"First Past the Post System is a Bane to Indian Democracy: Need for an Alternative Voting System"

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Abstract

An electoral system of a country is responsible for the flourishing and perishing of governance in country. It defines the manner in which votes are casted that are translated into seats in the legislatures which influence key governance dimensions and dynamics. The ideal electoral system in a representative democracy is one allowing all eligible citizens to cast an equally weighted vote. Unfortunately, the current electoral system in India i.e., first-past -the post-system often permits artificial majority in which significant proportion of the voters remains underrepresented and parties with mere one third of votes are entitled to rule as though they had majority support of the voters. This paper is an attempt to analyze plurality/majoritarian systems in a single member districts such as Two Round system and Alternative voting system. The purpose of this paper is to suggest Alternative voting system and to justify it as an ideal alternative to replace first past the post system in India. A move to the Alternative Vote (AV) would not be a radical change from the current system of First Past the Post (FPTP) because it would not distort the single member districts and fairer than FPTP. The paper further tries to accentuate the legal ramifications of changing the current First past the post system in India.

Keywords: Alternative voting system, Electoral system, First past the post system, Plurality system, Two Round system

Introduction:

"Voting system is the heart of representative democracy and the tool of citizen to create democratic government.[1]"

A representative Electoral system defines the efficiency of democratic governance in a country. It has profound impact on today's political processes and future political life of a country concerned. It is considered as most influential of all political institutions as it measures the citizen's participation and representativeness that ensures free and fair election, a fountain

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[1] Make every vote count, WWW.FAIRVOTE.CA, , https://www.fairvote.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/FVC-Tabloid-1.pdf (last visited Aug 3, 2018).

spring and corner stone of democracy. Therefore, choosing an electoral system is one of the herculean tasks and important institutional decisions to a continual participative operation, not a cataclysmic, periodic exercise. The criteria for choosing a true representative electoral system as mentioned in The New International IDEA handbook is:

1. **Providing Representation :** It may take at least four forms:

    Firstly, geographical representation implies that each electoral district has members of the legislature whom it chooses and who are ultimately accountable to their area. Secondly, the ideological divisions within society may be represented in the legislature. Thirdly, a legislature may be representative of the party political situation even if political parties do not have an ideological base. Fourthly, descriptive representation considers that the legislature should be to some degree 'a mirror of a nation.' It must reflect different religious affiliations, linguistic communities and ethnic groups within a society.

2. **Making elections accessible and meaningful:**

    The 'ease of voting' is determined by factors such as how complex the ballot paper is, how easy it is for the voter to get to a polling place, how upto-date the electoral register is, and how confident the voters will be that their ballot is secret. Voters should feel that elections provide them with a measure of influence over governments and government policy. They should also feel confident that their vote has a genuine impact on the formation of the government, not just on the composition of the legislature.

3. **Providing incentives for conciliation**:

    Different electoral systems can aggravate or moderate tension and conflict in a society. Some systems, in some circumstances, will encourage parties to make inclusive appeals for support outside their own core support base. But they can also exacerbate negative tendencies which already exist, for example, by encouraging parties to see elections as 'zerosum[2]' contests and thus to act in a hostile and exclusionary manner to anyone outside their home group.

4. **Facilitating stable and efficient government:**

    Different electoral systems have marked implications for governance in parliamentary systems. In particular, there is an inbuilt tension between electoral systems which maximize the potential for one-party government and those which make multiparty coalitions more likely.

5. **Holding the government accountable:**

    Accountability is one of the bedrocks of representative government. Its absence may indeed lead to long-term instability. An accountable political system is one in which the government is responsible to the voters to the highest degree possible. Voters should be

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[2] It originates from Game theory and Economic theory which means each participants gain entails a corresponding loss for other participants.

able to influence the shape of the government, either by altering the coalition of parties in power or by throwing out of office a single party which has failed to deliver.

Encouraging legislative opposition and oversight:

The electoral system should help ensure the presence of a viable opposition grouping which can critically assess legislation, question the performance of the executive, safeguard minority rights, and represent its constituents effectively. Opposition groupings should have enough representatives to be effective (assuming that their performance at the ballot box warrants it) and in a parliamentary system should be able to present a realistic alternative to the current government.

