Comparison of voting behavior and election results of USA versus India

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Abstract

The United States and India are the two largest democracies in the world, and their voting behavior and electoral outcomes reflect their political, social and historical context, which are inherently different. This study is a comparative analysis of electoral trends, voter turnout, party politics, and the role of socio-economic factors in shaping electoral outcomes in both states. This study looks precisely into these elements, namely voter turnout, the influence of technology in elections, the impact of political campaigns, and demographic factors in order to demonstrate how is the electoral system in a comparative perspective between those two countries. The paper also dives into how these structures create the conditions for political representation and governance, a study based on the U.S. Electoral college and the first-past-the-post system in India. Their findings contribute to a wider understanding of democratic practice by offering insights into how voter behavior and consequential election outcomes are influenced by systemic and cultural factors in two diverse democracies.

Keywords: Voting behavior, Election results, USA, India.

1. INTRODUCTION

Elections, the bedrock of democracy, place the power of representatives in citizens' hands. Similarities and differences in how the two largest democracies of the world conduct elections, vote and their outcomes. India employs a parliamentary system based on the first-past-the-post (FPTP) mechanism [1], while the U.S. follows a presidential system where an Electoral College is applied. These basic differences not only affect the counting of votes, but the conduct of political campaigns and how voters are engaged.

Various socio-political and economic factors influence the voting behavior in both the countries. In the United States, factors such as party loyalty, media effects, and economic performance have a considerable effect on elections [2]. On the other, various regional factors, caste, religion, economic conditions, etc., impact Indian elections [3]. Both countries have different electoral systems but share common challenges in voting, including turnout, misinformation, and reforms, which also means comparing their voting and electoral processes is both timely and necessary to find out the pros and cons of both.

Electoral Framework and Voting Systems

The U.S. has a system of indirect voting for presidential elections: citizens of each state vote for electors, who then vote for the president in the Electoral College. The efficiency of this system has been hotly contested when viewed as superficial [4], particularly the situations where a candidate becomes president without the support of the majority of Americans. As opposed this, in India, instead of an indirect system in which the electors elect the members of the electoral college who ultimately decide the fate of candidates directly or indirectly the system is direct, thus, members of parliament (MPs) are elected by the simple majority of the votes gained in their specific constituencies [5]. The difference in electoral frameworks impacts parties and candidates when they formulate their strategies.
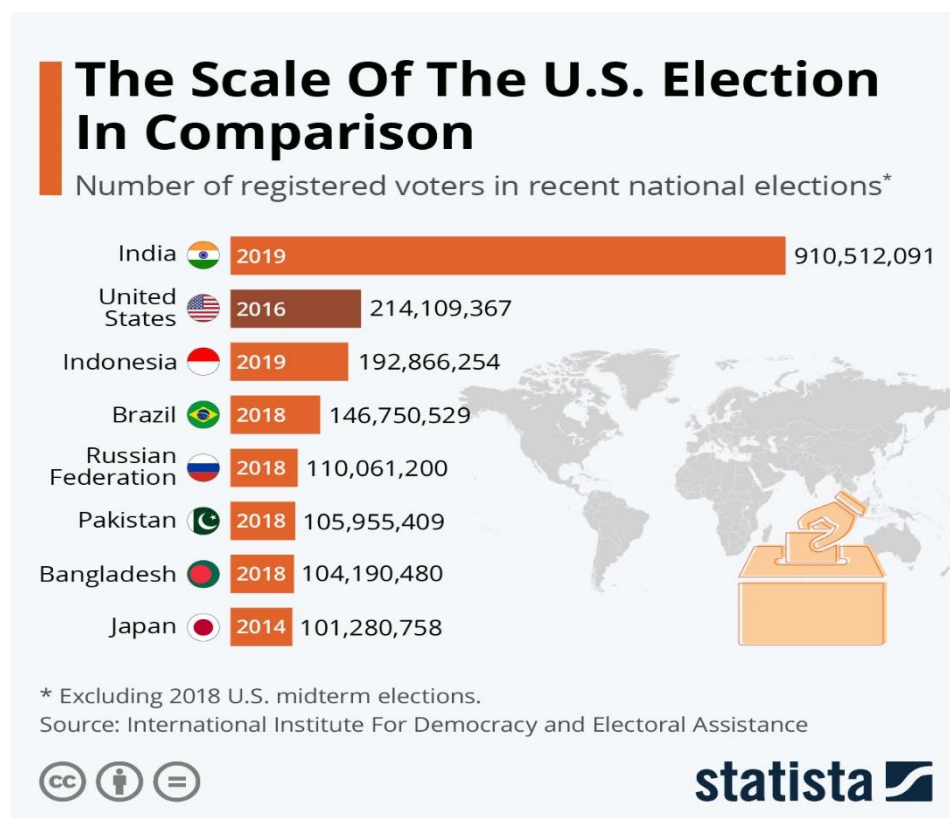

