour and constant contact by the party leaders and activists with the electorate can change the opinions of floating voters. Same kind of strategies for loyal and floating voters may not work. Political parties should develop different strategies for these two kinds of voters. In several developing nations mainly in the Indian sub-continent, political parties do not seem to have different strategies for loyal and floating voters. Political leaders create expectation through their appearance and promises. The value offerings from leaders in their speeches reinforce the expectations of the voters. So, political parties should be in search of leaders who are convincing and can be accepted by the electorate and have unblemished image. For this fourth factor, the statistically significant gap between relevance and practice is the result of the facts discussed above.

The fifth factor, named as *Inside-Out Political Marketing*, has been identified as another relevant factor of political marketing. From the perspective of a service organisation, internal ('inside-out') marketing is effective when the top management realises its importance and hire, train, and motivate employees to ensure that they provide excellent services to the customers. The objectives are achieved if political parties remain selective while choosing the members of the party. After selection, party members should go through training schedule. In general, political parties with exceptions, across the globe, do not regularly conduct training programmes for party members. Party conferences are organised by some of the political parties on a regular basis to communicate the ideology of the party to its members and previous activities of the parties are supposed to be critically analysed. In reality, the opinions of the lower-level party members are not always taken care of. Views of the leaders are generally not challenged by the members to ensure

that leaders are pleased. Strategies for the future should also be formulated through debate among the members of the party but debate within the party is not always entertained. Communication with the voters throughout the year is very important to understand the change in needs and wants of the electorate. Necessary changes in the party programmes can be made after considering the changes.

The sixth façade, named as *Selective leaning*, is considered to be relevant in the perspective of political marketing. This selective leaning which may be referred to as selective leaning in the light of the Indian trend, can create distance from the common people. If the political leaders are beyond the reach of the common people and travel by expensive cars, a detachment from the common people is inevitable. This causes alienation from the mass. Sometimes some political parties are criticised for helping the corporate sector at the cost of the common people. Relaxation on corporate taxes is one of the facilities given to the corporate sector. If political parties do not become cautious about this, the gap between relevance and practice will get widened. Languages and phrases used in campaign materials must be understood by the common people. If campaign materials are prepared keeping in mind the educated class of the society, the communication with common mass will be distorted and intended message will not be perceived. In general, political parties should desist from selective leaning. In this perspective, there can be some similarities among developing nations, especially, in some countries the Indian subcontinent.

The seventh factor has been named as *Current Political Actions*. The common party activists or cadres play a pivotal role in performing the contemporary political activities and the relevant actions therein. The past records and credibility of these common activists actually create the image of the political parties at local level. These people actually keep in touch with the people in the locality and people approach these activists whenever they are in problem. Moreover, these activists communicate different decisions of the party and help the voters understand the positive effects of those decisions. But in some of the cases political parties do not give proper importance to these activists. Promotions of different political parties in different media have become very common before elections. Some of the political advertisements are created in an innovative way after taking help of the experts of advertising. But in most of the cases, political parties are promoted

in a crude way. The value propositions are to be communicated properly through advertising. Moreover, promises made and claims of previous achievements in the different advertisements must be believable to the electorate. Creativity required to communicate with the electorate is generally observed to be missing in political advertisements. This leads to the gap between relevance and practice. However, mainstream political parties are gradually realising the importance and effect of social media and main political parties have started promoting themselves in social media but regular promotions in social media by most of the political parties in developing nations in general, are still missing. Negative comments against the other leader(s) of the same party who are in favour of the decision can create negative image in the minds of the electorate. It actually shows the lack of coordination and discipline in the party. If the party is to position itself as a disciplined party, these kinds of activities are to be controlled. This therefore creates gap between relevance and practice. It is also reported that party workers are sometimes involved in violence. Party workers are reported to take the help of violence to establish their strong presence, to make the people follow whatever they say, and sometimes just to protest against some incidents. If the political parties do not control these supporters and allow them to repeat these activities, electorate will develop negative impressions against these political parties. Just like salespeople represent the company when they meet the prospect and present the products and services of the company to them, the activists of the political parties actually represent the party in the locality. So, any negative activity of the party activists eventually leads to negative image of the political party.

