

Indian Democracy and Mass Movement in India: A Conceptual Framework

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“Democracy is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people.”

- Abraham Lincoln

Abstract

India is a very large country full of diversities – linguistically, culturally, and religiously. As with Indian democracy, political parties represent different sections among the Indian society and regions, and their core values play a major role in the politics of India. Democratic culture is one of the most important themes of modern empirical political science. It reflects the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the individuals who make up the political system. The study of India's democratic culture is possible with reference to several yet contradictory themes like unity and diversity, tradition and modernity, continuity and change, consensus and conflict, religion. One such contradictory yet enduring theme of India's democratic culture is ethics versus corruption in public life along which many protest movements have emerged. India the world's largest democracy is facing the scourge of corruption in public life. The research paper is to analyses the condition of mass movement and democracy in India.

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Introduction

India is a very large country full of diversities – linguistically, culturally, and religiously. At the time of independence, it was economically underdeveloped. There were enormous regional disparities, widespread poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and shortage of almost all public welfare means. Citizens had enormous expectations from independence. Seventy-two years after Independence, the promise of Swaraj is yet to be redeemed and the Democracy has been reduced. Factors such as education, corruption, women's issues, student politics, leadership strategies and the design of political institutions affect national and local politics. Some other factors such as the caste issue, environment policy, new long-term investment in the economy by foreigners etc., also have a bearing. As with Indian democracy, political parties represent different sections among the Indian society and regions, and their core values play a major role in the politics of India.

Democratic culture is one of the most important themes of modern empirical political science. It reflects the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the individuals who make up the political system. The study of India's democratic culture is possible with reference to several yet contradictory themes like unity and diversity, tradition and modernity, continuity and change, consensus and conflict, religion and secularism. It is said that the democratic culture of India is a peculiar mix of all these conflicting themes. One such contradictory yet enduring theme of India's democratic culture is ethics versus corruption in public life along with many protest movements have emerged. India the world's largest democracy is facing the scourge of corruption in public life.

Objectives of the Study:

The overall objective of the study is to make Mass Movements in India and their Impact on Indian Democracy with special reference to Jai Prakash Narayan and Anna Hazare. However, in order to make the research more meaningful, following specific objectives are laid down.

1. To study the Indian Democratic Conditions in India those were responsible for the Mass Movements.
2. To know the general characteristics of the Mass Movements in India.
3. To provide suggestions.

Research Method

In the present study an attempt has been made to analyse the Mass Movements in India and their Impact on Indian Democracy with special reference to Jai Prakash Narayan and Anna Hazare. The study has been based on secondary information. The information relating to the comparative study of Indian Democratic Conditions, Characteristics of the Mass Movements, their impact on Mass Movements in India has been compiled from various Reference Books, Yojna, Research Articles, Economics & Political Weekly, Magazines, Journals dealing Political issues, periodical, Newspapers and google.com etc.

Condition of Democracy in India

From the political commentaries and the media reporting on what is happening in India, one would tend to get a view that Indian democracy is in a thorough mess, that it is breaking down under the pressure of rising aspirations and increasing demands of the people on the state, that disaffection with incumbent governments grows because of populist promises of the political leaders and their inability to meet those demands, and that the people are seething with anger and dissatisfaction at the failure of democracy or its decay. It appears as if the elites are dissatisfied with populism, vote bank politics, as well as mal-governance by the self-seeking political leaders, and the masses are dissatisfied with the governments falling short of their aspirations and promises that political leaders make and the elite capture of the benefits of the economic growth and opportunities that are available in the society.

Democracy is largely understood as popular sovereignty where people have control over the decision made by the state. Since it is not practically possible for the people in the modern democratic societies to participate in the decision-making process of the state directly, they do so through representatives. But when political parties become ineffective in representing the interest of the people, we see the emergence of social movements. It is a truism that no society is static. Space, processes and nature as well as the direction of social change vary from time to time and society to society. Social movements are nothing new and they are taking place all around the globe, whether, they are based on certain issues or interests, under different institutional environments. In India also, social movements have taken place around identity issues or interest

based activism. Social movements play an important role in escalating not only the processes of change, but also in giving direction to social transformation.