Fig 1: The comparison Scale of U.S Election.

Also, the countries have varying voter eligibility and registration processes. Voter registration in the U.S. is at times a rather complicated and state-dependent process that can result in disenfranchisement — especially in relation to minority groups [6]. On the other hand, India has also taken several initiatives to improve voter turnout, for example the Election Commission of

India's (ECI) outreach programs, mobile voting units, and voter awareness campaigns [7]. Figure 1 also shows the Comparison Scale of U.S Election.

Voter Turnout Trends

Voter turnout is an important metric of the democratic involvement of a country. Most U.S. presidential elections have seen a voter turnout between 50% and 66%, while midterm elections have experienced even lower participation rates [8]. Reasons for these turnout rates include voter suppression laws, the absence of mandatory voting and electoral fatigue. In contrast, India has a higher voter turnout rate in general elections, which was approximately 67% in 2019 Lok Sabha elections [9]. The ongoing development of voting systems in India with the NOTA(None of the above) as well as changing time as youth and female voters become more active [10].

Political Parties and Their Influence

Political parties significantly influence electoral results in both the U.S. and India. The system in the U.S. is dominated by the two primaries political parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. This duopolistic often restricts voter choice and induces polarized politics [11]. In comparison, India's multi-party system has enabled the rise of regional parties, while there is no major party dominating at the national level, providing scenario where coalition governments are the norm [12]. Although the United States witnesses a stark ideological divide between conservatives and liberals, India undergoes transactional and ideological political transformations influenced by coalition politics, caste, and regionalist parties.

Additionally, the campaign tactics vary considerably from nation to nation. In the U.S., enormous financial resources are devoted to television advertisements, direct social media outreach, and high-profile debates [13]. In contrast, Indian elections rely heavily on grassroots campaigning, public rallies, and the power of local organizations [14]. Regardless of these differences, both nations must contend with the spread of misinformation, political propaganda, and voter manipulation via digital platforms.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the foundational differences elucidated in the previous sections it is imperative to review existing research that configures voting behavior and election outcomes in the countries. Studies on electoral systems show that structural setups of elections play significant roles in representing politics and effective governance [15]. Research demonstrates that when the U.S. Electoral College system results in the final election outcome diverging from the popular vote, this undermines the democratic process [16]. On the other hand, India's FPTP model, despite being simple, has faced

criticism for marginalizing smaller parties and providing underrepresentation to specific demographic blocs [17]

Voter turnout trends and their determinants have been widely studied among scholars of both countries. Similar studies found that socioeconomic factors such as education, income levels, and urbanization are critical to voter engagement [18]. In the context of the U.S., doors to equitable electoral participation have been closed by voter suppression techniques, such as restrictive ID laws and gerrymandering [19]. On the other hand, in the Indian context logistical issues, for example polling accessibility and voter intimidation in some parts have been recognized as hindrances to fair elections [20].

