

## Department of Political Science

### Party Switching in India: Understanding the downside of Indian democracy

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Party switching has become a major feature of Indian politics in recent years as party boundaries have become extremely porous. Party switching has often been attributed to the ambitions of opportunistic leaders to gain access to power or ideological/policy differences within a party forcing certain leaders to exit parties, or due to mixed motivations. However, to fully explain the increased frequency of party switching, we may have to examine the party systemic factors that encourage party switching. The presentation would examine some such factors: greater ideological convergence of parties, especially in the domain of economic policy, which makes party switching agreeable; high electoral volatility, which means unstable and ephemeral party attachments among the people; electoral laws that deny freedom to individual representatives to differ with the party leadership, making exit as the only option in case of disagreement; lack of inner party democracy; fluidity of political condition; low institutionalization of parties; and the moral dilemmas for leaders as in the system of centralized and personalized political power at the top they can deliver the welfare benefits for their supporters only when they are in power of access to the holders of power.



Professor Suri teaches at the Department of Political Science at University of Hyderabad. His recent publications include *Political Parties in South Asia: The Challenge of Change*, International IDEA, Stockholm, 2007; *Indian Democracy*, ICSSR Research Surveys and Explorations: Political Science: Volume 2, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013; and *Party Competition in Indian States: Electoral Politics in Post-Congress Polity* (Editor), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2014. He has published many book chapters and papers in national and international journals on different themes pertaining to politics and policies in India. He was a visiting scholar at Uppsala University, Sweden, and Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia. Presently he is the Managing Editor of *Studies in Indian Politics*, a bi-annual Political Science journal published in India by the Sage.

**Date: Monday, January 16th, 2017**

**Time: 1600 hrs -1800 hrs**

**Venue: SAI, Room 316**

**All are cordially invited!!**