

# RUSSIA'S SUPER-PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM: a CASE STUDY OF EXECUTIVE Vs LEGISLATURE

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## ABSTRACT

Russia adopted the Presidential system of Government after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 which brought about an end to the socialist regime and led Russia to enter into a realm of Democracy by giving the power to the People through Parliament as well as the President elected would be under the check of the Parliament. The Russian System came into being by deriving inspiration from the French Presidential system . However My Focus here to bring about the various failures in the constitutional system of Russia in putting a limitation on the power of President and thereby instead of giving more power to people , it had been allotted to the President thereby making it named as Super-Presidential system .

**Keywords:** *Presidential system, Parliament, democracy, power*

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The origin of the Executive and the Legislature can be attributed to the ideology of a group of members whose prime intent was to establish a set of rules which they expected to be obeyed by a majority of people (Laski 1989). However, in a modern state this formative group is substituted by an elected representative who comes to power by the democratic process of voting. Thus, he becomes the lone entity capable of deciding the course of all types of powers and garners massive authority over the three branches of the state machinery that comprises of the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary which determines every aspect of any decision taken with respect to the people (Barker 1951). Whenever the three wings of the governmental structure clash with one another in order to identify the best type of law for the people, the separation of powers comes into play in order to put a check on their roles and balance their role to a certain level. The first instance of the idea of the separation of power was discussed by Aristotle, who defined the roles of the Legislature, Executive and the Judiciary by propagating the ideals of separation of powers through its three tier structure at his time in the form of Assembly, Magistrate and the Judiciary (Aristotle 1962). The biggest problem which garnered major criticism towards the system of the separation of powers was owing to its failure to check the three pillars from meddling in the official domain of the other. The modern era saw every state organ trying to dominate the other by obstructing and interfering with their intrinsic functions. Scholars such as Willoughby criticized it for lacking practical applicability in the functional aspects of Separation of Powers (Willoughby 1919). Despite such criticism, one is bound to support the concept of separation of powers for its goals and ideals of safeguarding individuals' liberty from the havoc that might have been created by a totalitarian government (Gettel 1967).

After its initiation, this noble ideal of splitting-up of the governmental structures by Aristotle, it started garnering support from major thinkers across the ages like Marsiglio of Padua, Jean Bodin and John Locke. Montesquieu explains it best in his words stating that, “When the legislative and Executive powers are united in the same person or body, there can be no liberty, because apprehensions may arise least the same monarch or senate should enact tyrannical laws...where the power of judging joined with the legislature, the life and liberty of the subject would be exposed to arbitrary control, for the judge would then be the legislator (Montesquieu 1949).

This field of study directs its focus on the politics of the Constitution making and the formal powers of the President and the Parliament (Huskey 1995). Hence in order to study the relationship between the President and the Parliament in a governmental structure the best methodology to study the Executive and the Legislature relationship would be by concentrating on the Presidential and parliamentary governments. The parliamentary government which is practiced in the countries of Britain, Germany etc emphasizes on the democratic structures to resolve the conflict arising in their country, effective party system and policy formulation, the constant scrutiny of the government and public administration and flexibility in the conduct of elections. The main arguments against the presidential system was regarding the massive dependence of the polity on the persona of the leader, lack of party system and the limitations on the formulation of policies and alternate governments (Linz J 1990). ArendLijphart stresses on the exclusive nature of the presidential elections, based on the principle of the ‘winners-takes-all’ (Lijphart 1992).

The Executive and the Legislature are always embroiled in a problematic relationship in any political system especially in a new or emerging democracy (Higley 1992). The major cause of the conflict is based on the issue of division of the Executive and the Legislative power apart from the other fundamental issues of constitutional design and institutional structure (Di Palma 1990). However, the Constitution formulation does not end the conflict upon the adoption of a constitution. The formal rules of the Constitution no matter shape but they cannot determine the division of the political power. After a Constitution is in place, the newly established presidency struggles with the parliament for predominance which not only creates a roadblock in the transition but also renders it prone to a risk of reversion to authoritarian rule or a ‘broken back’ democracy (Rose 1998). There is a provision for the interpretation and implementation of the constitutional dictum combined with the possibility of amendment, as without it a continued struggle between executive and legislature for political power and policy influence is ensured.