FIRST PAST THE POST SYSTEM IN INDIA:

First Past the Post system is commonly known as 'winner take all' or single member plurality (SMP). It is the simplest form of plurality/majoritarian systems used in single member districts and candidate centred voting. It is widely practiced in the world because 22% out of 213 nation states use this electoral system[3]. Each voter can vote for one candidate and the single candidate with the highest number of votes will be declared elected. Succinctly, handful of voters can change the outcome of elections. It enables the candidate to be triumphant if he/she garners one vote more than the single strongest competitor even though the sum total votes of combined opposition is higher than what the elected person secured. There is neither minimum threshold of votes nor an absolute majority that candidates are required to secure but a relative majority would suffice to win the election. A winning candidate may have only 35% of votes whereas the subsequent candidates may have 34% and 31% of votes. Although two-thirds of voters supported other candidates, their democratic voice remains unheard and the plurality of votes is decisive. Although first-past-the-post provides a simple solution to elect a single winner, it does not guarantee an absolute majority if there are more than two candidates.

First Past the Post system is the legacy of British colonialism in India. The constituent Assembly debated the issue of which electoral system should be adopted at great length before finally choosing FPTP electoral system. Given India's extremely diverse and multi-ethnic society, FPTP was chosen mainly to avoid fragmented legislatures[4] and to help the formation of stable governments – stability being a major consideration in a developing country with widespread

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[3] ANDREW REYNOLDS, BEN REILLY & ANDREW ELLIS, ELECTORAL SYSTEM DESIGN: THE NEW INTERNATIONAL IDEA HANDBOOK (1997), (last visited Jul 25, 2018). https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/electoral-system-design-new-international-idea-handbook

[4] Patidhar, Vijay. (1997). *Electoral system Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*. IDEA, pp.39-42.

Year of General Election	Percentage of total votes polled for Congress party	Number of seats and Percentage of seats obtained by Congress
1971(won)	43.7%	352(64.8%)
1977(lost)	34.5%	154(28.4%)
1980(won)	42.7%	353(65.0%)
1984(won)	48.1%	405(74.6%)
1989(lost)	39.5%	197(36.3%)
1991(won)	36.5%	232(42.7%)
1996(lost)	28.8%	140(25.8%)
1998(lost)	25.8%	141(26.0%)
1999(lost)	28.3%	114(21.0%)
2004(won)	26.7%	145(26.7%)
2009(won)	28.55%	206(37.94%)
2014(lost)	19.52%	44(8.10%)

poverty and illiteracy. In India, this system is being used in all elections except those to Rajyasabha, Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election

FIRST PAST THE POST SYSTEM: DEVALUING DEMOCRACY

First Past the Post system in India suffers from a number of flaws. The one pervading evil of first past the post system is the tyranny of the majority that succeeds in carrying elections[5]. The underlying flaw of this system is the lack of substantive representativeness because of clear mismatch between vote share and seat share. A miniscule change in the vote share can result in the landslide changes in the seat share.

Source: Patidhar, Vijay. (1997). *Electoral system Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*. IDEA, pp.39-42.

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[5] CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEBATES, Volume VII, January 4th, 1949 debated by Kazi Syed karimuddhin available at http://cadindia.clpr.org.in/constitution_assembly_debates/volume/7/1949-01-04. (Last visited on Aug 18, 2018).

Year of General Election	Percentage of total votes polled for BJP party	Percentage of seats obtained by BJP
1984	7.7%	2(0.4%)
1989	11.5%	86(15.8%)
1991	20.0%	121(22.3%)
1996	20.3%	161(29.7%)
1998	25.6%	182(33.5%)
1999	23.6%	182(33.5%)
2004	22.2%	138(25.4%)
2009	18.80%	116(21.2%)
2014	31.34%	282(51.93%)

The above table brings to the fore that the overall general elections depict the disproportionality between the vote share and seat share. There is no single party that has crossed 50% vote share from general elections of 1951 up till present[6]. Though First past the post system fare up mainly in communion with a two party system or a limited number of parties, In this context, first past the post system is no more desirable in India because politicization at ground level in India coupled with a highly fragmented society, has given rise to a large number of political parties, each one existing not on a different ideology or economic programme, but on the basis of having nursed a narrow parochial, mostly caste or religion based, identity for itself and its band of followers[7]. Infact, it is the FPTP that fostered the multiplicity of parties and candidates by the opposition to reduce the Winner to a minority vote share. It also excludes Smaller parties from fair representation, when they have a broad base across constituencies, rather than a concentrated following in a few constituencies, may fail to win even a single seat even if their vote share is significant.[8] Other principle criticisms leveled against this system are:

Wasted votes and unrepresented voters: votes casted for all except the winner are wasted and ineffective because their votes elect no one to represent them. At the same time, any more votes casted to the winner than what is needed are superfluous. It makes no difference that a candidate

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[6] Election Commission of India https://eci.nic.in/ (Aug 5, 2018, 4:00 pm).

[7] National Commission to review the working of Constitution (Aug. 6, 2018, 10:04 pm) http://legalaffairs.gov.in/sites/default/files/%28VII%29Review%20of%20Election%20Law%2C%20Processes%20and%20Reform%20Options.pdf

[8] Law Commission of India report No:255 on Electoral reforms (March2015) (Aug. 6,2018, 5:00 pm). http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports/report255.pdf

wins by a landslide victory in a constituency; a hair breadth's margin would do as well i.e. to secure (+1) vote more than the second single competitor.

Targeted Campaigning: The contestants prioritize specific voters for securing votes. Since vote bank politics is being practiced by parties in India, FPTP gives an impetus for existing cleavages and deepen the divisive politics. It creates two sorts of areas such as safe votes and swing votes. Safe votes have a low chance of changing hands because of their specific ideological inclination whereas swing votes are independent of any ideology and difficult to predict their voting patterns. Swing voters are undecided voters who gets majorly influenced by election campaigning and hence plays an important role in deciding the result. By virtue of FPTP, parties often try outstripping opposition by designing their manifestos to appeal to swing voters. As a result, post election policies may then favor swing voters and does not represent the whole constituency better.

The representative becomes the sole gatekeeper[9]: The fact that FPTP provides only one representative per constituency means the winner becomes the sole gatekeeper, that is, the only person constituents can approach with their concerns. If the elected representative belongs to a party which opposes whatever the constituent seeks (or is hostile to the constituent for any reason), then the voter has nobody else to approach. In addition, voters who support a party but do not like the party's candidate get no other option.

Tactical voting: FPTP encourages tactical voting as the voters vote not for the candidates they prefer but for an alternative to keep the candidate out whom they most dislike. This is often seen in seats which are safe for particular candidates and therefore all others except a likely runner up are useless[10]. These safe candidates exclude potential and able candidates from the same party just because they belong to wrong social group.

Negative Campaigning: FPTP exhorts the practice of criticizing one's opponent during the election campaign since there is only one vote to each voter. This is a tactic played by the parties to defeat the most liked candidate or a candidate likely to win.

CLASSIFICATION OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

There are four major electoral systems[11] in the world currently in vogue with many more permutations on each form. They are:

- Majoritarian/ plurality
- Proportional Representation
- Mixed representation

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[9] Arvind Sivaramakrishnan, Between Formal and Substantive legitimacy , ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY, , (Aug 8, 2018). https://www.epw.in/node/129429/pdf.
[10] Id. At 9.
[11] Id. At 3.

- Other forms of Electoral systems.

Within these, there are nine sub-categories: First Past The Post (FPTP), Block Vote (BV), Party Block Vote (PBV), Alternative Vote (AV), and the Two round system(TRS) are all plurality/majority systems; List Proportional Representation (List PR) and the Single Transferable Vote (STV) are both proportional systems; Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) and Parallel systems are both examples of the mixed model. In addition, there are other systems such as the Single Non- Transferable Vote (SNTV), the Limited Vote (LV), and the Borda Count (BC) which fall under the category of other electoral systems.

