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REPERCUSSIONS OF VOTE BANK CHASE IN INDIA

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Abstract:

As a particular ideology is the basis of formation of political parties so they use and propagate that ideology in pie-poll scenario. But arrival of elections brings out irrelevant facets of these, inconsistent with their ideologies and manifestoes. Exploitation of communal feeling of the voters during elections to the extreme is a main weapon in the armoury of the contesting party as well as the candidates. Although seeds of communal representation in Legislative institutions were sown by British but Indian Constitution discarded these as outdated and outmoded to give a cohesive and integrated outlook to Indian Constitution after independence but unscrupulous politicians do not hesitate to communalize the sensitive issues during election time to the detriment of unity in diversity feature. Politicians profess secularism but most of them are possessed of communalism and use the same to flair up this sentiment in a community against another at times and try to get the sympathy of all the communities. This kind of poisonous thinking prompts the political parties to identify the constituencies and put up the candidate of the majority community in that very area. Committed secularists play vote bank policies pitching, one community against the other at the time of elections.

INTRODUCTION

In democratic setup reservation policy is not considered act of charity rather act of social justice to integrate SC, ST and BC into mainstream and protect their due share and opportunities. Some feel that this legalized discrimination and reverse discrimination polarize the cast system. It was a transitory arrangement to achieve the socio-economic uplift of the weaker sections and means of enlisting their loyalty and meaningful participation in the democratic setup and a stage will be reached when the whole system of reservation will become farcical and negations of constitutional provisions. Reservation has been constitutionalised so that we may march from political freedom to economic freedom and equality. So there is no need to give justification for reservation. Creamy layer should not be adjusted against reservation. At elections time speeches emphasis that India which practiced caste based discrimination for about 300 years and consigned the bulk of population to its dung heap, 50 years of reservation is like a drop in the ocean and fixing date to end it a wishful thinking. The word "when" is like infinity. Centre and state are using reservation as tool to widen their vote banks. Religion based reservation not only violate the principle of equality but pervert the policy of secularism. Our politicians are doing great disservice to the nation and disturbing social harmony. Divisive politics must be defeated if we are to consolidate secularism and bring in progressive society.

Caste factor had played a prominent role in our social as well as political life since times immemorial. It works as a deciding factor during election scenario and caste sentiments plays havoc at national and state level elections when integrity, honesty and consistent loyalty to nation are thrown to the winds by the electorates while choosing from the contesting candidates. If we divide the votes in water tight compartments we come to the conclusion that some stick to their political parties, whatever reason for this may be but there are some conservative electorates who imperceptible have got their brain preoccupied

with caste ingredients which reverberates in the election scenario. Every speaker in election campaigns pronounce himself as the champion of secularism but his ultimate armory is to hit caste sentiment in a veiled manner just like a juggler who kept waiting the gathering for the ultimate trick but before that collects the money and moves away.

Minority rights are the most contested issues at the times of elections. State is often accused of abdicating its constitutional responsibility to protect religious minorities. Preservation of secular and plural character of India and problem of economic and social deprivation suffered by large sections are discussed. Focus is on the rights of marginalized communities having growing sense of disillusionment. In every gathering the starting point is protection of constitutional guarantees accorded to minority communities and preservation of secular values, communal harmony, and preservation of languages, culture, religious practices and administration of their own educational institutions and personal laws for different communities. They argue that Muslims are worst off their counterparts on all social economic indicators as they have nominal presence in administration, police defense services, financial and banking institutions. All political parties have kept mum on Jinnana cause because of loosing vote bank of Muslims.

Indira Gandhi innovated the phrase of vote bank and tried to establish herself by winning the hearts of people below the line of poverty by nationalizing the private banks and abolishing the Privy Purses of the erstwhile rulers which though proved meaningless actions but temporarily gained the upper hand over her electorates. Jai Parkash Narayan challenged her infinite hunger for power and mobilized the masses on his own line of action. Starting from Bihar he engulfed the whole of India. His strength lied in students organizations. He snatched the power from Indira Gandhi through ballots and handed over the reign to conglomeration of several political parties which could never imagine such a situation to come. Chandershekhar became Prime Minister but was over thrown by Charan Singh an unscrupulous defector who had consolidated his roots in Kissan community and reaped harvest without any pain who did not face the Parliament for a day during his tenure as Prime Minister. Thereafter came an era when vote bank conception remained in the donnant. Then followed the periods of non performing governments which never left their footmarks on the sands of time, only just came and went unsung. After this non eventful period came of big religion exploiters BJP which used Hinduism as a plank to rise to power without outwardly accepting this route. Lal Krishan Advani the main architect of Hindutva episode adopted Rath Yatra to evoke sentiments and emotions of conservative Hindus in the name of construction of Ram Temple at Ayodhya. His misadventure succeeded and BJP came to power with the help of other associates. In Gujarat, Narinder Modi too build his edifice on the same ideology to capture power. Then time came when voters saw through their confusing stands and rejected them out rightly in the subsequent election. Creation of vote banks has been the only weapon in the armoury of political parties to catapult their self to power.