The President’s authority to issue decree is one of the major reasons behind the rise of hegemonic authoritarianism which led to his dominance over the legislature. The ease of the executive in bypassing the legislature will undermine the quality of democracy.

## **1.2 FIRST PHASE: LATE YEARS OF GORBACHEV**

The Russian Republic in the Soviet era possessed a Constitution which was made in 1978. They were actually “sham constitutions” as the Communist party was placed above the constitutional constraints which needed to be changed as the same Constitution continued to be followed with certain amendments in order to embrace the newly democratic set up. The 1978 constitution brought about a fusion of the legislature and the Executive

through the creation of CPD and CPSU (Remington 1997). The CPSU elected the Deputies who formed a part of the Congress of People's Deputies (CPD) which acted as the administrative organ at various regional and provincial levels. The reforms undertaken by Gorbachev marked the beginning of the new Constitution for Russia. The CPD of 1989 set up a Constitutional commission chaired by Yeltsin and Khasbulatov that would prepare a new article which would reflect the change of status of the Russian Republic. Two drafts, one by the group led by Yeltsin and the other by the Conservatives were formed, which were not only contradictory but also the origin of the friction between the Executive and the Legislature in Russia in the coming years which is wholly based on the control of the Russian state structure. However, the relationship faced a dicey disposition after 1989 with the creation of the post of the President which was independent of the legislature; Gorbachev acquired the Presidential post in 1990. The Presidential system saw its failure in its true adherence to democracy when he refused to face the election. However, in subsequent years the office of the presidency saw its phenomenal growth, making it almost as powerful as the Soviet Legislature with the power of appointing the Prime Minister and its Cabinet. The real struggle on the path of acquiring more power by the President was faced as there is no provision of the decrease of the powers of the Soviet legislature which leads to a system of dual power at the center (Sakwa 1996). Juan Linz stresses that the problem of 'dual democratic legitimacy', with independent electoral mandates for the Executive and the Legislative branches creates a situation in which 'a conflict is always latent and sometimes likely to erupt dramatically' (Linz 1994). This led to a competition for a greater mandate in the Russian political system which ultimately led to an unhealthy and unstable presidential system. This type of presidential system is suggestive of a concoction between the earlier Soviet and the Parliamentary of today which ultimately led to the conflict (Remington 1997). In 1991, the Russian Presidency got its legitimacy when it went for direct election both for the support of the Russian presidency and to adjudge the person eligible to be elected as the next President in which the people not only favored the Russian presidency but also elected Boris Yeltsin as the first directly elected President of Russia.

### **1.3 SECOND PHASE: 1990 – 1993**

It was challenging for the newly constituted directly elected President with an already powerful Parliament to accommodate itself abruptly in the prevailing Russian political system which derived its authority from the old Constitution of 1978 which embraced the three institutions namely, the Congress of People's Deputies (CPD), the Presidency and the Constitutional Court, through amendments which necessitated the need have a new Constitution (Nogee, 1997). The Presidential office was characterized as being "super-presidential" in its powers, and authoritarian in the exercise of those powers (Holmes 1993). Boris Yeltsin was quite successful in his mission of bringing up reforms in Russia owing to the conservative opposition (Sharlet1993). Yeltsin used the position of his directly elected President-ship to increase the powers of the President, which solidified his foundation by indirectly increasing the position and status of the President with the cooperation of CPD (Fish 2000). The struggle between the two had largely been at one point of time regarding the authority exercised by the Russian President to issue decrees. One of the principal area that defined the conflictual relation between the Executive and the Legislative in the democratic regimes is concerned with a single area which is the issuance of decrees (Carey 1998). The massive size of the Russian bureaucracy with the conflicting ministries demands a top-down mechanism such as presidential decrees to bring about action and coordination in its direction (Kolesnikov 1997).

The most dramatic episode was the 1993 shelling of the Russian White House, on the order of President Boris Yeltsin after the parliamentary and public opposition to his dissolution of the Parliament via Executive decree. Yeltsin thereby dissolved the first post-Soviet Parliament through the unconstitutional decree in September 1993 and later ratified it by force of arms, flushing the unmanageable camp out of the Parliament with the help of army tanks which led to the death of 150 people. The Russian presidential Constitution was passed two months later in the shadow of violence and with the obvious manipulation by the State Electoral Administration by Yeltsin's government to obtain the desired outcome.