ALTERNATIVE VOTING SYSTEM

Alternative voting system is one of the majoritarian or plurality systems that represent a very simple change to the first past the post system. AV is used for national parliamentary elections in three countries: Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea. It is also used for presidential elections and for parliamentary by- elections in Ireland. Within the UK, it is currently used for local government by-elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland[12]. Some local elections in the United States also use AV, where it is known as "instant runoff". It mandates the support of a majority of the people. It is popularly called as Preferential voting because voters can rank the candidates according to preference, placing a "1" for their favorite candidate, a "2" for their next most favored candidate, and so on. However, there are two basic categories of Alternative voting systems. They are:

- Alternative voting system- Full preferential:
  Under this voting system, Voters can express as many or as few preferences as they wish. It is prevalent in UK to choose party leaders and common's speaker.
- Alternative voting system- optional preferential:
  Under this system, a vote is valid only if all the preferences are expressed by ranking all the candidates. This is being practiced in most of the Australian elections.

Working of Alternative Voting system:

A candidate who secures an absolute majority (50%+1) of valid first preference votes is declared elected. If no candidate secures an absolute majority of the first preferences, the last placed candidates are eliminated from the count, and his or her ballots are examined for their second preferences. Each ballot is then transferred to whichever remaining candidate has the highest

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[12] Voting systems in UK (Aug. 12, 2018, 6:00pm),www.Parliament.UK
https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/elections-and-voting/voting-systems/

preference in the order as marked on the ballot paper. This process is repeated until one candidate has an absolute majority, and is declared duly elected.[13]

Eg: Suppose an election with four candidates namely A,B,C,D. 10,000 valid votes are casted, so a candidate needs 5001 to win election. The first preference for each candidate is as follows:

1. A: 4000 votes ; B: 3500 votes; C: 1500 votes; D: 1000 votes

Since none of the candidates have secured an absolute majority (50%+1) i.e. 5001 votes, the candidate with the least number of votes is eliminated. Hence, D gets eliminated from the election fray. The votes cast for D still count as one vote each, but now they count for the candidate that these voters ranked second, not for D.

2. A: 4000+ 400(second preference votes in D's Ballot paper) = 4400
   B: 3500+350(second preference votes in D's Ballot paper)= 3850
   C: 1500+ 250(second preference votes in D's Ballot paper) =1750

Still, No one has secured an absolute majority and hence C is eliminated. The votes cast for C still count as one vote each, but now they count for the candidate that these voters ranked second, not for C.

3. A: 4400+1000(second preference votes in C's ballot paper)= 5400
   B: 3850+750(Second preference votes in C's ballot paper)= 4600

Since A has crossed the majority mark, he is declared winner.

Advantages of Alternative Voting system:

It incentivizes co-operative politics and necessitates real mandate to ensure that the contestants appeal to all the sections without confining to natural support groups of the society. This in effect, increases the sense of accountability tended to be spread across different sections, thus reducing the scope of Vote bank politics. It also encourages candidates to actively appeal to supporters of other parties thus reducing the need for negative campaigning.[14] Its preserves the constituency link of FPTP without needing to re draw constituencies and makes it stronger by persuading representatives to reach out to the majority of the people. The question of wasted or unrepresented votes does not arise in AV. Even if the first preference candidate doesn't get elected, the other preferences would still help decide the winner. It helps in obviating the need

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[13] Id. At 3.

[14] Alternative Vote, ELECTORAL REFORM SOCIETY, https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/voting-systems/types-of-voting-system/alternative vote/ (last visited Aug 18,2018)

for runoff election thereby not inflating the election expenditures. Quite often, Winners under FPTP are not supported by majority of the voters. AV addresses this fundamental problem of FPTP and ensures the majority and genuine support from the voters. AV would not require the use of expensive voting machines and there is no truth in the claim that AV would require the introduction of electronic voting machines. Elections held under AV (and, indeed, under the more demanding STV system) in Australia, Ireland, and Scotland are all in general conducted using traditional paper ballots[15]. There is no reason to think electronic counting would be necessary for elections held under AV.