Additional research explores the effect of parties on voting behavior. Inevitably, this contentious show has given rise to an electorate deeply polarized along ideological lines, as American politics has been dominated by the two-party system that exists in its current form until the present time [21]. In contrast, India's multiparty system contributes to volatility of political affiliations, with coalition politics and regional parties playing significant roles in national governance [22].

In addition, the influence of digital media and technology on electoral politics has been an expanding field of study in academia. Research notes shift in voter attitudes and election results in both countries due to the influence of social media platforms, campaign approaches powered by artificial intelligence, and misinformation campaigns [23]. Key case studies exemplifying the effectiveness of digital tools for mobilizing voter bases and crafting political narratives are the 2016 U.S. presidential elections and India's 2019 general elections [24].

Reviewing these meaningful insights gleaned through numerous studies lays the foundation for understanding the impact of electoral systems, voter turnout and party politics in the U.S. and India. The following sections will delve into case studies and empirical data to illuminate these comparative themes.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a comprehensive mixed-methods approach to analyze voting behavior and election outcomes in the U.S. and India. The methodology integrates qualitative and quantitative research strategies to ensure a multi-dimensional understanding of electoral dynamics.

Data Collection and Sources

- **Primary Data**: Surveys and interviews with political analysts, voters, and election officials to capture perspectives on voter behavior, political engagement, and electoral reforms in both nations.

- **Secondary Data**: Government election reports, research papers, policy documents from the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and the Election Commission of India (ECI), as well as international democracy research organizations.

- **Historical and Demographic Analysis**: Data from sources like Pew Research Center, the Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), and national electoral databases to examine long-term voter trends and demographic influences.

Analytical Framework

Comparative Electoral System Analysis

- Evaluation of the structural differences in electoral processes, including direct vs. indirect voting systems and representation allocation.

Voter Turnout and Participation

- Statistical assessment of historical voter turnout, participation trends, and influencing factors.

Political Party Dynamics

- Comparative analysis of party systems, ideological divisions, and their impact on voter behavior.

Role of Technology and Digital Campaigns

- Examination of AI-driven election strategies, social media influence, and misinformation campaigns in shaping voter perceptions.

Research Methods

Quantitative Analysis: Use of statistical tools such as regression models, correlation studies, and trend analysis to identify voting patterns.

Qualitative Analysis: Thematic analysis of political speeches, campaign strategies, and voter interviews.

Case Studies: Examination of key elections (e.g., the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election and the 2019 Indian General Election) to illustrate major electoral themes.

This multi-layered methodology ensures a holistic and data-driven comparison of voting behaviors in the U.S. and India, providing critical insights into the effectiveness and challenges of each system.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the comparative analysis of voting behavior and election outcomes in the U.S. and India, based on various graphical representations.
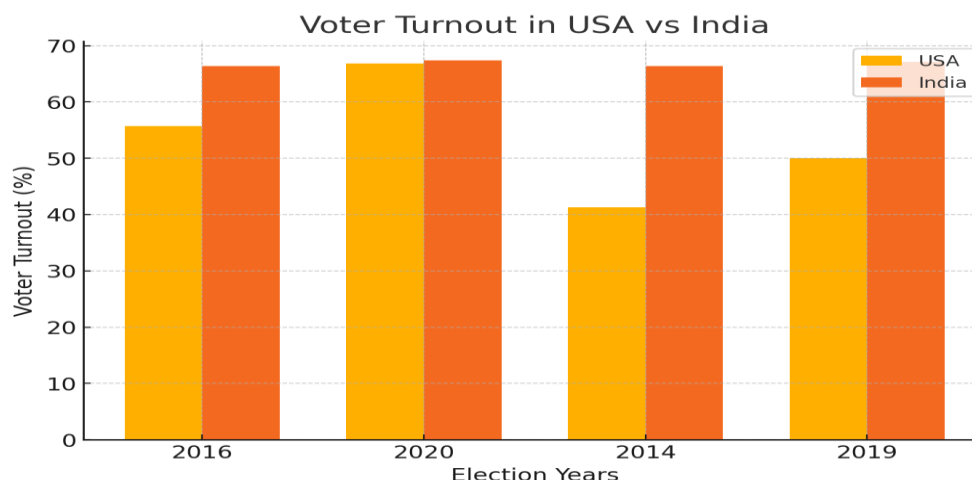

Fig 2: Voter Turnout in USA Vs India.