### **1.3.1 Presidential Powers**

#### ***1.3.1.1. Decree Power***

However, the friction between them did not see an end even after the 1993 Constitution came into being, and a new Parliament came up in December 1993 which enhanced the rift between Yeltsin and the opposition controlled Duma. We see a rise in the issuance of decree on the part of the President after 1993 owing of the domination of the Parliament by the opponents. Any decree by the President can be overridden by the Parliament but it requires a two-third majority of both the legislative chambers which is difficult on the part of the Legislature to achieve because of the weak party system. Earlier the President had faced many constraints in the issuance of decree with the Parliament having the absolute authority to block the decrees by annulling them (Parrish 1998). According to Scott Parrish, Yeltsin used his constitutional decree power and the emergency decree which he was granted in 1991 by the Parliament for economic stabilization (Boycko M 1995). However, the decrees served as an important tool through which the President can bring about social, political and economical transformation as these decrees led to the initiation of many important domestic programs.

Many decrees facilitated the President to look after the various affairs of the administration and economy. It is the decree that made the President the focus of intense lobbying (Freeland 2000). However, there are certain areas where a policy must take the route of federal law instead of a presidential decree such as Taxation, pensions and social benefits, use of land by government, rules regarding the election of Duma, formation of federation Council and the appointment of judges. The decree loses its value in the sphere of a legislation which has set its policy (Remington 1998). A decree might give excessive authoritative power to the Executive, but on the whole *a decree is less credible than a law in the eyes of bureaucrats and private agents* (Remington 2000).

#### ***1.3.1.2. Veto Power***

The President has the Veto power in the case of laws sent to him by the Federal Assembly. However, it can be overridden by the Parliament by a two-third majority in each chamber which is not easily achieved in the Russian scenario. This has led to disagreements between the Duma and the Federation Council.

#### ***1.3.1.3 Right of Legislative Initiative***

The Russian President has the right to bring a bill directly in the Duma. This ensures that the presidential proposals will be considered above others. Both the President and the government lack control over the agenda of the bill as they have no package votes or any restrictive procedures in the Russian legislation like in Britain and France (Huber 1996).

#### ***1.3.1.4 Right of Dissolution***

The President has the authority to dissolve the Duma under specific condition but he can't do the same in the case of the Federation Council under any circumstances. The power of dissolution exercised by the President has a lot of limitations, such as he cannot dissolve it within one year of the dissolution of the previous government, or if the Duma had already impeached him. The President cannot dissolve anybody in the last six months of his term of office. The President's real Executive power is evident in his authority to dissolve a Duma for its failure in confirming a nominee for the post of the Prime Minister three times in a row, and when he refused confidence in the government twice.

#### ***1.3.1.5 Right to Appoint and Dismiss the Government***

This power is a point of conflict between the Executive and the Legislature since 1991. The President appoints the Prime Minister who in turn forms the government. The President has the power to even dismiss the government which makes the government and its members responsible to the President.

#### ***1.3.1.6 High hurdles to Constitutional Amendment***

The 1993 Constitution is very difficult to amend because of the complicated amendment process which requires the support of both the lower and the upper house, and the majority of regional establishments. Analytically there is a need for two-thirds vote in Duma, three-quarter vote in Federation Council, and it should have been passed by the two-third of the subjects of the federation in the total regional legislatures for an amendment to be passed. In order to maintain a balance, Duma needs to maintain a balanced distribution of power between the President and the Region. The biggest problem on the part of the regional and republic powers is to hand the power to the federal center in order to make the Duma stronger. The same problem is faced by the President in order to relinquish powers to the Duma. The entire process of amendment can be achieved by a balanced relationship between the President, Parliament and the regional legislators.

### **1.3.2 Parliamentary Powers**

#### ***1.3.2.1 Approval of Legislation***

The consent of the Parliament is required in order to pass any kind of law in Russia. For ordinary laws it require a simple majority in each chamber followed by the President's signature. However in Russia there is an overriding power over the President that is the Duma which may override the Federation Council's rejection of a bill by a two-third majority vote, and the two chambers may override a presidential veto by a two-third majority.