TWO ROUND SYSTEM (TRS):

Two round system(TRS) also known as Second ballot majority Run-off system is one of the plurality/majoritarian systems in which, as the name suggests, second round of election is held for the candidates who secures highest votes if no candidate achieves absolute majority (50%+1)in the first round of election. The winner of the second round of election is declared elected. The first round is often conducted using First past the post system whereas the second round takes two forms. One is a majority plurality form and the other is majority Run off form. In majority plurality form, any candidate who secures 12.5% of the votes of registered electorate in the first round is eligible to contest in the second round. Whoever wins the highest numbers of votes in the second round is then declared elected, regardless of whether they have won an absolute majority or not. In majority run off systems, the second round of voting is to be a straight run off contest held between the first two candidates who secured highest number of votes in the first round of election. This system is prevalent in 15 of the 25 countries with direct presidential elections including Austria, Columbia, Finland and Russia. A majority-runoff is also used in legislative elections in Mali and the Ukraine, and a plurality-runoff is used for the French National Assembly. The aim of runoff elections is to consolidate support behind the victor, and to encourage broad cross-party coalition building and alliances in the final stages of the campaign[16]. Majority Plurality form is blemished by losing out the truly majoritarian character thus it is merely a variant of First past the post system.

Cost wise and logistically, this system is more laborious. In a country like India which has the population of around 132.32 crores(as per 2016 census) conducting a second election, shortly after organizing the first significantly doubles or increases the cost of the election process and the time elapsed between voting and declaration of result. It places an additional burden on the

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[15] Dr. Alan Renwick, University of Reading, The Alternative Vote-A Briefing paper, POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION., https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/TheAlternativeVoteBriefingPaper.pdf (last visited Aug 29,2018)

[16] Pippa Norris, Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed systems, 18 INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW 297-312(1997)

voter in terms of time and effort required to cast the vote second time as the voter has to make it to the polling station twice due to which sometimes there can be a sharp decline in the voter turnout for the second round. In order to avoid the burden of casting vote for the second time, it is likely that voters will end up voting for the candidate against their wish who has the probable chances of winning in the first round itself. It may also result in the violence and rebellion especially in India where criminalization of politics and politicization of criminals is an accepted fact. For instance, X & Y are two candidates who contested in the first round of election along with other candidates and the former secured 42% of votes whereas latter secured 49%. If X is clear that he would definitely lose the runoff election, it incentivizes him to incite violence and play a democratic opposition game. Eg: Boycotting runoff election etc.

Undesirability of Proportional Representation in India:

The law commission of India report No: 255 on electoral reforms published on March 2015 proposed the transition from first past the post system to proportional representation. The idea of proportional representation is not new to India. It has been debated at length during constituent assembly debates. In the words of Kazi syed Karimuddin in the constituent assembly debates *"The present electoral system, of single member constituency according to me, is very defective. The one pervading evil of democracy is the tyranny of the majority that succeeds in carrying elections. To break off that point is to arrest danger. The common system of representation perpetuates the danger and the only remedy is proportional representation. That system is also profoundly democratic for it increases the influence of thousands of those who would have no voice in the Government and it brings men more near an equality by so contriving that no vote shall be wasted and that every voter shall contribute to bring into Parliament a member of his own choice and opinion. I plead that if proportional representation is guaranteed the reservation of seats even on religious grounds must go. It has been accepted on all hands that communalism must be uprooted from the soil of this country. We have has had evil effects of it and the Dominion Parliament is already committed to this stand because a Resolution has been already passed that no communal party may be allowed to function in the country. Therefore separatism, communalism and isolationism must disappear from the body politics of India but we cannot ignore the existing conditions in the country. Therefore we have to find out a way that communalism must go and the minorities must be represented in the legislatures[17]."*

However, proportional representation was disregarded because the literacy rate was just 12% [18]when the British rule ended in India and it was not practically possible to expect the voters to rank the candidates on ballot paper in numerals. In the Constituent Assembly Debate on 4th

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[17] CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEBATES, Vol. VII January 4, 1949.
[18] https://www.census2011.co.in/literacy.php

January 1949, Dr. BR Ambedkar noted that[19]: "*Proportional representation is not suited to the form of government which this Constitution lays down…in the House where there is a Parliamentary system of government, you must necessarily have a party which is in majority and which is prepared to support the government. One of the disadvantages of proportional representation is the fragmentation of the legislature into a number of small groups. Proportional representation would not permit a stable government to remain in office, because Parliament would be so divided into so many small groups that every time anything happened which displeased certain groups in Parliament, they would, on that occasion, withdraw their support from the Government, with the result that the Government losing the support of certain groups and units, would fall to pieces. Our future government must do one thing, namely, it must maintain a stable government and maintain law and order.*