Democracy means that political institutions with democratic processes and every Indian citizen is to be democratic, reflecting basic democratic values of equality, liberty, fraternity, secularism and justice in the social environment and individual behaviour. In other way it can be termed as a genuine democracy only when it fulfils both political and socio-economic aspects of people's participation and satisfaction. For this reason, it needs to adopt a Constitution and laws that vest supreme power with the people. The followings are the challenges of democracy and most essential elements to be present in democratic government for implementation of constitutional provisions in India.

In identifying the Congress with the masses, and national freedom with the betterment of their condition, Gandhiji in his own way, gave a social democratic twist to the nationalist movement. He did not talk the language of socialism as Pandit Nehru did, but set himself straightaway to the task of ameliorating poverty, disease and ignorance through self-help and self-discipline. Spinning, sanitation, clean housing, improved agriculture, removal of untouchability, emancipation of women, etc. were some of the items that figured in the constructive programme. Despite the outmoded concept of village self-sufficiency and the semi-religious idea of simplicity and austerity, Gandhiji's constructive programme helped to sow in the peasant' mind the desire and the will for a better life. One might say that the first tadpole wriggle of the modern kind of desire for progress was produced in village India, strangely enough, under the impact of the Gandhian programme. What he promised the masses were more clothes, more food, more housing, more sanitation, more freedom and more equality than they possessed at the moment. This is clear from Gandhiji's own picture of an ideal Indian village. "An ideal Indian village", he wrote, "will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation. It will have cottages with sufficient light and ventilation, and built of a material available within a radius of five miles of it. The cottages will have court-yards enabling households to plant vegetables for domestic use and to house their cattle.

Concepts of Mass Movement in India

The field of movement operates between social conflict and social change. Conflicts give birth to movements which led to social change. People coming together in collective action for performing a task with an objective forms the basis of any movements. The collective action also led for understanding of the collective behavior in element of movement. This collective action and behavior has ignited the fire of enquiry among social scientist. The various dimensions of collective action as well as human behavior in the act of social movements have attracted the attention of social scientists. In an endeavor to understand the mass action and behavior, the process of theorizing started in the field of movement studies. Initially academicians enquired about defining and locating the elements of movement.

Movement as phenomena was studied by the various streams of sociology, psychology and political science in social science. Theorists of movement have focused much on social aspect of movement, due to the fact that earlier movement studies were subject matter of Sociology. The approach of viewing social movement as ‘people’s participation in public politics is a new entrant which is gaining ground in movement studies. Lately the field of political sociology accommodated this emerging field of movement studies in political science. Movements are parameter to know what people think about the system and their general good in society. The people participation in movement determines what masses aspire in society and to make their future. Movement demonstrates how ‘Uncommon People’, who run, maintain and develops the system, are silently erased from the benefits of development of system with conspiracy (**Eric Hobsbawm; 2009**).

It showed that people who talk of solving the country’s agricultural and unemployment problems by encouraging small-scale production and small-peasant farming within the present capitalist state and economic structure are objectively helping install fascism in the country knowingly or unknowingly, no matter the party badge or ideological cloak they wear. The strategies that the different political parties pursue in the mass movements — the trickeries with which they confuse their ranks and supporters who are not politically conscious, and confuse people too, creating in its ultimate consequence obstacles to developing the revolutionary mass movement.

With all their activities, they are only strengthening the election-oriented politics. This politics of theirs can in no way weaken capitalism, it cannot generate the forces of revolution eventually. In reality, they are incapable of giving birth to what we call the people's own political power.

