

THE CHANGING PATTERN OF POLITICAL DYNAMISM IN INDIA

A CASE STUDY OF ANNA HAZARE MOVEMENT

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THE paper comprehensively analyzes the development of a new middle class as an offshoot of the rampant economic growth of India after 1991. This economic prosperity has not only resulted in the uplifting of socio-economic conditions but has surged the level of consciousness, concernment and awareness among people and they have become more concerned with their frame of rule and political order where it demands for potent assertion. Paper also focuses on the development of Indian polity in post-colonial phase and juxtaposes the uprising of Anna Hazare with the popular movement of Sampurn Kranti by JP Narayan. There is a continuous demand for change in political order that could accommodate newly emerged Middle Class and movement of Anna Hazare is the best elucidation of this phenomenon.

Purpose: Purpose of the research is to find the rationale of a popular rising in a country like India which offers the most functional democracy of the world.

Design/methodology/Approach: Exploratory research methodology has been followed along with the qualitative data analysis. On hand literature on Indian Middle Class has been carefully examined and over the case study interviews and primary introspection has been made.

Findings: The Indian boom of economic prosperity due to liberalized economy has resulted in a strong educated Middle Class which yearns for its stature in political sphere. The movement of Anna Hazare serves as a vantage point for Indian middle class to forcefully assert itself.

Research Limitations/Implications: The study is significant rather appurtenant because of the increasing significance of India in global sphere. This paper would aim at exploring the societal dynamism associated with the state and polity in India.

Originality/Value: 19% similarity Index and all that has been cited has footnotes and bibliography.

Key Words: Middle Class, Neo-Metropolitan Bourgeoisie, Socioeconomics, Colonialism, Liberal Economy, Post-Colonialism.

Introduction

The impact of colonialism on the recent democratic development in India cannot be shrugged off. Strong administrative structure, strengthened political elite and intermediaries were the legacies on hand for India at the time of independence (Jones, 1964). India did not opt for any specific economic mechanism in its inceptive years rather it preferred for mixed model of economy where centralized planning was borrowed from USSR.

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Like idealists who primarily focus on the institutional development Nehru also went for the consolidation of the institutions where the strengthening of electoral practice resulted in the vibrant democratic practice which in later stages made India as the most functional democracy of the world. Democratic development is directly proportional to the political stability, so much of democratic development in India owes to the political stability (Nallari and Griffith, 2011). With India's emergence as a vibrant and stable polity the nexus of development and democracy has become very evident and viable. This nexus operates in varying levels with the transitional structure. Level of economic development and the democratic incidence are inextricably linked (Przeworski, 2000).

As an offshoot to liberalized economy post 1991 India is on the path of rampant economic growth. It has drifted India towards a major transition where millions of families who were entrenched in poverty have been uplifted and are now been placed in metropolis and resulted in a new middle class. By 2025 India would achieve the status of 5th largest consumer economy and in coming two decades its household economy will get tripled (The 'Bird of Gold'). It is the illustration of the fact that India is marching in the realm of economics which is not only strengthening this new middle class but is fortifying it where Middle Class of any country is very significant as it introduces human capital, new innovation and struggle.

Consumerism has come in limelight in the aftermath of the neo-liberal policies where India emerged as a potential consumer economy and this trend is getting upward with passing time. Economic prosperity of India and neo-middle class share a two pronged promising relationship. At one hand it is benefiting India with improved standard of life and other hand it is maturing the sense of political representation and creating a new sphere of assertion of this newly emerged Middle Class.

India has imparted a new sense of rejuvenated nation where it has become centre of attraction for the world. This sense of getting exalted is new to India as well. India's growing economics can be elucidated from a fact that when world was entrenched into the catastrophic phase of worst recession India was commemorating its continuous annual growth of 9% (Desai, 2011). This has not only resulted in the uplifting of socio-economic conditions but has surged the level of consciousness, concernment and awareness among people and they have become more concerned with their frame of rule and political order. This concerned middle class aspires for a potent assertion in the political order of its polity. The movement of Anna Hazare against corruption is the best explanation of the above mentioned phenomenon where neo-middle class is endeavouring for its acknowledgement.

Post-Colonial Development of Indian Polity

India and her immediate neighbour Pakistan are post-colonial polities, so after independence India was encountering the same challenges which mostly transitional countries face. A tremendously diverse class and caste based social structure was inherited by India as its historical and colonial legacy. The consolidation of democracy in such a diverse society is something worth intriguing where it was a common perception of colonial masters that parliamentary democracy would not deem fit in a society that is intensely divided on communal, religious and ethnic lines and where hierarchical social structure prevails over ideological considerations (Brass, 1994).

