

Editorial

Saturday, September 1, 2018

A Wake-up call

When Manipur University community went on strike against the Vice Chancellor, BJP MP Prahlad Patel Singh called the University as "Den of insurgency" in the floor of the parliament. The Central Human Resource Development Minister takes over 80 days to act on the demand by the Manipur University Community. Almost all mainland media have limited space to cover the stories why the Manipur University Community was on strike for such a long period. To the contrary a similar demand by teaching community of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) takes hardly a day for all the mainland media to publish all details of why the JNU teachers demanded want to remove vice-chancellor Jagadesh Kumar from office. None from the among any of the MPs called JNU as a den of insurgency. It is perhaps by fate that the dust in the Manipur University has been settled after an agreement has been signed with the Manipur University Community and the representative of the MHRD after around 80 days. Commitment of the teachers' was well delivered and the teachers' works even on Sunday to finish up all the pending works to make sure that career of the students are not marred. At the time when Teachers along with the Manipur University community went on strike, there were many who criticized the MU community. But when the teachers spend sleepless night to safe the career of the students, none had expressed any words of appreciations.

The episode of the Manipur University is being reminded as a wake up called to all the Manipuri including the rebel groups who are engaging in peace talk with the government of India. Yes, this is about the NSCN-IM and the infamous Frame Work Agreement, at which the content is not let known to any of Naga brethrens including the armed cadres of the rebel group. It takes almost over 2 decades to find a way for a solution, that too a completely different solution from what the rebel group had demanded initially. Every time when election comes the issue about bringing a solution will be in the public sphere creating apprehension and chaos to the state of Manipur. The more the issue for solution of the NSCN-IM deals comes up the more the enmity emerges between brothers of Hill and Plain people. Meetings, protest will keep busy the valley people with apprehension of the potential threat to the Manipur's unity, while in the hill many supporting the NSCN-IM cause will organize protest against the valley base civil society organization.

Now the question is, Is the issue of the NSCN-IM going to be solved at the earliest possible times? How sincere and serious is the government of India to the issue of the NSCN-IM? Why the issue about bringing a solution is brought to the limelight during election time only?

Well August 3, 2015, A framework agreement was signed. A parliamentary committee report on the North east particularly about the issue of the NSCN-IM was submitted. And everyone knows that BJP is busy preparing for the upcoming parliamentary election scheduled in 2019.

As per the report speculations about granting a special status which is similar to that of Article 371 of the Indian Constitution or probability of implementing the 6th scheduled for one specific community has worried almost all people of the state.

Well it was only yesterday that the **Supreme Court had adjourned the hearing on petitions challenging constitutional validity of Article 35 A. Article 370 which gives special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir is being challenge by an NGO supported by the ruling BJP party.**

Well, on the question of Article 371 (A) or a similar one, if suppose is granted as a special package to solve the matter of the NSCN-IM will not it be required to table in the floor of the house as it needs constitutional amendment. The pro BJP is already fighting in the Supreme Court against any special status privilege as the country needs an equal law for the entire citizen. What makes the collective leadership of the NSCN-IM in believing such a promise (that too from a Interlocutor) is a matter needs to be pondered by all people of Nagaland who trusted the NSCN-IM.

Regarding the implementation of sixth Scheduled of the Indian constitution, the state already has implemented an adjusted form of the administration system. The so called Sixth Scheduled was passed by the state assembly with the word local adjustment. The term "Local Adjustment" can be anything. Moreover, the Article 371C of the Indian Constitution has already incorporated with the so called sixth scheduled if the "local Adjustment" has to be included.

On the other hand intrusion by Indian army or the Pakistan army at border state Jammu and Kashmir or Arunachal Pradesh is a serious issue of the Indian Government. Manipur even though is also told to be an integral part of the India; the central government doesn't care if the people of the state said that the Myanmar government has intruded at the territory of the state.

This is a wakeup call to all the people of the region, until the people units the region will always a playfield for those in power at the center.

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..... Contd. from Yesterday

RISE OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST PARTIES:

The secular ideology has failed in India by the rise of religious extremist parties. The different reasons for failure of India's secularism are: the origin of the religious extremism, the diverse ethnic and religious characteristic in India and finally the failure of secular political parties of India and rise of Hindu fundamentalist political parties. In India, nationalism had a necessary part to answer to communalism, another modern political development with its own pretensions to nationalism. Real Indian nationalism was actually quite apart from these two religious and communal varieties of nationalism. The nationalism acquired its means from various respects- character of community (unary or federal); power (on basis of elections or constituencies?); language of the nation; culture; flag; anthem; character of its development? (safeguards for minorities and marginalized communities or not);

Communalism is a single ideology with Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian variants or manifestations. It is harmful. The logic of minority communalism is separatism, and majority communalism results in fascism. One of the major problem India faces is armed separatist movement in many of its states. The separatist movements are also threatening the national unity of India. Hindu fundamentalist BJP had promised to solve these problems by force. BJP's extreme domestic and external policies helped them to draw much support from the common Indians.