Whatever the image and influence of Jayprakash Narayan in West Bengal earlier, he has in some way come to the forefront in the Indian mass mind through newspapers and magazines, centring round the combined effect of the turn of events like the Bihar movement, the Gujarat movement, his role in the freedom movement, etc. Whatever maybe one's political evaluation of him, Jayprakashji is raising the slogan for developing one thing. Which is, the emergence of people's power, the power of the youth and the students based on moral and political consciousness — that is, let there be people's movement. For that, he has advocated formation of struggle committees, because, without that, no change can be brought about in the country. Although, all his stand regarding the change, the revolution, is hazy. People's movement has to be developed from the grassroots to the highest level through forming people's committees. Afterwards, on the battleground of mass movement we will settle whether it will be peaceful or will be all-out radical, or whether it will take the form of armed anti-capitalist socialist revolution — which we hold to be the historically determined path for emancipation of India. But we agree with him on the point that he desires emergence of people's power. We, too, want that outside the confines of this anti-Congress mock fight, people's committees grow up from the village level upwards as people's own instrument of struggle. Let the parties, if they have the ability, extend their own influence over these committees and direct them.

Concepts of Socialism

Jayprakash Narayan was a born revolutionary whose mission of life was to fight for both independence and a new socio-economic order. So when India got independence, other leaders got involved in the power tussle he planned for a social revolution to replace the present socio economic order by a new socialist order. He was the one of the 'Committed Socialist' who made a dauntless fight against the forces of exploitation i.e., capitalism and landlordism in India. In the budding stage of his political mind, he was heavily drunk with 'Marxism Socialism'. He was convinced about dialectical materialism and necessity of class war. But when he came to India,

the Current of nationalism was most powerful subsiding the possibility of a communist revolution, but he preferred to join freedom movement. And in 1934, he found the Congress Socialist Party. He opposed Gandhi's social philosophy and argues that it gives an opportunity to the princes to exploit the paupers. He rejected Gandhism as 'timid economic analysis' 'ineffective moralising' and Marxian socialism is the basis of his ideas of socio-economic order.

But in the forties after his imprisonment in special camp jail at Deoli in Rajasthan, he realised the necessity of a democratic polity with moral values. He was drawn towards Gandhism for the latter's emphasis on decentralisation in administration and commitment to certain ethical values in politics. In his book 'Why Socialism' he advanced his arguments for adopting socialism in India. He made an analysis of socio-economic conditions of India which was :

- A. Inequality in the Society:** He says that the main cause is inequalities - inequality of rank, of culture and of opportunity; a most disproportionately unequal distribution of the property and the things needed for life.
- B. Unequal Distribution of Wealth**
- C. Accumulation and Concentration of Wealth**
- D. Exploitation:** Accumulation and concentration of wealth makes it easier for some to exploit money.

Jayaprakash Narayan viewed socialism in Indian perspective. He viewed "Socialism is a system of social reconstruction. Socialism is not a code of personal conduct; nor is it a hot house growth." It means to change in the socio-economic and political life of the country –where there will be no inequality in possession and no exploitation. It will be a society with balanced growth from all sides. He said socialism is a system of social organisation which has few objectives that are -:

- ✓ Elimination of exploitation and poverty.
- ✓ Provision for equal opportunities to all for self-development.

- ✓ Full development of material and moral resources of the society.
- ✓ Equitable distribution of national wealth.

Jayaprakash Narayan regarded socialism as a complete theory of socio-economic construction. He said that the inequality in society exists due to the disproportionate control of the means of production. He advocated reduction in revenue, limitation of expenditure and the nationalization of industries. In the Ramgarh session of the Congress in 1940 he advocated collective ownership and control of large-scale production, and nationalization of the heavy industries, heavy transport, shipping and mining. He made Gandhism the base of his socialism. The village should be made a self-governing and self-sufficient unit. He favored the distribution of land to the tiller, co operative farming, and cancellation of agriculture debt.

Any attempt at establishing new socio-economic order must start with the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and establishing social ownership. That will solve the problem of accumulation of wealth in few hands and eradicate exploitation from the society. He described the process of applying socialism to both agriculture and industry. In the field of establishing 'Socialist Industry', he said, both large and small-scale industry must be democratically managed and controlled and it must be owned by the government. Hence Jayaprakash's socialism in economic sphere includes

- Abolition of landlordism and capitalism.
- Socialization of means of production by abolishing private property rights.
- Cooperative farming run by the gram panchyats.
- Collective farming.
- Large-scale industries owned by the states with workers participation and small-scale industries organized into producer's cooperatives.