For the eighth facade, named as *Organisational Reputation* is very relevant in the Indian context and activities of political parties of India are either positively or negatively perceived by the electorate. The continuous advertising in the media by the main political parties is very relevant in political marketing in developing nations but the reality is that the advertisements are telecast continuously only before the main elections. So, the communication with the electorate with the help of advertising throughout the year is not practised by the Indian political parties. Political parties may employ professional advertising agencies and following the parameters of effective promotion, in order to prepare political advertisements since advertising agencies put in

efforts to make the political communication utilising marketing communication. But again, this practice is visible only before elections.

The ninth factor, contains a single item and it has been named as *Political Ideology* which is unique in its nature. Ideology defines the domain which shows the way for political parties to decide on their vision and mission. A strong ideology-oriented political party is likely to adhere to its vision and mission even if there is emergence of a situation which pressurises the political party to deviate. Belief and faith in the ideology are required for brand building and electorate loyalty of a political party. Preferably, a political party should not deviate from its ideology since it can have negative impact on vote bank in the long run. Thus, for obvious reasons, the ninth façade contains a single item.

5.2 Relevance-Practice Contrast of Political Marketing: Ramification for Action Orientation of Political Parties

It has already been discussed in the methodology section that the questionnaire administered among the marketing experts comprises items wherein experts have been requested to give their opinions on the relevance as well as practice of each item. Hence, corresponding to each item we have been able to obtain two sets of values, one signifying the relevance and the other denoting the practice. Now, based on the results of factor analysis as described in the previous sub-section, we have considered the items that fall under each factor (facade) separately for relevance and practice. In other words, same set of items falling under each factor has been clubbed separately under relevance and practice. Thus, we have two sets of factors, each set comprising nine factors. Accordingly, two-tailed paired t-test has been employed to understand whether there is any statistically significant gap between the relevance of the factor and how much it is practised by the Indian political parties.

The result of the paired t-test is given in table 3. All the factors (factor 1 to factor 9) corresponding to the nine facades identified after analysing the responses of the marketing experts are mentioned in table 3 below. Here 'R' represents Relevance of the factor in political marketing and 'P' represents the practice of same the factor in Indian political perspective.

Pairs	Paired Differences					T	f	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	90% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Factor1R - Factor1P	0.836	0.852	0.099	0.671	1.001	8.440	3	000
Factor2R - Factor2P	0.838	0.899	0.105	0.662	1.015	7.916	1	000
Factor3R - Factor3P	0.658	0.924	0.107	0.479	.837	6.127	3	000
Factor4R - Factor4P	0.585	0.880	0.102	0.415	.756	5.720	3	000
Factor5R - Factor5P	1.05856	0.860	0.100	0.891	1.22525	10.580	3	000
Factor6R - Factor6P	0.42342	0.893	0.1038	0.250	0.59648	4.076	3	000
Factor7R - Factor7P	0.59452	0.833	.09761	0.431	0.757	6.091	2	000
Factor8R - Factor8P	0.22297	0.815	.09482	0.065	0.380	2.351	3	021
Factor9R - Factor9P	0.85135	1.029	.11967	0.651	1.050	7.114	3	000

Table 3: Relevance-Practice Contrast of Political Marketing

For all the nine factors, the gap between relevance and practice has been observed to be statistically significant. The gaps, which are statistically significant, can be the result of the fact that political parties in India do not give appropriate importance to these factors and are constrained to practice them in their regular activities and political actions. In case of service marketing, if the marketers do not consider the relevant aspects related to their business and practise them to address those aspects, a gap is created and the chance of success reduces to a considerable extent. In the same perspective, political parties as service organisations must consider the relevant aspects of their organisations in particular and political environment in general and work on those to accrue electoral success. Thus, political parties need to consider this in the right perspective and reconfigure their strategic action orientation in the order to be more effective by filling in the perceived gap between relevance and practice.