This bar chart of figure 2 compares voter turnout percentages in the U.S. and India for major election years. The U.S. shows a significant increase in turnout for the 2020 election compared to 2016, while India's voter turnout remains consistently high across both election years. The data highlights differences in voter engagement, influenced by electoral mechanisms and socio-political factors.
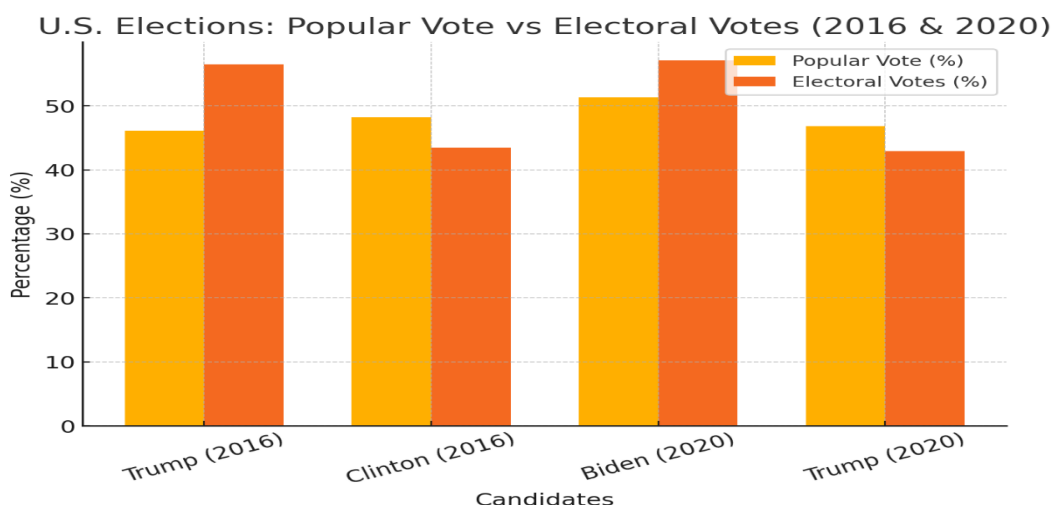

Fig 3: U.S. Elections: Popular Vote vs Electoral Votes.

This bar chart of figure 3 illustrates the disparity between the popular vote and Electoral College results in the U.S. presidential elections of 2016 and 2020. While Hillary Clinton won the popular vote in 2016, Donald Trump secured more electoral votes, leading to his victory. A similar pattern can be observed in 2020, where Joe Biden won both the popular and electoral votes but with different margins. This showcases the influence of the Electoral College system in determining election outcomes.
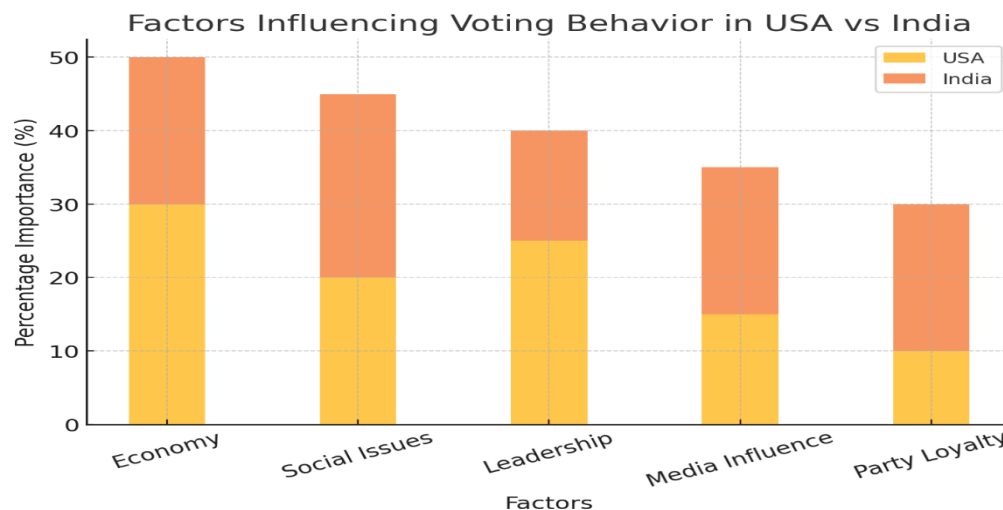

