

# Charismatic Leadership and NGO Governance: A Comparative Study of NGO Governance by Modi and Putin

Sudhir Kumar Parida\*

Ph.D. Scholar, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

**Abstract – Societies, as evolutionists argue, would transform from a simple to complex system. The governance pattern and the leadership must be in tandem with the transformation. In this age of dynamism - where legal-rational authority has already got momentum - it is the critical job for a head of the state even to maintain the status quo of administration. But still there is a rise in charismatic leaders. This article inquires the current state of relationship between ‘charismatic leadership’ and ‘governance’. By doing so, the article advances with comparative study of NGO governance or governing of the NGOs by popular leaders of world - Mr. Modi and Mr. Putin. This paper intends to interlink ‘personality trait’ and ‘governance’ of two leaders, in matters related to taming fraud NGOs. This paper adopts analytical method and in particular employs comparative method.**

**Key Words: Charisma, Leadership, NGO Governance**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Today, societies are complex, administrative institutions are more complex, citizens are empowered, civil society is hyper-active, globalization is on rampage, refugee crisis is deepening, secessionist movement are ubiquitous, technological advancement makes the environment more complex. In this age of dynamism - where legal-rational authority has already got firm foothold - it is the toughest job for a head of the state even to maintain the status quo of administration. But some leaders, who are often described as charismatic leaders, possess transcendent administrative skills to govern and to take a nation forward to a new era. With the rise of political activities by NGOs targeting the national development, both Bharat and Russia are bleeding with numerous cuts. It's a major challenge for contemporary leaders of both the nations who are conceived as charismatic leaders.
2. This paper focuses on the theoretical mapping of charismatic leadership and their governance skills. By doing so, it will contextualize the attributes of charismatic leaders in relation to present-day leaders of Russia and Bharat, particularly to Mr. Modi and Mr. Putin. This article parse the leadership traits of two contemporary leaders namely Narendra Modi, the current Prime

Minister of Bharat and Vladimir Putin, the statesman and present day President of Russia with in the realm of ‘NGO governance’. This paper intends a brief comparison of ways of taming fraud NGOs by these two leaders. The paper takes into account solely the fraud NGOs and don't reject the immense contribution of NGOs as avatars of altruism.

3. The study is qualitative in nature. The objectives of the paper: To study the charismatic leadership in contemporary Bharat and Russia in context of NGO governance. The paper proceeds with the hypothesis that of charismatic leaders tame fraud NGOs in effective manner. Comparative method is employed for inductive analysis of data. Mostly secondary is used for this study.
4. The paper charts the whole into six parts. An introduction followed by understanding the traits of charismatic leadership, charismatic leadership in context of contemporary Bharat and Russia, operational definition of NGO governance, contextualising NGO governance in context of Modi and Putin, and concluding remarks. The next section discusses about some arguments of charismatic leadership.

## ETYMOLOGY AND ARGUMENTS OF TRAITS OF CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

1. In the political and sociological landscape, there were always altercations about whether the virtue of charismatic leadership is god-gifted or is something hard-earned. Sociologists Blau[1] and Friedland[2] advocate the emergence of such types of leadership were/are actually need of the hour. Basically, they express the opinion that sociological and historical context are the critical elements leading to the emanation of such leadership. Whereas some theorist believe that certain traits and relational dynamism between leader and follower are the root cause for the emergence of charisma.[3][4] Abstracting the idea that “charismatic leadership is neither personality-based nor contextually-determined, but rather the phenomenon is largely relational and perceptual”, Willner says that “it is not what the leader is but what people see the leader as that counts in generating the charismatic relationship”. [4]
2. The Latin word ‘charisma’ is transcribed from the Greek word ‘kharisma’, which literally maps as ‘favour’ or ‘gift’. Its English use has been detected in Christian Bible to describe the attributes of Holy Spirit.[5] The German sociologist and political economist Max Weber was the first non-English user of the term, who brought the term into vogue with his famous ‘tripartite classification of authority’ in the essay ‘Politics as Vocation’.[6][7]
3. Some theorists believe that attributes are intrinsic; some anticipate that attributes are extrinsic; some also speculate social and historical context are responsible for the emergence of charisma, whereas some advocate relational dynamism and also some mentions the ecological turbulence as root factor for the emergence of charisma.[8] But by and large everyone is in same ship when they talk about possession of astute qualities by charismatic leaders.
4. Kautilya – who tells that the actual happiness of king is the happiness of his subjects – delineates too many qualities such as “sharp intellect, strong memory, and keen mind, energetic, powerful, trained in all kinds of arts, free from vice, capable of playing in the same coin by way of awarding punishments or rewards, possessed of dignity, capable of taking remedial measures against dangers, possessed of foresight of a leader...” for a good leader.[9] The Bible also enlists traits such as wisdom, prophecy, ruling, healing,