#### ***1.3.2.2. Control over the Executive***

Though the Constitution never provided the Federal Assembly enough power to look over the executive, it still has certain rights based on which it can take action and monitor the government and bureaucracy. One of the ways it does so is through the 'government hour' feature of the Duma proceedings through which it summons ministers to report their work. Other mechanisms employed are parliamentary inquiries, hearings, and impeachment.

### *1.3.2.3 Impeachment*

Impeachment is one of the few processes that question the authority of the President in case of non-confirmation to the constitutional provisions. The removal of the President by means of impeachment consists of four steps:

- The passage of the motion of impeachment at Duma by two-third majority.
- Affirmation from the Supreme court stating the President's actions as a grave crimes or treason.
- The Procedure adopted in the impeachment must be confirmed by the Constitutional Court.
- Voting to remove the President in the Federation Council by a two-third majority.

The opposition during the 1998 period in Russia finally succeeded in placing impeachment through the Duma against Yeltsin. However, the motion was defeated owing to the lack of votes.

## **1.4 THIRD PHASE: 1993 – 1999**

The Russian constitutional design has been under scrutiny since the dramatic events of 1991 (Colton T. , 1995). Throughout the period of December 1993, the struggle over the constitutional design was the prime political agenda of the time, particularly with regard to the division of power between the Parliament and the Presidency (White 1994). This period was marked by the destruction of the Parliament and creation of a new Russian Constitution which consolidated the institutional and policy formulating power of the President either by formal or informal means (Willerton 1997). The 1993 Constitution to some extent gave a clear cut picture of the semi-Presidential system in Russia where both the President and the Legislature were directly elected and are dependent on each other. However, it still favors the President more by legitimizing the Presidential control over the composition of the government and its survival in power. The 1993 constitution made The Executive – Legislative relations hit a bottom between 1993 and 1999 by diminishing the legislature's position in the policy making process. Its bitterness can be seen in the years of Yeltsin's first term (1991 -96) and fundamental mistrust in Yeltsin's second term (1996 – 99). Yeltsin being a pro-reformist himself wanted to have a pro-reformist legislature in the December 1993 elections but the results was contrary to his expectations and the Russian Communist party won in the Duma (Shevtsova 1995). Even the 1995 Parliamentary Election brought the Communist party a majority position in the state Duma. The Constitution did demonstrate favoritism to the Executive in the case of institutional design but it was not able to retain the balance of ideological forces in the Legislature owing to the victory the Communist party with a modern-reformist Executive at the government. Yeltsin later revealed his severity towards the Duma by his refusal to appear before the Legislative body which made the Duma unwilling to cooperate with Yeltsin's government. The mistrust between the Legislature and Yeltsin had reached its peak point in the Parliament's spring 1999 impeachment that continued till Yeltsin's surprise retirement at the end of the year 1999. Nevertheless, the Executive faced a lot of constraints in exercising its function which had been granted by the President due to the following developments – a) Public disapproval of the President and his policies, b) lack of discipline within the Executive branch including the involvement of outsiders in the functioning of the Executive in the form of oligarchs, c) tendency of the opposition to block Yeltsin's policies and d) the Executive Instability of the person at the helm of the affairs .

### **1.4.1. Extra-constitutional Agreements and the Prospects for Parliamentary Government**

Although it was widely believed that the 1993 Constitution led to the creation of a super -Presidential structure