India was riddled with three perplexing questions at the time of its inception. One was to fortify democracy in a polarized framework, secondly the placement of religion in state's sphere, and third was the option of economic system either of capitalistic bloc or centralized planning inspired from the model of USSR. India in its first five years of independence went for the communitarian reorientation which was pledged by the Congress elite during freedom movement. Apparently the growing significance of Indian autonomous regionalism owes itself to that initial settlement. A strong centre was established under constitutional framework along with the parliamentary democracy as system of governance. Secondly India opted for a secular frame of rule where religion was not discredited at all by the political elite but state did not acclaim any religion officially. It was a nimble move at the part of India, though this secularism itself is dual faced and the rule and will of majority prevail. Minorities are mostly envisaged

as vote banks. In the realm of economics India opted for centralized planning but with a mixed model of economy. India yearned for a major role in Asia and the wave of decolonization movement and for that spectrum of non-aligned movement was carved out.

India always envisioned itself a mature and big civilization and this civilizational character of India was pleaded cogently by Nehru who wanted India to be regarded and revered. The domination of Congress from 1947-64 gave tremendous stability to India which resulted in the consolidation of electoral politics and made electorates as vibrant and viable institution. It strengthened electoral practices at centre and even local level as well. The Indian democracy in its inceptive phase can be best understood by understanding the negotiation for power and fluctuating determinants of socioeconomic importance. India went for a centralized rule but did not exclude Middle Class interests within framework that was elite dominated. With a strong and powerful centre, maximum autonomy was given to states. India maintained a very thin line balance between centralization and devolution of powers where like federal democracies India also images itself as a centralized state. And it is a plain fact that demands for decentralization makes sense within a centralized frame of rule (Kohli, 2001).

The Indian Middle Class

In Weberian context the theoretical definition of Middle Class is a stratum in a hierarchical society that is below the upper class but is slightly upward from lower class. The Middle Class is a very broader term that involves culture along with social and political practices. The definition of Middle class in socio-economic perspective can be regarded as an offshoot of modernity where it talks for changing the pattern of pedagogy, reverting traditional trends and altering mode of subsistence. The Middle Class is the most assertive hierarchy of any society that runs from pillar to post to ensure its status and survival. It works on a short term agenda with minimal calculated risks and a clear vision and standard of life which it yearns for (Smith, 2007).

In India Middle Class is the byproduct of colonialism where initiation of modernity process through communication and institutions resulted in the genesis of new nobility that was privileged and was loyal to British. The replacement of English against Persian was a stepping stone toward s modernity which resulted in unintended consequences. Hindus' willingness to learn it and Muslims' reluctance escalated the communal competition. Modern institutions and mode of communication were setup. Effective mechanism of railways was established. The colonialism with its constraints of structure rendered a very ambivalent status to this newly emerged group that somewhere rests points of access and the incentives and privileges but it restricts its access to economic manipulation and political power (Fernandeas, 2006).

In post-independence phase there was slow involvement of the people in political setup because frame of rule was dominated by those who led the freedom movement. But in other way that was the representation of the Middle Class which later on assumed the role of political elite. In its early phase the Middle class in India was dependent more on state where Nehruvan era was marked with state interventionist policies in economy. The growth of Middle Class in post-independence phase has got strong linkages with existing Middle Class through colonially inherited elite and institutions. India's policy of a uniform education surged the employment opportunities and raised education at local level. Thus this was state dependent emerging Middle Class. The system of license-Raj initiated by Ms. Gandhi made participation of those people in the system that has got direct stakes. Unionization process commenced. The white collar union is the best elucidation of the Middle Class's political mobilization (Fernandeas, 2006).

Rise of Neo-Metropolitan Bourgeoisie

Modern Middle Class is a post 1991 development in India. It can be regarded as third phase of evolution of Indian Middle Class which has briskly changed and improved the socio-economic conditions in rural polities and has imparted a new better standard of living but this group neither comes in elite nor on bourgeois. This class of society has got tremendous economic weight but it lacks political representation on all counts.

Hamza Alavi (1972) was the first one who deliberated this concept of metropolitan bourgeoisie. His focus was on dialectical Marxist notion but this neo metropolitan bourgeoisie is somehow different as it is an offshoot of neo liberal economic policies and an aftermath of public private entrepreneurship. It has resulted in the formation and consolidation of a strengthened, aware, educated and grounded Middle Class. India throughout his history has remained populously rural country but this neo metropolitan bourgeoisie is largely settled in cities and metropolis. India in its past was considered less urbanized but this trend is also getting reversed. So this neo metropolitan bourgeoisie is essentially urbanite class. Trends of ruralization are getting reverted. Awareness and consciousness are not only socializing the masses but making them more concerned and active participants of the system.