Fig 4: Factors Influencing Voting Behavior in USA vs India.

This stacked bar chart of figure 4 compares the key factors influencing voting behavior in the U.S. and India. In the U.S., the economy and leadership play dominant roles in shaping voter decisions, whereas in India, social issues and media influence have a higher impact. Party loyalty remains a significant factor in both nations, though its influence is more evenly distributed in India.
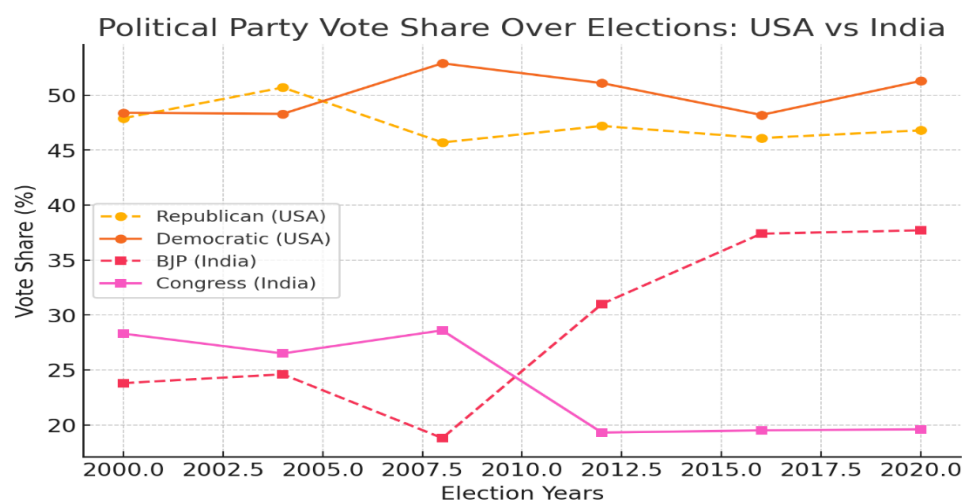

Fig 5: Political Party Vote Share Over Elections: USA vs India.

This line chart of figure 5 presents the changing vote shares of major political parties in the U.S. and India from 2000 to 2020. In the U.S., the Republican and Democratic parties remain competitive, with fluctuating vote shares. Meanwhile, in India, the BJP has steadily increased its influence, surpassing the Congress party, which has seen a decline in its vote share over time. This illustrates the differing party dynamics in the two democracies.
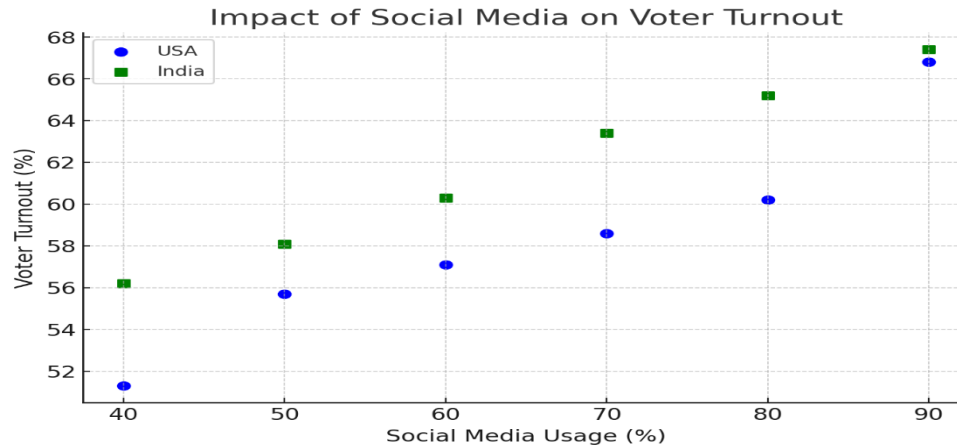