by concentrating more power in the Presidency (Paul 1994), the Legislature still possessed its legislative authority and the capacity to exercise it. The new Constitution had mentioned the broad areas where the law takes precedence over the decrees when the two are in conflict. Despite these things the relation between the Executive and Legislature did not turn hostile but gave way to a mixture of calculated conflicts and limited cooperation (Mangott 2004). Robert G. Moser refers to the relationship of this period as a “peaceful coexistence” between the Executive and the Legislative branches. At this juncture there were extra-constitutional arrangements which were being used to resolve crisis such as the “big-four” negotiation involving the President, Prime Minister and the chairs of the two chambers of the Parliament. This initiative of big four was put forward by President Yeltsin in the fall of 1996 and it was used to deal with a lot of policies from 1996 to 1998 such as land code etc. There was also the Consultative Mechanism between the Duma faction leaders and the President through which they discuss many divisive issues that helps them reach a compromise in order to arrive at a decision especially during the process of the nomination of the Prime Minister. This period saw a less confrontational relation between the Executive and the Legislature because of the safety vent in the form of the 1993 Constitution, which made it highly precarious to be involved in any kind of confrontation leading to a lot of compromise between Yeltsin and the Communist party dominated Duma. According to Remington, the Parliament even when it is in a process of countering the presidency which was possible due to the incentives embodied in the Constitution (Remington 2000). During the period between 1994 and 1999 the Parliament had enacted more than 800 laws which demonstrate its power in engaging with the President and creating a space for itself in the policy process. At the same time there was issuance of 1500 decrees however, instead of viewing it in a negative light from the democratic viewpoint, we can contend ourselves with the show of strength of the parliamentary power structure till date in Russia. The Presidential decrees are central to the dominance of the President in the matters of Russian policy and bureaucracy. Yet, they were granted by the Constitution as a form of power to the President in order to implement it on one condition that it will not contradict the Constitution and the federal laws (Art 90 1993). Although the Duma was in a strong position, there were certain party factions and committees who were always at loggerheads with each other. This caught the attention of Yeltsin who wanted them to fight against each other instead of challenging the Executive in the matters of policy formulations (Ostrow 1998).

The period from 1994 to 1999 saw the rise in the power of the Russian Legislature as there was a decline in the health of President Yeltsin who was spending considerable time outside on vacation. This facilitated the Legislature in Duma to increase its power in order to tighten the strings around the Executive which ultimately led to self realization on the part of the Duma regarding its constitutional powers of which it was unaware earlier. They are using this new self-realization to challenge the Executive powers (Troxel 2003). The challenges that the Duma posed before the Executive were in the form of an agenda made by organizing coalitions against the Executive decision, thereby leading to the Lower House gaining credibility as an effective organ in order to influence the policy process.

Thus began a process of checks and balances on the part of the Legislature to counter the Executive through various mechanisms such as overriding vetoes from the council and the President, opposing the Prime Ministerial candidates in the first two rounds of voting, delaying executive bills while adopting legislation

which was earlier not favored by the Executive. The 1996 Presidential election brought back Yeltsin to power for another term which increased his stature as a strong leader. However, his weakness as a President was exposed which led to the formulation of many detrimental decisions by him that further decreased the original status of the presidency which was later substituted by the close aides of the president.

Yeltsin's years in Russia are being termed chaotic because economic crisis prevailed during his tenure as the power was hijacked by the oligarchs. They were controlling the provincial governors in their process of bargaining with Kremlin while exploiting the regions. Thus, Yeltsin's government was facing two channels of obstruction. On the central level the conflict was between him and the obstructionist Duma dominated by the Conservatives, and at the provincial level it was with the regional political leaders who had the backing of the oligarchs (Treisman 2002).

#### **1.4.2 Weak Party System**

The Soviet Union was a strong state during its heyday because of its strong party structure. Though, it was a single party system but the same thing works in a democracy too by the strength of an effective party system. In 1995 Boris Yeltsin undertook a task of establishing a party known as 'Party of Power' that would unify some of the centrist and moderately pro-market groups under the banner of a pro-government party which would promote the theme of stability and continuity – "Our Home is Russia". This initiative of Yeltsin under the banner of "Our Home is Russia" faded into oblivion after it failed to secure enough votes in the December 1995 elections. The Party was a failure not because it didn't get enough votes, which was unlikely, when Yeltsin never campaigned for the party and governors never wanted to support it through their own machinery (McFaul 2001). The fear of challenge was always in the mind of Yeltsin because his period was marked by a Duma ruled by a party who opposed all his moves. It also led him to believe that this party "Our Home is Russia" might become powerful and challenge him in the future.

#### **1.4.3 Duma in the 1993 - 1999**

Yeltsin during his final years of the end of his term was going through an ugly phase, with a decreasing health and political points in the Duma, which is visible in his dwindling use of decrees to bring forth some of his legislative agreements (Haspel 2006). As said earlier there was a decrease in tendency of conflict between Legislature-Executive because of the divergence in the relationship between communists in Duma and reformists in the Executive. As a whole we can say that initially they were having a conflictual relationship which led to the struggle for the vast property of the erstwhile Soviet Union (Barnes 2006). Instead of struggling among themselves they started struggling for the ownership of private property which Yeltsin considered an effective tool in dismantling communism in Russia (Shleifer 2000) which not only formulated parliamentary politics and executive-legislative relations but also opened up the scope of disagreements between them (Boycko 1995). This new phase led to the strengthening and organization of lobby quite strongly in Duma.