There has been a significant shift where small cities are becoming centers. Remote and secluded areas are also getting affected with this wave of modernity. In near future this neo metropolitan bourgeoisie is likely to expand itself as more and more areas would be incorporated in it. Economy is likely to be monopolized by the big metropolitan centers but emerging cities like Chandigarh and Ludhiana with their increasing per capita incomes are likely to capture attention in coming future (Beinhocker and Zainulbhai, 2007). There are some other cultural specters that augmented the rise of neo-metropolitan bourgeoisie as throughout the history of India it remained aloof as an isolationist state. It was the ideational construct of Hindutva that got translated but with the economic rise of India and its growing significance across the globe, it has become a lucrative place for the world and it impels India to redraw and reorient its concepts and constructs. It has intensified the belief of India and made it confident internationally and give it a space to assert regionally which is strengthening and consolidating the structural basis of India.

India remained attached to the ideals of planned economy and democracy despite tremendous differences, conflicts and diversity (Jalal, 1994). In its inceptive years the ruling political elite was poles apart from the traditional notions of Mahatma who proposed for self reliance and decentralized village republics and this elite was more inclined towards the socialist model of centralized planning. India maneuvered smartly and made a mixture of both where centralized planning borrowed from socialist model was implemented at center's level and states were given a sort of free hand. The tremendous participation in the electoral processes and its continuation sustained and dignified the democracy in India's framework. The six decades' continuation of electoral practices has made democracy a culture of India rather a procedural act. With the advent of liberalized economic policy and functioning institutions a new sphere of Middle Class has come into scene that is cognizant, educated, and well aware and is mostly settled in urban centers. Migration from rural areas to these centers is also taking place due to their attraction and consequence of development. This newly emerged class has been termed as neo-metropolitan bourgeoisie.

Escalating Demand for Change in Political Order

Democracy in India has got its own issues and drawbacks as well where there is immense participation but voters have been commoditized, everything comes under the capitalistic interests. Democracy has been inextricably linked with free market and those who are not member to this chain do not matter too much or have been extricated from the system (Roy, 2009). Indian political order is also facing many challenges. Most of the people who are not sponsored lose elections. The elite dominated frame of rule has captured rather tightly gripped India which offers a little to the Middle Class. On who gets maximum share in power capabilities dominates the system. It can be regarded as elite monopolized system. The dominance of single party in functional democracy is perplexing and is making Indian democracy a stagnant democracy. Incumbency factor is also playing its role. The hurdles in legislation, corruption at large and issues of non-governance are tarnishing the face of Congress which might suffer a blow in coming times.

The economics of a country if will exceed and undermines the political demands the system will not persist long, even if politics monopolizes brushing economics aside. The economic system and Political system must coincide with one another to run system in balance (Huntington, 1968). The political

order within transitional countries is typified with expectation from government, demands and agitation from public as an aftermath to non deliverance. The system that does not respond to the genuine concerns of the masses in long run loses its worth and significance and turns irrelevant and inappropriate. In India still there is miserable poverty, human development index is still low and a significant difference between those possess and those who do not. In India the 300 million people live in a pathetic situation. 250,000 debt-ridden farmers who committed suicide and approx 800 million are deprived and earn less than 20 rupees a day (Roy, 2012).

The access to modern means of communication along with massive awareness make people think whether democracy means deliverance or just holding procedural ballots? Corruption is a shared paradox of post-colonial states where India is also facing the same predicament. Many embezzlements and scams have been reported in recent days where corruption seems to be systemized. There are powerful individuals and groups who favour status quo in India for their interests like many other countries where state dominates over economics (Jenkins). The disparities among the masses propel them to assert themselves as Jan Lokpal Bill in India has become a symbol of discontentment of Indian Middle Class.

The Movement of Anna Hazare

Anna Hazare emerged as an iconic figure when he waged his battle against corruption. He demanded equal accountability for all and strongly protested against the exemption of political elite. His hunger strike pulled him in limelight and brought him a tremendous support. Anna announced to strive unless Jan Lokpal bill gets passed from the Lok Sabha.

Anna Hazare has got a long history of struggles. In 1991 he did one similar attempt when he launched "*Bhrashtachar Virodhi Jan Aandolan*" in Ralegaon Siddhi. He forcefully introduced his own morality, took law into his own hands and used it to tie the drunkards with the poles for public shame. It was just for public shame there was no beating (Seabrook, 1993). He took up an issue of forty forest officials who were colluding with timber merchants. It resulted in the transfers of those officials. In 1997 he made public the malpractices in power looms. His motto was that through a strong level of involvement and commitment a dream for self reliant strong nation could be achieved that would have self sufficient villages ("What is the Jan Lokpal Bill, 2011").