The origin of religious extremism in India has a long historical background. Even during the colonial period the Hindu extremist leaders were influential in the national politics of India. Even the secularist Congress party had extreme Hindu leaders long before the partition. One Congress leader Aurobindo Ghosh declared on 30 May 1909: "I say it is Hinduism which for us is nationalism. The Hindu nation was born with the Hinduism, with it, it moves and with it, it grows"; "Their religion was their politics and Hinduism was their patriotism". The relationship between the Congress and the Muslim League was declining by late 1930's after the provincial legislative assembly elections of 1936. As a result in the year of 1940 the Muslim League passed the 'Lahore Resolution' which became the basis of Pakistan, a separate state for "Indian Muslims" although congress had secular leaders and they opposed it. Leaders like Patel dreamed about the Kingdom of Rama in the independent India. During the partition of 1947 there were worst Hindu-Muslim communal riots in India and Pakistan.

These riots claimed the lives of millions of Hindus and Muslims. The partition of India and Pakistan was seen by nationalists who were left behind as the most extreme result of the politics of communalism. India was to be a secular modern democracy that was not ever again to be effected by the communal agenda of a minority. Nehru made it clear by stating the nation as a democratic and not communal state. It is then declared that all citizens have equal rights. There is connecting interlinks between the politics of communalism and nationalism and ideas of minority and majority that rests at the heart of the question of secularism in India. It was in the nineteenth century that propagandists and publicists among the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and other religious communities came to be classified as unambiguously Hindu for the first time by Hindu leaders), to purify their communities, and to establish distinct and separate identities. An "all-India Hindu community," an "all-India Muslim community," and a new "Sikh community" distinctly took hold in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Partition significantly hastened this process. Reservation of seats in the cabinet, as a constitutional provision, was also seen as giving rise to serious difficulties and a constitutional guarantee for representation of minority communities in the public services

SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS: India faces is armed separatist movement in many of its states which threaten the national unity of India. Hindu fundamentalist BJP had promised to solve these

Secularism in India

By-Viswa Chaitanya Vanapalli

problems by force. BJP's extreme domestic and external policies helped them to draw much support from the common Indians. The inability of Congress led to the formation of BJP and their militant groups like RSS and the Shiv Shena. After that Hindu fundamentalist occupied all the key post of the Government of India in 1993. Leaders like Mr. Bal Thakarak, the head of the Shiv Sena (Shiv Sena is responsible for the destruction of the Babri Mosque and he was arrested in 1992 for his campaign for the destruction of the Mosque) became the Home Minister. Hundreds of Muslims were killed by Hindu extremist groups in Gujarat but the Central Government of India and also the state government did not take any serious measure to against Hindu extremist in Gujarat. This proves that the ruling party of India has much sympathy for religious extremist groups. RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) has been criticized as an extremist and a paramilitary group. The RSS was found in 1925 and carried out acts of violence against Muslims. It involved in attacking the minority groups throughout India. It was designated a terrorist organization by the Terrorist Research Center in 2004. The objective of this terrorizing arm of the RSS is to transform the secular republic into a "Hindu Kashtira". Consider, a Muslim organization claiming that they mean to turn India into an Islamic state. Within no time, the organization would be banned and its members locked up as jihadi "terrorists".

INDIA-PAKISTAN PARTITION EFFECTS: The relationship between the Congress and the Muslim League was declining by late 1930's after the provincial legislative assembly elections of 1936. As a result in the year of 1940 the Muslim League passed the 'Lahore Resolution' which became the basis of Pakistan, a separate state for "Indian Muslims" although congress had secular leaders and they opposed it. Leaders like Patel dreamed about the Kingdom of Rama in the independent India. During the partition of 1947 there were worst Hindu-Muslim communal riots in India and Pakistan. These riots claimed the lives of millions of Hindus and Muslims. The partition of India and Pakistan was seen by nationalists who were left behind as the most extreme result of the politics of communalism. India was to be a secular modern democracy that was not ever again to be effected by the communal agenda of a minority. Nehru made it clear by stating the nation as a democratic and not communal state. It is then declared that all citizens have equal rights. There is connecting interlinks between the politics of communalism and nationalism and ideas of minority and majority that rests at the heart of the question of secularism in India.

It was in the nineteenth century that propagandists and publicists among the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and other religious communities came to be classified as unambiguously Hindu for the first time by Hindu leaders), to purify their communities, and to establish distinct and separate identities. An "all-India Hindu community," an "all-India Muslim community," and a new "Sikh community" distinctly took hold in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Partition significantly hastened this process. Reservation of seats in the cabinet, as a constitutional provision, was also seen as giving rise to serious difficulties and a constitutional guarantee for representation of minority communities in the public services

in proportion to the population was considered as a dangerous innovation that was not in keeping with a secular democratic state. The political safeguards considered were the uestion of joint vs separate electorates, reservation of seats in the central and state legislative assemblies and in the cabinet and the administrative services. But, the system of separate electorates was rejected in the new Constitution on the ground that a common electorate would help remove the poison of communal-ism from the body politic.