### **1.5 FOURTH PHASE: PUTIN'S YEARS**

After Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin was appointed as the Prime Minister in August 1999. The departure of Boris from presidency in 1999 marked a new phase in Russia's post-communist political development. With the

presidency no longer occupied by the author of the Constitution, the question arose whether or not his successor will consider himself bound by the constitutional arrangements in place since 1993 or later (Remington 2000). Since 1993, after the Constitution was made there was a chance for Russia to evolve itself from the disputable democracy to a settled, consolidated constitutional democracy (Diamond 1999). There is further doubt to the above as the tense relations between the President and the parliament sometimes reach the point of threatening the constitutional fabric itself. Although, there was a negative impression about the Yeltsin's use of presidential power to dominate Duma and the federal level politics (Ostrow 1998), yet the same supremacy in presidential administration was used in a positive sense under Putin to gain control over private, economic and financial interest which was necessary as the country was going through a bad economic phase in 1999. He, later on, went ahead and won the Presidential election in 2000 which brought about a new change in the Executive-Legislature relationship by the personal popularity of Putin and sequence of election and its outcome. This was for the first time that a President enjoyed a majority support in the legislature. So, this led to a good relationship between Executive and Legislature. He was a supporter of powerful Presidency and his tenure as president in Russia is termed as 'administered democracy', or 'managed pluralism' or 'managed democracy' (Balzer 2003). There was also change in the relationship status of the Executive-Legislature from confrontational to cooperative, thanks to the majority enjoyed by the president in the Russian state Duma (Colton 2000). He brought about changes in the nature of the polity without altering the constitution. The regime of Putin was purely Presidential Authoritarian as compared to the confused Liberal Presidency of Yeltsin. From the perspective of a consolidated personalized regime, Putin's Russia has gained a better reputation from that of Yeltsin's, which was a failing state marked by unconsolidated democracy and authoritarianism (Sobchak 1999).

Putin's two terms in Russia from 2000 - 2003 and 2004 - 2007 as a President can be called the authoritarian dominant party system, where the party and state are closely working together in the Russia's executive institution of Presidency. The two terms of Putin saw a growth of party system which is positive from one perspective but, it also forced the party to use its access to state resources and policies to win elections in regional and national legislative elections. Now and then, we get a proof of the nexus between the party at national and regional level. This development in the political structure of Russia is a shift from that of Gorbachev's, as during his presidency the party was always opposed to the President in all his policies and political decisions. It used to give greater autonomy, as we have seen in chapter 3, to the policy of adaptive federalism and segmented regionalism, which actually changed in Putin's period. It not only marked the end of the conflict between party and executive but also made the Regions follow into the footsteps of the Centre through its policy of New Federalism (as we have seen in the previous chapter). There was a shift from Presidential authoritarianism to party authoritarianism from 1993 - 1999 and 2000 - 2007. By increasing the regional election through his electors, Putin made sure that any legislation he proposed would be passed in the regional legislatures. The party of Putin, United Russia, (Edinaya Rossiya) played a major role in building the bridge between the President and the Parliament because it gave a major boost to the President whenever he wants to have a control over the voting process in the Duma, through its members in the parliament with the help of a whip. The same can be said about the Upper Chamber of the Russian parliament in the Federation Council, where too the president enjoys a lot of support.

### 1.5.1 One Party Regime

The Voting pattern of the Legislature is usually in line with the wishes and desires of the President and is conducted in a well-disciplined manner (Chaisty 2005). The party members at the Parliament are always in search for money and influence by lobbying for various legislations that belong to distinct business houses, industrialists etc. In their efforts to give advantage to any particular legislation, they deviate from their party line by cooperating with the deputies in state Duma and members of the Federation Council. So, this brings another problem to the forefront. The bill may be introduced quickly at the insistence of the President but the passage of the bill takes time because of the sinister and selfish nature of the legislators. This makes the parliament a fighting arena of personal interests and profits over the public policy. The involvement of members in such acts is sometimes considered as legitimate and needful of the dominant party. The party needs a steady flow of capital to maintain the election campaign and the loyalty of public officials in the form of kickbacks, contacts to private companies, slush funds, parastatal funds etc. It leads indirectly to corruption at many levels, which involves figures of state and regional officials including the Governor, Mayors and other state and central officials. A dominant party system is always needed to fulfill the aspirations of its members by sanctioning more funds to their home projects, leading to greater patronage on the part of the majority party because of its control over productive forces (Hale 2005).