Though proportional representation is highly representative in nature for the fact that the parties are granted seats in accordance with the seat share and includes minority voices, it would divide the society further. According to an American political scientist Fred Riggs- PR encourages the proliferation of centrifugal party systems[20].Proportional representation cannot be used in a single member districts. Therefore the pre-requisite of adopting this system is a mammoth task of transforming the current single-member districts into multi-member districts that appear very strange to the voters and would also increase the size of the constituency (assuming three-member constituencies the size would be increased by three times) and it would become practically difficult for the candidates to approach all voters. This is highly sophisticated system to understand those complex rules by the voters of India as they are accustomed to plurality system. It also gives rise to coalition governments. In India, where the numbers of smaller parties are manifold, PR would foster coalition governments with minority or smaller parties which will then hold larger parties to ransom in coalition negotiations. This in turn leads to legislative gridlock and consequent inability to carry out coherent policies. In a system where transmission is already weak, PR further weakens the link that a representative has with his constituency and their accountability to the people of their respective constituencies would diminish. Hence, replacing First past the post system with proportional representation is a radical transformation that increases administrative burden and confusion among the people which is simply not viable.

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[19] Constituent assembly Debates (Proceedings) Vol. VII dated 4th January, 1949, .
[20] Bhanu Dhamija, Why Proportional representation would hurt India's Democracy, BLOG.,
https://www.huffingtonpost.in/bhanu-dhamija/why-proportional-representation-would-hurt-india-s-democracy_a_23222533/ (Aug 22, 2018, 7:00pm)

Legal ramifications of changing Electoral system in India:

The constitution of India does not mandate first past the post system for conducting elections to the Loksabha and state legislature (lower house) unlike presidential and vice-presidential elections that are explicitly mentioned in Articles 55 and 66 of the Indian constitution. Both are elected through proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote (STV). Nonetheless, Article 81 and 171 only provides for the direct election to House of people from territorial constituencies and to legislative assemblies respectively. Changing electoral system neither requires any constitutional amendments nor attracts any constitutional hazards because Articles 327 and 328 empowers parliament and legislature of a state to make provision with respect to elections to legislatures. There is nothing that inhibits from changing electoral system and the discretion is left to the legislature by virtue of Article 327.

Conclusion:

Alternative Voting system is the ideal and suitable system to India which has a character of sub continent comprising people of different religions, castes, sub castes, races, languages and cultures. The current First Past the post system in India deepens the existing differences and cleavages by encouraging targeted campaigning. Vote Bank Politics in India further ensues in the candidate representing a religion or caste or a community without representing the constituency better. This shortcoming is best addressed in Alternative voting system as it is successfully functioning in Papa New guinea wherein AV promoted inter-ethnic accommodation and moderation in deeply divided societies by allowing voters to express not just their first choice of candidate but also their second and later choices. Because of the nature of PNG society, under AV most voters invariably gave their first preference to their own clan or 'home' candidate. In many seats, however, this was not enough for any single candidate to gain a majority of votes; they needed the second preferences of other groups as well. In order to gain a majority, candidates had to 'sell' themselves as a good 'second-best' choice to other clan groups—which meant, in general, someone who would be attentive to the interests of all groups, not just their own. It also meant that those candidates who formed alliances and cooperated with each other would often be more successful than candidates who attempted to win the seat from their own voter base alone. This gave many candidates an incentive to act in an accommodating manner to other clans. The mechanics of the system also ensured that the winning candidate would have the support of an absolute majority of voters. In a substantial number of the winning candidate was not the one who had the biggest 'bloc' of supporters but rather the one who could successfully build support across several groups[21]. The winner in this method of election, by definition, is the least disliked and most liked person contesting the polls which is a huge improvement

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[21] Id at 3.

from first past the post but is still no reason to dump direct democracy as an idea. Since there are always tradeoffs involved in almost all the electoral systems, radical changes of shifting to PR will have far reaching impacts on the society. It is always better to make few changes in the existing system or adopt a new system that functions on the similar lines as that of the existing one but ameliorates the fundamental flaws in the existing system. Therefore a move to the Alternative Vote (AV) would not be a radical change from the current system of First Past the Post (FPTP) because it would not distort the single member districts and fairer than FPTP.