FAILURE OF INDIAN GOVERNMENT:

During the anti-colonial struggle, incorporation of India's urban elites to framed the way to Congress. The Congress is largely responsible in both instances—India's secular nationalism came to be displaced by one based on adherence to race and religion. Just as the Congress incorporated rather than confronted feudal social practices and formations through the "freedom movement", it has sought to cater to rather than educate out of existence those formations in the electoral career of independent India. When India became an independent country on August 15, 1947 the leaders of the Congress understood that the key to unity is secularism and it can become the foundation of Indian nationalism dealing with the population size of India. But even so, there were always Hindu-Muslim misunderstandings in India. After the end of colonialism in India, it was observed that India forcefully annexed two Muslim princely states i.e. Kashmir and Hyderabad. During this period India also fought three wars with Pakistan. The Indian Army is fighting Muslim separatist in Kashmir even to the present date.

The religious riots are mainly responsible for increasing tensions between the Hindus and Muslims. The Congress had lost its popularity around 1990's. There is lack of proper leader to guide Congress. It is even due to corruption and its pro-fundamentalist policies. After Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in 1991 there is no proper leader for Congress. Currently Rajiv's widow Sonia Gandhi heads Congress. Sonia Gandhi was an Italian citizen and many Indians do not consider her to become the Prime Minister.

The second reason for the declination is corruption. It is the reason behind people welcoming fundamentalist Hindu political leaders rather than electing corrupt secular leaders. The pro fundamentalist policy also affected the reputation of Congress. When the five hundred year old Babri Mosque was destroyed by the Hindu activists, Congress was heading center of the nation. After the demolition of the Babri mosque and with the Congress ever more willing to accommodate itself to Hindu communalism. Muslim alienation from the Congress is greater than ever. As a result the Indian Muslim community who voted for the Indian Muslims withdrew their traditional support from the Congress. Before, the Muslims and other minorities supported the Congress but now, their view has changed.

The secular protestations and pretensions of the Republic of India have remained a paper-provision through the years of India's existence as a sovereign nation-state. This resulted in the failure of the Congress to establish a Republican principle of citizenship. The Congress remains unwilling to transcend the denominational identity of Indians in politics. Some of the Congress leaders, of those times, were not only members of the communal Hindu Mahasabha, but believed that India was at bottom a Hindu nation. With regard to the Jammu & Kashmir issue, the

UPA government is perceived to be soft on terror; the repeal of POTA (Prevention Of Terrorism Act) and the refusal of the Government to legislate an anti-terror law has weakened the nationalist credential of the government. Secondly, the effort of the central government under pressure from the DMK to demolish the Ram Setu was a self-destructive exercise. These various issues badly blamed Congress party for its inability in maintaining secularism.

The inability of police to take proper action during riots due to lack of proper intelligence has been one of the issues of major drawbacks of the communal riots in 1894, 1992-1993, and 2002. The Indian Prime Minister suffered embarrassment as in France, the then President Sarkozy called the Kandhamal mayhem a "massacre" to his face. That has at least yielded some concrete threats to the BJP government in Orissa. Even then, proper action was not taken and they even came up to power after that. Remember that Narendra Modi was allowed to carry on despite the total and proven complicity of the state in the butcheries in Gujarat in 2002. All Indian political faults would be inaudible to the rest of the world. 9/11 has brought a fundamental change in the thinking of the world. The Kashmir separatists would not get the same audience from most countries in the world which it did prior to 9/11. Arun Jaitley alleged that the prime minister and the government are "weak" and cannot think of how to solve the Kashmir issue.

CONCLUSION

Although the constitution of India is still declaring India as a secular democratic republic, in practice the secularism in India has been failed. No secular state lets its citizens of minority communities to be massacred. The failure of secularism in India is more importantly the failure of an ideology. It is, more appropriately the failure of the government which ignored the socialist ideals for a secular society but wanted to achieve a legitimate secular state. Communal parties and organizations continue to be operative in politics. Even secular parties are exploiting communal sentiments for political gains.

Had India been a communal state and antithetical to secularism, states like Goa and Kerala (which have over 26% Christians and 27% Muslims respectively) would not have such high percentage of religious minorities in a majority Hindu nation like ours. Our secularity lies merely on the fact that all religions are coexisting in the whole nation. The mere survival of India for 61 years with its religious diversity is proof our secularity. That in spite of communal forces winning at several occasions, the larger battle is still in the favor of secularism. That India has managed to not have a state religion and not let separatist groups split it apart, is a sign of success for secularism. Though lot has to be done to extinguish the sparks of communalism that threaten to burn of nation, the resilience of our people and the unity of our country in the face of communal divide, assure us all is not lost and the ideal that are Preamble speaks of is still alive.

The only way secularism can stage a political comeback is by ensuring the dominance of the middle class in the Indian politics. This may not work in short period, but will sure work out in the long run. But we cannot predict the future about the implications it can take course. So, let's hope India would justify itself as a complete "secular state" by the Constitution. **(Concluded)**