Fig 6: Impact of Social Media on Voter Turnout.

This scatter plot of figure 6 illustrates the correlation between social media usage and voter turnout in the U.S. and India. As social media usage increases, voter turnout also shows an upward trend in both countries. This highlights the growing influence of digital campaigns, online political engagement, and voter mobilization efforts through social platforms.
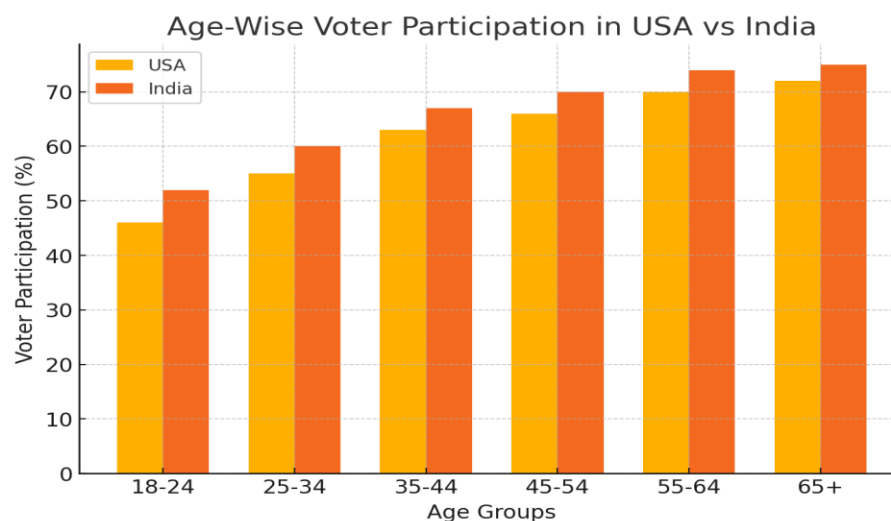

Fig 7: Age-Wise Voter Participation in USA vs India.

This grouped bar chart of figure 7 compares voter participation across different age groups in the U.S. and India. While voter engagement increases with age in both countries, India consistently shows higher participation rates across all age groups. This suggests that younger voters in the U.S. are less likely to participate compared to their Indian counterparts, potentially due to differences in voter mobilization efforts and political engagement strategies.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight key differences and similarities between U.S. and Indian elections. While India consistently experiences higher voter turnout, the U.S. struggles with fluctuations due to restrictive voting laws and electoral fatigue. The Electoral College system in the U.S. continues to be a controversial factor, leading to disparities between the popular vote and election outcomes, whereas India's FPTP system favors major political parties but can marginalize smaller groups. Additionally, political engagement strategies vary significantly, with the U.S. relying on high-budget media campaigns, while India emphasizes grassroots political mobilization. The role of social media is growing in both nations, acting as both an enabler and a disruptor of democratic processes.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the significance of electoral frameworks, voter engagement, and political party influence in shaping election outcomes in the U.S. and India. While both countries uphold democratic values, systemic differences impact voter participation and representation. The findings suggest that policy reforms, including addressing voter suppression in the U.S. and enhancing proportional representation in India, could improve electoral fairness and inclusivity. Future research could explore the long-term impact of digital technology on voter behavior and the evolution of election systems in both nations.

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