Concepts of Sarvodaya

Jayaprakash made a voyage from socialism to Sarvodaya in the fifties. The Sarvodaya movement was started by Gandhi in pre-independent India and spearheaded by Vinoba Bhave in the post-independence era. Jayaprakash's Sarvodaya implies a new order in which the society will be class-less and stateless; it will be a political system in which Lokniti will replace rajneeti

it will be 'peoples' socialism., which will ensure not only freedom and equality, but also peace and eternity. The Sarvodaya aims to establish a new social order on the basis of truth, love and non-violence. It is highly critical of the State and its government, because both are based on force and coercion. As such, sarvodaya aims towards the creation of a social order free from every form of authority. Its ultimate aim is to establish a stateless society where "the ruler and the ruled will be merged in the individual". The main features of sarvodaya social order, are as under:-

- No power should be dominant in society; there should only be a discipline of good thought;
- All facilities of the individual to be dedicated to society which must provide the individual for growth and development and
- The moral, social and economic values of all the callings performed honestly should be the same.

Sarvodaya is people's socialism, where there will be more of voluntary participation of the people and non-state form of socialism. The philosophy of Sarvodaya believes in 'inner goodness' of man. But its objective is to establish a small society with ethics and morality. He said that 'self-government, self-management, mutual co-operation and sharing, equality, freedom, brotherhood all could be practiced and developed better if men lived in a small communities. Hence he concluded that "the form of Sarvodaya society will be such that people will manage their affairs with co-operation, non-conflict, self-discipline and sense of responsibility". Unless man realizes the importance of Satyagraha and non-violence, class-war can't solve the problem. Because class-war will beget hatred amongst brothers in the society.

In economic sphere, Jayaprakash travelled from class-war of Marxism, nationalization of democratic socialism to Bhoodan, trusteeship and Sarvodaya. He was sure that ideals of Bhoodan that is –

- ❖ To give surplus land to landless. (Bhoodan).
- ❖ Communalization of land. (Gramdan).
- ❖ Converting property into what Gandhiji called trusteeship. (Sampattidan).

Jayaprakash was relentless crusader for human freedom and democracy. He had made sincere effort to search for new Indian polity where power would really belong to the people. He had raised questions on the efficiency of the present political institutions and processes in India and suggested the measures to make democracy more democratic, efficient, enduring and meaningful. The aim of Jayaprakash is to create and establish a stateless and participatory democracy. Sarvodaya aims at liberty, equality, peace, and fraternity with mass involvement and voluntary participation of people paying less importance on state and government.

Jaya Prakash had a vision of an ideal society in which great human values of equality, freedom, peace and brotherhood would be best realized. It was for that reason that he travelled from political system to another; and in whatever system he could find a greater possibility of realizing the said values, he accepted that. As a man always in search of truth, he was not at all satisfied with ready-made formulas and systems; and he always tried to test their validity through his personal experiences in the given situations or circumstances. By 1970, an account of his experiments on Bhodan and Sarvodaya, Jaya Prakash had been confirmed in his belief that self-government, self-management, mutual cooperation and sharing, equality, freedom, brotherhood all could be practiced and developed for better if men lived in small communities, and that the vitiating influence of Party-Politics could be eradicated from the society if it functioned as a communitarian society. He had lost his faith both in a parliamentary democracy of the Western type and a communist or socialist government working and relying on military force and violence. In place of them, he argued in favour of Sarvodaya which stood for voluntary Socialism to be brought about through peaceful revolution. In the coming years, he had new type of experience of heart transformation by peaceful means, which urged him to turn to the idea of Total Revolution.

Jayaprakash Narayan believed that biological inequality could also be attributed to social inequality. Poor people do not get enough opportunity to develop their potential. So, people may not be always born intelligent but the amount of opportunities they receive in a society make all the difference. In a lucid analysis, meant for the common man, Jayaprakash reviled how accumulation of wealth led to exploitation and inequality.