For the first factor (facade) which is very relevant in the Indian context, it can be averred that the way political parties address this factor increases the gap between the relevance and practice. The Image and transparency of a political party becomes to some extent believable if the party administration

comprises educated and unblemished people. Thus, the statistically significant gap found in the analysis actually shows that actions mentioned above are not adequately taken care of by the Indian political parties. Again, for the second factor, *voters' preference analysis*, statistically significant difference with respect to relevance and practice has been observed since Indian political parties generally do not recognise the importance of this façade and hence the statistically significant difference has been observed. In India preference analysis is carried out just on the eve of election by majority of the political parties. Following the same logic it can be averred that the third factor, though very relevant in the Indian context, activities of the political parties do not seem to attach requisite importance to it. So, the gap between relevance and practice is observed to be statistically significant.

In terms of the fourth façade, it can be opined that the Indian political parties do not seem to have different strategies for loyal and floating voters and if leaders of the political parties are not perceived well by the electorate and the way promises made by those leaders is not very much convincing for the electorate, the political parties cannot make the electorates believe that the intangible value offerings are possible. For this reason, for the fourth factor, the statistically significant gap between relevance and practice is the result of the circumstance discussed above.

The fifth factor has been identified as a very important factor of political marketing. However, political parties in India do not, in general regularly conduct training and orientation programmes for party members. Moreover, there is occasional shift of allegiance from one party to another which disorients internal marketing orientation of rank and file. Ineffective inside-out marketing in political marketing as perceived by experts may be the reason behind the statistically significant difference in the context of the fifth factor. The sixth factor, named as *Selective Leaning*, is considered to be relevant by experts in political marketing. This selective or so to say elitist leaning can create distance from the common people and can explain the statistically significant gap between relevance and practice for the factor entitled "selective leaning".

In case of the seventh factor, the gap between relevance and practice is yet again found to be statistically significant since any negative activity of the party activists eventually leads to negative image of the political party and

thus signifies the gap between relevance and practice in case of this factor. For the eighth factor, named as organisational *reputation*, the gap is again observed to be statistically significant. This signifies that as far as reputation façade is concerned, it is very relevant in the Indian context and activities of political parties of India, either positively or negatively perceived by electorate, cannot bridge the gap between relevance and practice. As far as the ninth factor, Ideology, it may be averred that political parties with strong ideology should also modify their ideology with the changing political environment. In some of the cases political parties are alleged for communicating very popular ideology and vouching to follow it but not sticking to it when situation is not conducive. This creates a gap between relevance and practice.

6. Conclusion

It has already been mentioned in the introductory note of this research article that the paucity of original work on political marketing from the context of developing nations motivated the researcher to conduct a research work on this topic. It was extremely challenging for the researcher to identify the facets of political marketing from the identified perspective because of the lack of research work on political marketing with emphasis on the developing nation's perspective. The aspects were identified from foreign literature and have been improvised with the help of secondary sources concerning activities of Indian politics published in different reputed newspapers, books, and websites. It was again challenging in the sense that the available literature could not give any direction towards the development of proper methodology. Construction of the questionnaires for marketing experts with the help of the identified aspects was methodically done in order to ensure that the statements presented to marketing experts were purely from service marketing perspective. The nine factors which have been identified on the basis of the responses of the marketing experts can be considered as the important facets of political marketing from the perspective of a developing nation. Furthermore, the identification of statistically significant gaps with respect to the identified facets highlights the areas where political parties need to emphasise in identifying their respective political action orientation.

It was also found out through the analysis of the responses of the marketing experts that a gap exists between the relevance of the facets of political marketing and the extent to which these facets are practised by political parties. This is a testimony to the fact that Indian political parties in general do not emphasise on those practices that are strategically relevant in the context of political marketing. So, it is imperative for the political parties to bridge the gap in order to be successful in electoral politics. This therefore develops the basic framework of political action orientation of political marketing. Although in small countries, the results can be generalised, in a vast and diverse country like India, the results may vary from region to region depending on the political environment. This research work will provide a systematic path to analyse the voting behaviour using the concepts and tools of marketing and to formulate effective courses of action to increase the probability of success in electoral politics with respect to developing nations in general and India in particular.

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