But some permanent features worth mentioning are there in Indian polity to be used from time to time which people have imbibed in the social and political culture which imperceptible change their mindset and they come to know the reality when nothing could be done to retreat back. In Punjab Shrimom Akali Dal has been trying to maintain their supremacy in the rural areas though various soaps and utilizing their power to consolidate their vote bank ignoring government partner BJP's threats of parting way with them if they continued to burden the urban areas at the cost of rural. There is no dearth of mischief mongers. Now, Nitish Kumar from Bihar is thinking to split the scheduled castes in two categories the Dalits and Mahan Dalits. There seems no end of this kind of terrible thinking.

During election time in India regional and parochial issues are forerunner. Every national objective is eclipsed during election campaign as all political parties feel that exploitation of regional factor is a must. Regional parties as well as national parties foment regional moments and legitimize the same to create a base for their political survivals. To capitalize, national parties even align themselves with regional parties without caring for the genuineness of demand of the region. The goal before them is to gain maximum number of seats and protect the erosion of their popular support and cut into their vote at regional level. Regional parties are formidable check on the authoritarian approach of the national parties. National political parties have to enter into electoral understanding or pre-election alliances with regional parties as these have the potential of cutting into the popularity of the national parties at the state level. Political parties demands distributive justice and thus generate ethnic and economic regionalism.

On going attitude of Thackeray's pursuing the politics of regional chauvinism for sharpening the divide in Mumbai through misguided gullible youths with parochial line of thinking is unacceptable with vitriolic statements.

When religion becomes the basic social identity of a group, it becomes a homogeneous and cohesive community especially in the political field. "It is the belief that in India Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs form different and distinct communities. India is, therefore, considered to be a "confederation of religious communities". Keeping in view the myriad religious, linguistic and even ethnic differences prevailing in India, our constitution makers had no choice but to opt for secularism and

communalism was expected to die a natural death following independence. Yet, this did not happen. The division of the country into India and Pakistan did not improve the relations between the two communities, the Hindus and the Muslims. Nehru's idea of a secular state was that the interest of all religious communities and groups must be protected and no community or group should be allowed to usurp the rights of others. After independence, power had obviously cast a greater spell than the higher values of politics and in order to get into office whether it is at the centre or in the states, and even lower down in the local bodies, the politician had necessarily to ensure the maximum number of votes, cutting across all caste and communal barriers. In the resultant fight-to-finish with no holds barred situation, communalism has acquired a prominent position in politics. The problem is that all religious communities in India talk of secularism but consider each other as non-secular and a threat to their interests. They consider, and use the constitutional provisions for religious security and propagating their respective religions in an organized manner. In this secular county there are number of religion based parties. The Hindu Mahasabha mercifully changed its name and its membership criteria and through various meetings become the Bhartiya Janata Party which has opened its doors to members of other communities. There are several Muslim parties exclusively pursuing the interests of Muslims. The Akali Dal of the Sikhs is of the largest and most active religion based political party. A section of it is responsible for the most serious crisis the country has faced since 1947 and the Hindu Shiv Sena has become highly assertive. Every political party is potentially a ruling party in a State or at the Centre.

Mahatma Gandhi devised the ways and means for the upliftment of the state and people but politicians used the same to grind their own ends without caring for the moral codes. Burk propounded the theory of "Principle of expedience" but the same has been utilized to the benefit of the individuals. Rousseau put forward the theory "General will" which emerges where brain regulates the soul and mind. But clever politicians have exploited the minds of the people showing silver lining in the clouds. Some concessions original enshrined in constitution were to nurse the new born democracy but these are and being stretched and no limit seems visible. But here every one is equal before law but not before governments. All paths adopted by politicians converge to vote banks whether it is communalism, reservation, caste, minority, gender, regionalism, secularism and linguism.

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