Anna Hazare is the man who held the lamp for the fight against corruption, illuminating the path to people across the country, in order to attain a corruption-free India. The method used by him is the same old Gandhian way of 'fast unto death' in order to curb the menace. Retiring voluntarily from the army in 1977, Anna began to work as a social activist through his organization Bhraasthachar Virodhi Jan Andolan and in 1991 went for his first indefinite fast against corruption, a scandal where 42 forest officers had duped the Maharashtra government of crores of rupees (**Tare, India Today, 2011**). Two decades later when he retook his eleventh fast, again against corruption, a difference occurred for the whole nation joined him and thus marking the beginning of a popular movement, the 2011 Indian Anti- Corruption Movement.

India, irrespective of successive attempts made by the various governments that have been formed since independence, to eradicate corruption. In fact, the dynamics of corruption in Indian democracy are multi-faceted. Corruption is about disparities of power and the subversion by entrenched relations of privilege of formal laws that promise equality and opportunity. Since being represented as the focus of patriotic loyalty in the early years of Indian freedom, the “state” was in quick time transformed in elite perception to being the fount of all iniquity.

The other side of this story, of rising inequality and of the numerous excluded sections seeking to assert their right to a share in political power through the electoral process featured in the “news” agenda as a sidelight, an interesting curiosity. Political corruption is an ongoing problem in India, acknowledged domestically and internationally. Corruption or misuse of power by the person in the office.

Large sections of the middle classes articulate a different worldview and seek solutions through politics and the state. For middle classes coming from historically marginalised sections, the state remains an important centre where they gain or lose power. Hence, they continue to depend on the state and its framework of social justice, rights, and entitlements, and on representative democracy. This is in sharp contrast with the push for efficiency, completion, and value-neutral meritocracy by the dominant middle classes, and creates for contestation on issues such as affirmative action policies, representative vs. direct democracy, and notions of equality

as sameness vs. substantive equality. Similarly, sub-sections of the middle classes who live in small towns and cities of rural India do not exemplify the new middle classes because while they may share the aspiration of their metropolitan counterparts, their consumption patterns and location in the economy differ.

It is important to note that at this bottom level of corruption, both those taking and giving bribes come from the same segment – the urban middle and lower middle classes and the rural farming community. It is these people who flocked to Anna Hazare's demonstration. They are a divided lot, torn by self-conflict as bribe takers and bribe givers. The same electrician or telephone linesman who demands bribe from his neighbour to restore the service, or the three-wheeler driver who cheats his passenger, has to pay a bribe to the local petty official to gain a no-objection certificate to get his house registered! The same grocer who is cheating his customer has to pay a regular hafta or protection money to the beat constable. There is thus a tacit mental collaboration between individual bribe-taking and collective bribe-giving.

In this scenario of the anti-corruption movement, like the other parliamentary parties, the Left also was caught unaware by the demonstrations of support for Anna Hazare. It belatedly jumped into the scene, divided between the need to echo the public anger against corruption and the fear that the Jan Lokpal would encroach on the rights of its parliamentarians. The repeated assertion by its leaders that the Constitution is above everything and that the rights of Parliament are non-negotiable, reflects a mindset that ignores the people's supreme right to make decisions even to change the Constitution and reform parliamentary rules in the direction of a more morally accountable and participatory politics. The Parliament-centric approach of the Left parties results from their long absence from civil society where ordinary citizens face daily problems, and distance from extra-parliamentary mass struggles. While they surely take up economic issues like price rise and unemployment among other things in their demonstrations, corruption had not been a top priority in their list of concerns. Yet, the fight against a social evil like corruption is part and parcel of the struggle to change the political and economic system. The environment can act as either an encouragement to bribery, or as a coercive milieu to prevent it. The propagation of a strong ethical culture to change the environment, along with a robust governance with stiff punitive measures against the offenders, can deter corruption. But at

the end, the fight against corruption has to be situated in the wider strategy of changing both the economic model of development and the social culture, which carry the seeds of corruption.

Conclusion

In India there are still a number of challenges for democracy. Though we have adopted the federal form of government, the central government is dominating over the state governments. Citizens have been denied their basic civil and political rights, corruption, violation of the election code of conduct there are some demerits which are destabilizing our democratic Society. We have completed 67 years of independence our democracy is still in infant stage. The modern concept of democracy not only covered the political aspect, its large equal emphasis on its social and economic dimensions.

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