teaching and many more are the gift by god are charismatic in nature, and any person with such qualities will master in governance.[5] Similarly, Weber visualises charismatic leadership by portraying their attributes as:

...an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader.[10]

5. Len Oakes postulates that charismatic leaders exhibit traits of narcissism: these leaders display “an extraordinary amount of energy, accompanied by an inner clarity unhindered by the anxieties and guilt that afflict more ordinary people”. [11] Traits such as transcendent vision,[1][3][12] act of heroism,[4] an ability to inspire and build confidence, rhetorical and a powerful aura are enlisted by many political scientists and sociologists.
6. This section has put some arguments regarding the traits of charismatic leaders. In a continuation, the next section focuses charismatic leadership in contemporary Bharat and Russia.

## CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY BHARAT AND RUSSIA

1. What Mark Twain famously said, “the difference between the almost right word and the right word is... the difference between lightning bug and a lightning”. [13] No one can certain to conceive a leader as god or devil but anyone can distinguish him/her either a charismatic one or not. Most of historical figures have been personified as charismatic leaders for their bold and outside the box thinking capacity. Today, societies are evolving at very faster pace and becoming more complex; the administrative institutions are more differentiated and complex; citizen-centric governance requires the leaders to be sensitive towards the people rather old concept of kingship; globalisation give birth to borderless problems; refugee crisis crumbled the world; secessionist movements are sprouting; and technological revolution makes the world borderless, more interconnected; multinational corporations taking the service sector into its realm. Comparatively, the role of state is

diminishing. In this juncture, legal rational authority is considered as ideal leadership concept. It is the hardest job for a head of the state even to maintain the status quo of administration. But some leaders possess transcendent administrative skills to govern and to take a nation forward to a new era. In case of charismatic leaders, either you can love them or hate them but you cannot ignore them. Simply you cannot ignore their governance style for good governance.

2. Charismatic leadership, in contemporary era and in relation to Bharat and Russia, can be mapped to Mr. Modi and Mr. Putin. Both leaders are popular in their respective countries and also popular outside of their country. Here, are verbally eloquent, very skilled communicators, are able to articulate a compelling vision, and are able to arouse strong emotions among their followers, also able to communicate to followers on a deep, emotional level. They address directly the stake holders. Both bring about unconventional approaches to reform governance and proposing out-of-the-box ideas to shake up the status-quo in administration. For their out-of-box approach, they also faced resistance from within party and also from outside the party. The pair possesses images of butchers like communists and fascists, in the eyes of their opponents but considered as supernatural powers in the eyes of their followers. Both of these leaders have used their country's rich history to ignite the feeling of pride towards the nations. Both have common trait what could be conceived as central to their charisma is, "their purity of purpose".
3. It may be futile to discuss or to enlist what personal traits they have but it is even greater if we do not discuss the governance skills they have. They both have long term visions for the development of their respective nation. Both are connected to people direct means like internet, and television rather indirectly through news. Monitoring the implementation is the major skill performed by the duo. Efficiency, equity, transparency, accountability, empowerment, employment, efficient deliveries of services are some of consequences due to their vigour governance skills.
4. The section narrated the reasons why both Mr. Modi and Mr. Putin are painted as charismatic leaders in domestic politics and worldwide. The next part describes the concept of NGO governance.

