

INDIAN STREAMS RESEARCH JOURNAL

“THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY OF BABU JAGJIVAN RAM”



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Abstract :

Jagjivan Ram, as national leader, parliamentarian, Union Minister and champion of depressed classes, he had a towering presence and played a long innings spanning half a century in Indian politics. His enduring and quintessentially twentieth century political legacy reminds us of the fervor, idealism and indomitable spirit of India's political leadership that not only fought and won freedom for the country, but also laid the firm foundation for a modern, democratic polity. Gifted with a flair for political leadership and moved by the ideals and goals of the socio-political events that enveloped the country, Babu Jagjivan Ram played a significant role in scripting our country's political and constitutional development and social change.

Key Words:- Political Philosophy, economic Philosophy, Social Philosophy, Parliamentarian, Administrator, political leader,

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INTRODUCTION

Babu Jagjivan Ram (5 April 1908 – 6 July 1986) affectionately called Babuji, was a Indian freedom fighter, a crusader for social justice and a messiah of downtrodden. His meteoric rise in public life saw him emerge as an eminent and popular political leader who devoted his entire life working for the welfare of the country. He belonged to the vintage era of modern Indian politics. As a national leader, a great parliamentarian, Union Minister for more than three decades and champion of depressed classes, he had a towering presence and played a long inning spanning over half a century in Indian Politics. His enduring and quintessentially twentieth century political legacy reminds us of the fervor, idealism and indomitable spirit of India's political leadership that not only fought and won freedom for the country, but also laid the firm foundation for a modern democratic polity. Gifted with a flair of political leadership and moved by the ideals and goals of the socio-political events that enveloped the country, Babu Jagjivan Ram played a significant role in scripting our country's political and constitutional development and social changes. A passionate leader, dedicated to public life, he enjoyed immense respect from all quarters. Widely admired for his leadership qualities and organizational abilities, he always remained a force to be reckoned with in Indian politics.

Babu Jagjivan Ram was a great patriot, a scholar statesman, a versatile & genius personality, a brilliant orator, a distinguished parliamentarian, a true democrat and a great administrator of the country. Imbued with a deep spirit of patriotism, he contributed a lot towards building an egalitarian society. Babu Jagjivan Ramji has done a lot for the amelioration of the conditions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country. He had grown by himself, without any support from outside and excelled not only as a Minister in a variety of posts he had held in the Union Ministry but also as AICC president, a valiant leader of the oppressed and the depressed. He enthused the country for Defense preparedness as a Defense Minister, brought in the Green Revolution as a Minister of Agriculture, expanded the Railways as a Railway Minister, inducted sophisticated fighter aircraft and improved the service conditions of armed forces personnel as Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister and thereby distinguished himself in every field that was entrusted to him.

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Being a busy politician and a senior Minister he did not have enough time to express his thinking in any holistic and academic framework despite his intellectual sharpness, deep understanding and intensive as well as extensive experience of men and public affairs. He did not put his thoughts down in a systematic manner, except on the question of caste (in the book “Caste Challenge in India”) at a later stage. However, it is possible to make a brief survey of his outlook and thinking by sifting through the numerous speeches, addresses and interviews that he gave, as well as the records of his debates in Parliament which bear testimony to a wide ranging mind and a keen observer with capacity to analyse every problem threadbare with an eye on constructive and practical solution.

Political Philosophy:

Jagjivan Ram's political convictions came from certain observations that he made of society and his personal experience of politics in actual life. The first was that caste had been perverted from its original intention, into a social reality in which one group considered itself to be superior to another and deprived it of all rights. The only way to end this was for the oppressed to unite and through the strength of their numbers, bring to an end this discrimination. Simultaneously, the oppressed group must work with other sections of society and not against them. If it worked against other groups, it was not likely to end discrimination, but might even end up increasing it. One discerns a sense of agony but no acrimony in his approach to this thorny problem. It was for this reason that the Depressed Classes League joined hands with the Congress. Jagjivan Ram maintained his strength through his own organizations, while simultaneously working in tandem with those he believed harboured a view of society similar to his. In this manner, he hoped to bring about harmony and cohesiveness in society. As a Minister, while he took particular interest in the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, he did not confine himself to them. He looked after the welfare of the entire broad spectrum of those who constituted society. This could only be possible in a democratic system. He worked for a participatory democracy, as could be seen in the manner in which he tried to involve as many people as possible in the making of policies in many of the Ministries that he headed, consulting widely and deeply with sincerity and sensitivity.

On Economic Issues:

Jagjivan Ram was a firm believer in a Planned economy. According to him, it was the only way in which not just the narrow interests of one section of society, who held all power in their hands, but the interests of all sections of society, could be served. It was also the only tool through which the wastage of scarce resources could be prevented. It is interesting to consider the lengthy reply that he gave to a question on whether the adoption of democratic socialism in

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India had been correct: “Ideologies and concepts do change from time to time. Gandhiji made the village the centre-piece in his concept of planning. He stressed as imperative of planning, the utilizing of the unutilized or under-utilised rural labour and their skill through organization of agriculture and village industries. He advocated the democratic decentralization and dispersal of economic and political power. All his constructive programmes were related to his ideal of making a new man in a new society. When power shifted into the hands of the people, the ideals took the shape of actions. Therefore, soon after independence, India embarked upon planned socio-economic development to transform quickly her colonial village economy, feudal agrarian pattern and backward rural technology into a highly developed or an economic society of an advanced nation, so as to cater to the social requirements of the masses and achieve the goal of democratic socialism”. He always stood strongly for equity and egalitarianism in economy and society.

Conclusion:

Jagjivan Ram was no ordinary individual. He was endowed with a strong intellect, a stout heart, great strength of character, firmness of conviction and purpose and an astounding capacity for sustained hard work. He had a vision along with capability and clarity of approach towards its realization. Jagjivan Ram was not only an astute politician, an outstanding parliamentarian but also a great administrator. He combined idealism and pragmatism in his approach to problems. He would give opportunity to all of his advisers or officers to express freely and frankly their reactions or views and listen to them quietly and intervene occasionally to seek clarifications or elaboration of some vexed points. Having done this he would succinctly and clearly give his definitive opinion or decision. There was a finality about his decision and his personality was such that those responsible for execution of the decision would do so without demur or doubt as they always were confident of guidance and support as and when necessary. He could therefore produce results as desired by him in his various exacting spheres of ministerial responsibility. His memory was phenomenal and his decisiveness was proverbial. In any discussion or debate he would manage to his final say persuasively and logically. He had an uncanny sense of humour, capacity for repartees and thorough grasp or mastery of the subject in detail and in depth. The happy blending of those qualities made him a front rank parliamentarian whom everyone would like to listen to with attention and respect. Jagjivan Ram fought against caste prejudices all his life. But while deploring the conduct of those who practised caste prejudice, he never directed his ire against them, he never harboured hate or animus for them. He was keen for social solidarity and social progress and amity and for removal of social inequity of every kind and complexion.

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