Single dominant parties, in order to maintain its status quo, always go for subduing its opposition by means of coercion, intimidation, control over media and manipulation of the election process (Magaloni 2006). It is sometimes expensive and risky on the part of the leader (Levitsky 2002). Patronage is better suited with respect to coercion only if the state has a great amount of natural resources to distribute in order to gain political mileage. There is no harm in doing that as it does not lead to losses in any sections of the society because in the case of losses the particular section is properly reimbursed. In the case of Russia, many of its regional powers are also the representatives of their energy rich areas. So the legislators of these areas are given freedom to use their resources according to their legislative will in accordance with the Centre.

The party of United Russia, in order to help their party members in serving their particular interests, developed a series of objectives – a) By increasing the number of legislative Committees from 29 to 32, they are giving members an opportunity to harness their profits from various deals without any clash of jurisdictions, b) having multiple access of the legislative agendas through the Deputy chair of the Duma, who has the power to set agendas and the calendar for the chamber, they can prioritize any issue over the others when it enters the Parliament, and c) by the formation of Deputy groups, which are nothing but internal and factional groups under the United Russia party, they strongly represent lobbying sectors such as oil and gas industry.

The party system in Russia has come a long way since the failure on the part of Yeltsin in his “Our Home is Russia” endeavour to the success of the “United Russia Party” under Putin. Moreover, the period of Putin was marked by a gain in international prices for the oils, gases, metals and other primary goods. Putin’s effective mechanism of using his party members to bring about legislation in the form of low taxes, less intrusive regulation and legislative support for the creation of new markets, in the fields of land, pensions, real-estate, insurance and other financial assets, not only raised the investors’ confidence but also contributed to a faster economic growth that helped the growth of Putin’s popularity ultimately leading to the growth of his party. The powerful electoral base of the party comprises of the middle class which is largely targeted by the public image of Putin that highlights order, economic progress and international prestige returned to the country since the

disassociation of Soviet Union in 1991.

### **1.5.1 Arbitrary personal rule**

Putin's rule in Russia can be perceived as concentration of power around the personal charisma and figure of Putin himself, instead of the political and legal institutions given in the Russian Constitution. In a democratic Russia, the President, instead of the government, allocates the various public and private offices. Like Yeltsin, who never had the support of the majority government in the Parliament and hence ruled the state by a Presidential decree and in open contempt of his political opposition, Putin too did the same by pertaining to the authoritarian possibilities of the Constitution.

### **1.5.2 Use of Force to decide Political Issues**

When it comes to political issues in Russia, the President, in order to surge over the difficult political issues, contemplates the use of force, which if seen in the case of Yeltsin's presidency not only brought about the Constitution through the coup, but also helped during the war of Chechen Succession (1994 - 1996). However, Putin on the other hand, took the help of intimidation, harassment and arrest as tools to tide over the political pressure. This highlighted another aspect of the Executive - Legislature clash, which hadn't completely ended but transgressed to a whole new level by the nexus between the Executive and other democratic tools such as Journalism, media, oligarchy, elite associations etc. This whole system of resolving political conflict by the bullet, and not by the ballot, was established under Yeltsin's rule in October 1993 when he went on a mass military rampage in order to subvert the political opposition to his reforms.

### **1.5.4 Duma under Putin**

Putin came to the limelight in 1999 the year of the third Duma after Yeltsin had resigned. In the elections of 2000, his party didn't get a majority but became a pivotal party. Without its support, nobody could get a majority in the Parliament. His United Russian Party formed an alliance with the Fatherland – All Russian party factions and two deputy groups. Under this majority in the Duma, Putin initiated his goal of economic growth which was not usual for Yeltsin because he faced the stiff opposition from the nationalist and Communist in the Legislature. Putin perceived that the major threat to Russia at that juncture was its Economic stagnation. In 2000, when the new Parliament came into existence, he planned numerous measures at the initial stage on innovation, investment and Tax. In 2001, he emphasized on federal relations, criminal and civil procedure. In 2002, he focused more on the division of responsibility between the federal government and the regional government and reformed the local government. He was in the favor of limitation of the large industrial monopolies and reforms in utilities and housing sector. By the December of 2003 elections, Putin's party, United Russia established total control over the Duma with a centralized power within the faction of the alliance. He brought about administrative reforms in 2004.