## NGO GOVERNANCE

1. The contemporary age is age of turbulence. Humanity is confronting threats from environmental disasters, wars, religious intolerance, poverty, disease and from many other challenges. The support from NGOs is inevitable and indispensable along with national governments. But NGOs have been indulged in scandals, corruption, subverting nation and national governments in the disguise of charity.[14][15] The concept of NGO governance has emerged as a reaction to the evil deeds of NGOs. NGO governance here refers *making NGOs transparent, responsible and accountable organisations*. Wyatt[16] outlined characters of NGO governance as:
  - NGOs are accountable to their communities
  - Good governance is a basic form of accountability
  - Good governance has a formal structure
  - Good governance involves the separation of governance and government
  - NGOs are mission-based organisations
  - NGOs promote the highest professional and ethical standards
  - NGOs exercise responsible resource management and mobilization
  - NGOs are responsive to the communities they serve
  - Similarly, Silk put forth ten guidelines for good NGO governance.[17] though these principles are not exclusive, these highlights the necessity of governing the NGOs.

## HIGHLIGHTING NGO GOVERNANCE OF MODI AND OF PUTIN

1. As Alford points out, NGOs face severe criticism from academics, politicians and public for wasting billions of money in an inefficient manner.[18] Buchanan ponders whether USA stealthily disseminate propaganda through NGOs, to subvert the governments of Russia, Israel, China, North Korea, Vietnam, Iran, Syria, Egypt, Many Arab nation, Venezuela, Cuba and of many more countries. It is often perceived that NGOs are the foreign policy tools and de facto arms powerful nations and used for influencing people, as well as

- subversion and destabilisation of nations.[19] There are uncountable instances of state subversion activities by NGOs. So, NGO governance is the need of the hour for national governments to protect their sovereignty and for the betterment of people.
2. Several steps have been initiated by this duo on many sectors - be it political is it economic or be it military. Let keep aside all the incidents and discuss how they handle international conspiracy to destabilise their nation through NGO. The matter we bring to light is chocking the operation of undesirable NGOs citing that an overseas group be deemed a threat to the country's constitutional order, defence or security. Fraud NGOs are being spotted by both leaders as enemies in disguise. A relevant piece of wisdom from Sun Tzu is that "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle".[20] It is a matter of fact that several NGOs are never non-governmental. They are simply foreign-governmental-organisations (FGOs). They receive funds from foreign government so how they can level themselves as non-governmental-organisation? Is it possible for an institution to be loyal or to be a well-wishers of people who does not belong to them? In every society there are discontent and foreign NGO's exploit and aggravate those discontent and attempt to sow inter-ethnic and sectarian conflict. It is rightly pointed out by R. Vaidyanathan-Professor of IIM Bangalore that "Many of them call themselves as 'civil society' and involve in socio-political activities even though they do not directly participate in electoral process".[21] He pronounced NGO's as third sector (first sector is government and second is private) and tried to point out the concerns of these third sector and established "the range of concerns of third sector is as large as that of sovereign states".[21]
  3. Before WW-II in 1938 USA adopted Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA) to prevent Nazi ideas and propaganda, and was successful in foiling the foreign interventions in internal affair.[22] Though there was intense debate, whether government muzzling freedom of expression or not, USA government succeeded the implementation of law. The same fear, which was looming during WW – II on American soil, has been consistently looming on the soil of Bharat and Russia.
  4. Various NGOs, in the veil of service to poor, have indulged in political activities to influence the government decisions. There has been a nexus of NGO complex and political leaders for power. Whether communist leaders, or congress leaders, or BJP leaders, everyone when in power, understand the magnifying power of NGOs to change the opinions of people and hence perceive the threat for the nation.[23] The former Prime Minister of Bharat, Dr. Manmohan Singh, heavily criticised NGOs for hiring people for protest against government and pointed the potential threats emerges out of NGOs when he said that "There are NGOs, often funded from the United States and the Scandinavian countries, which are not fully appreciative of the development challenges that our country faces".[24]
  5. Prime Minister Modi adopted comparatively lenient approach than their predecessors. He fights the NGO industry with legal and financial accounts. Primarily, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi enacted Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) in 1976 to prevent foreign interference in internal matters of Bharat.[25] The law was amended concerning the foreign interventions in internal matters through the help of NGOs, in 2010. This amendment recognising the probable threat of foreign intervention and of financial irregularity, enshrines its goal as to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality by certain individuals or associations or companies and to prohibit acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality for any activities detrimental to the national interest and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto".[26]
  6. Several newspapers reported about a 'intelligence bureau' report on impact of NGOs on development. The alleged report has supported NGO activity but focused on NGO's which are negatively impacting economic development.[27] The original FCRA act was intended to strengthen internal security and to regulate foreign funds that could potentially be used for violent, fraudulent, or anti-national activities. To control such fraudulent and potential dangerous NGOs, Modi government just directed NGO's to reveal their economic transparency. The problem here is so chronic that eight national educational universities could not provide their financial transactions and lost their FCRA license. Since 2014, as many as