Anna received much popularity over Citizen Ombudsman bill popularly known as Jan Lokpal Bill where he demanded equal treatment and accountability for politicians and bureaucrats ("What is the Jan Lokpal Bill, 2011"). In April 2011, he started his protest against this bill and he announced fast unto death. The demand of Anna was that politicians must also be included in the list of who can be held accountable and intensely lambasted the weak accountability bill initiated by the government. His efforts were supported by the youth and Middle Class that comprised of people from every walk of life. They rallied behind him and massive congregations on Indian roads made Anna a strengthened voice against corruption. Anna a disciple of Gandhian tradition demanded that civil activists must also be indulged in the process of drafting law against corruption (India Activist Anna Hazare Ends Hunger Strike, 2012).

Anna symbolically ended his strike on April 9th, 2011 when his demands got accepted but later on he rejected the draft of the bill and he intimated that he would go for strike for indefinite period. Middle Class's concern with this issue can be illustrated by a fact that after the rejection of Anna and endorsement of bill by government, people within 24 hours communicated ten thousand faxes demanding strong bill against corruption (Avaaz Decries Cabinet's Endorsement of a Weak Lokpal Bill, 2011). Anna Hazare got support of lawyers. Opposition parties, Vishwa Hindu Parishad in particular stood by his stance. Mumbai taxi union showed their solidarity with Anna by keeping their taxis off on August 16th (Taxi Union to join Hazare's Fight for Lokpal, 2012).

It raises a very intriguing question why Indian Middle Class supported or cheerfully acquiesced to the leadership of a person who is traditional in his outlook and his thoughts and mental proclivity reflects

his orthodoxy. He is a man with authoritarian values. There is a large sense of deprivation in Indian Middle Class in the wake of economic boom where post-colonial trends amalgamated with rising community has carved a new identity for Middle Class. It intends to have a spectrum where it could assert itself. It needs its representation. Indian Middle Class is projecting its emphatic presence in the face of Anna Hazare movement.

India did experience such like major standing up in the decade of 70s when JP Narayn stood up against the authoritarian Indira with a slogan of Lok Saiva. He was also vehemently embraced by the masses who embraced with his slogan of total revolution. The movement was of great success because of one party's domination in state's framework and tight control of Indira over state's affairs. This movement pushed India towards the first constitutional emergency. Narayan became a phenomenon in India who challenged the rhetoric of composite culture with Janta culture (Vaidya, 2012). Democracy remained intact always in India even total revolution movement did not disregard it. Congress lost as an aftermath to this movement in Center's elections. Janta party came into power. Under the mixed economy's model that was the first popular accentuation of Indian Middle Class.

Anna's has also got tremendous response from the masses because the frame of rule is elite dominant and it offers no space and representation to the Middle Class in political arena where India's Middle Class intends to enact a major role and potent assertion. Anna is a symbolic character of Indian Middle Class's representation. Congress may have to face some dire consequences in coming elections where its long hauling discourse of rule may get impeded.

Conclusion

Indian democracy has achieved the status of more substantive than participative but apparently this participative frame of rule is not accommodating the neo-metropolitan bourgeoisie and that is why Indian democracy seems to be stuck on a point and is not further progressing. Critics do hold a belief that Indian democracy has become more of a gerontocracy. The new blood is also not getting warm embrace. Recent setting up of Aam Admi party is the best elucidation of the disgruntlement among the masses. Though the feudal lordship in India has been abolished but powerful elite has hijacked all the system and has become lord itself. Issues of corruption, incompetence and ill governance are smacking Indian masses where resentment is rife.

The political parties in India themselves are unsure and obscure over the future of this system. Internal hustle in parties has constricted their vision. If the Middle Class would not be accommodated then in future these mainstream parties might face some dire consequences. It may carve out sphere for new political parties like recently Aam Admi party has been established. The dynamism of Anna Hazare will have long term effects on Indian polity. The resentment in Middle Class is there but possibility of any insurrection or rebellion is highly unusual. Congressional rule may suffer a blow back in long run but problematic perception is the demising influence of Janta culture. Apparently it is Middle Class activism and dynamism that cannot be juxtaposed with the very concept of revolution. It is an offshoot of rapid socio-economic change where participation and concern of Indian Middle Class along with electoral dynamism has fueled this disgruntlement. Anna Hazare is merely a lexicon of this activism which does not necessarily represent the cognitive structures and constructs of Indian elite. It is a changing pattern of political dynamism in India and a symbol of involvement and politicking of Indian Middle Class. Democracy in India would remain intact as it has got deeply consolidated and having structural roots in a society where democracy is embraced as a religion. The movement of Anna Hazare ostensibly projects altering pattern of political dynamism in India.

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