## **1.6 CONCLUSION**

To sum up in the end, we can say that the mixed "President-Parliamentary" constitution faced a lot of crunch in the form of interbranch deadlock and crisis because of extensive power in the hands of the President, weak Parliament in the form of a Communist opposition and intermediary position of the government which required

not only the Parliament's confidence but also the President's favor. While a great amount of attention was given to the politics involved in the Constitution making and the powers of the President and the Parliament, little research were done in order to explore the dynamics of the Legislative-Executive relations in practice. The authority possessed by the Executive to pass decrees always poses a problem in a new democratic set up as it undermines the Legislature's lawmaking ability and indirectly leads to the harming of the democratic character of the regime. The 1993 Constitution gave a lot of power to the Executive which was being used by both Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin to propel their policies ahead which indirectly made the executive hegemonic. Russian politics has been through numerous changes which had a lot of impact on the development of various dimension of the evolution of the Executive. It started with the unrealistic, pro-western policies adopted by the Yeltsin government in the early 1990s. The Post-soviet Russia saw its elites losing faith in their country when it came to deal within and the world. This made the Executive opt for an authoritarian rule based on the Presidential prerogative and they reversed the dependence on private finance and eliminated political opposition. The relation between the Executive and Parliament went for a bargaining and compromised their relation for six years from 1993 to 1999. The fear of the catastrophic breakdown that might occur due to the collision between the two branches and the Constitutional limitations on the part of the President in policy making makes it desirable to seek the legislative's decision for the same in a congenial way. In the process of their hammering relationship a lot of agreements get squashed on some issues. There was a breakdown in the relationship from 1994 – 99 which was the reason behind their failure to reach a reasonable conclusion on some of the major agreements, such as legalization of private property in land etc. The Period of 1993-94 was a period of uncertainty as there was a lack of trust between Yeltsin and his opponents who were deeply divided on ideological lines and doubtful about each other's intentions.

In 2000, Vladimir Putin took over the reins of an old guard with uncertainty about the relative strength of each camp. Although political disorder and risk of constitutional breakdown still makes the process of democracy look like a failure, it is the compromise between the Executive and the Legislature for the past six years that has made us believe in some kind of a compromise between the opposing camps to form a stable political system. The United Russia had helped maintain a huge popularity base for Putin which not only benefitted him politically and electorally but also brought the economic growth of the country in the form of decline of poverty & unemployment, increase in average real income, accumulation of wealth in through pensions, savings, ownership of shares and stock. It is very hard to believe that the entire process of development was always positive as there is also the negative part of it which is not highlighted because of the administrative pressure, biased media, falsified results and the popularity of Putin as a man who guided his country towards political development and economic prosperity. It is a very costly affair to maintain an authoritarian dominant party regime which needed a certain amount of fund and monetary patronage, publicity campaigns and winning of elections. The effort on the part of Putin's administration has lead to the construction of a post-1993 Russian politics and shaped the nature of relationship between the President and the Parliament. United Russia's domination in the Duma helped Putin in shaping his goals which couldn't happen during the time of Yeltsin. He changed his agenda from time to time which was successful because of the support he enjoys in the Parliament. During the 2000 – 2003 his only objective was the revival of the economy by dismantling any kind barriers to investment and innovation. For this objective he initiated a lot of policies and measures and made sure that it got passed in the Duma through his loyal party members. From 2004 – 2007 he changed his objective by expansion

of the executive branch by countervailing any other threat to the executive which includes the party, civil society, media and the expansion of funds towards commitments in the social sector such as pension, education, employment. There are conflicts between various groups and industrial bodies based on the policy disputes which made the President helpless in the context of taking sides, since it needs economic security to carry out its policies. The bureaucratic conflict is the new trend in Russian politics during Putin's era because of the great amount of patronage of the Legislature under the directions of the Executive which is a dangerous trend and might destabilize the country. Russia under Putin akin to Yeltsin's period can be regarded as a state nation rather than a nation state.

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