15000 fraud NGO's could not show how they consumed billions of money and lost their license.[28] There is also the amendment to this act on 2019,[29] which requires introduction of PFMS integrated bank account, unique ID of NGOs receiving foreign fund, uploading documents in online mode... to make NGOs transparent for public. These steps terminated the fraud NGO network and became booms who actually work for the people in a transparent manner.

7. On policy level President Putin signed 'Russian Foreign Agent Law' on July 2012.[30] This law declares that all NGOs who receive funding from abroad, and that are even partially engaged in political activities, must register as foreign agents. In tandem, President Putin signed 'Russian Undesirable Organisations Law' on 23 May 2015 which states that "The activity of a foreign or international non-governmental organization that poses a threat to the fundamentals of the constitutional system of the Russian Federation, the country's defence or state security, may be considered undesirable in the territory of the Russian Federation".[31] Under the law, Russian prosecutor determines whether foreign and international organisations undesirable or not. Violators could attract stringent punishment such as prison up to six years and/or financial punitive action such as fine which amount of three years' salary of the convict and/or forced labour with restricted liberty. Several influential foreign organisations – Levada Centre, Memorial, Committee Against Torture, Dynasty Foundation, Golos Association, Glasnost Defence Foundation, Transparency International and many more - have been placed in registry as undesirable organisations.[32] Till now fifteen NGOs have been listed as undesirable by the Ministry of Justice of Russia.[33] This undesirable law further highlights the threats emerged from NGOs for Russia.

## CONCLUSION

1. As Prof. Vaidyanathan[21] predicted the secret multi-billion NGO industry vanished away with the transparent mechanisms. Democracy, as Prof. Casse[34] asserts, "is one of the most acceptable ways to treat human beings in society" and only a unique kind of leadership can flourish this. Democracy could be sustainable if the society has some sort of society. It is evident that when a charismatic leaders are in helm affairs, they can pour energy into the whole system. They have profound influence

on their followers. This is the reason they think, take risk and execute plans and accomplish goals. President Putin and Prime Minister Modi are in power because of 'legal rational domination' but have possess certain charismatic leadership qualities. They have profound influence inside and outside their country. That's why they are capable of doing numerous administrative decisions without hesitation.

2. Interestingly many NGOs such as Greenpeace, amnesty international, human rights watch etc. whose presence was on the territory of both nations, face hurdles of transparency, and financial accountability due to renewed NGO governance. Historically, NGOs have a less say in Russian territory because of its centralised government history. But still mazy NGOs don't cope with the constitutional norms. It is evident that the Russian laws are more stringent and attracts more penalty in comparison to its Bharatiya counterpart.
3. NGOs are necessary for good governance but they have indulged in state subverting activities. To flourish a democratic state, fraud NGOs must be tamed. NGO governance should the inevitable option for both the nations. The two leaders have saved millions people by averting disastrous situations like Ukraine, Libya, Syria. Their NGO governance not only protected the sovereignty for their countries but also established the safety and security of the people.

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### **Corresponding Author**

**Sudhir Kumar Parida\***

Ph.D. Scholar, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

[sudhiruindia@gmail.com](mailto:sudhiruindia@gmail.com)