

Editorial

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Understanding Communist ideology: The only means for revival

Scholars, politicians and almost all civil society leaders of this erstwhile nation call Manipur, now, become a part of the Indian union, are all politically sensible people. At public square they talk of good governance, needs for protection and preservation of the identity, culture, traditions and history which is stated as many as 2000 years. Some says Manipur earlier called Kangleipak is the first Asiatic nation which elects its government through adult franchise. Well that was in the year 1948 when British left and handed over the administration to the then Maharajah of the erstwhile nation.

Well this write up not about argument or counter argument on the status of the state after its merger with the Indian Union but it is more about the political consciousness of the people of the state.

1972, when Manipur become a full fledged state of the country, Regional political Party called Manipur Peoples' Party, Communist Party and Congress party were the most popular political parties of the state. Since then, many elections had conducted and government after government with different political parties leading the government had ruled the state.

Communist party of India was also one among the political party which reached its peak far and wide across the state in late 70s and early 80s. There were at least one or two candidates elected in every state election. Moreover, the number of hard core Communist members were tough guys and never change their mind even though the number was not to the mark. The falls of the CPI began after 2001 election where around 5 of them were elected and later joined the government. May be there are other reason for the decline to the popularity of the CPI but as witnessed in the political history of the state it was that time that people started losing trust to the CPI.

When the country today talks about the revival of a third front led by the Communist party, the state of Manipur believes in either the Ruling BJP party and its alliance political party or the Congress Party.

The state witnessed 15 years of Congress rule and now a government led by the BJP. To the ideology of most of the people particularly those in the fore front, talks of communism is their main agenda. But for reason best to them no one is dare to come out and openly support the CPI.

Is it because of the so called CPI leaders of the state who are more bourgeoisies in character? Or is it because Manipur is waiting for the Communist regime to come back at the center?

Communist theory of a civilized develop society is what every youths of the state began their career. Those believed in the ideology of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism are recognized as leftist. When majority of the youths, since the time of Hijam Rabot believe in Communist regime why they change in their latter part of their life - a matter need to ponder.

It is rather a misunderstanding of what actually is left ideology due to misinterpretation by vested interested capitalist group who had also stood against equality. Well Left is about putting primacy to the interest of the people as oppose to putting primacy to the interest of people.

The crumbling of the Soviet Union or the changes in China is the revolution brought by the ideology of the Communists leaders. Considering of North Korea Regime as of today as socialist is in contrary to what Maoism has suggested. Socialist as demanded by leftist is about a society which is free- even more that the capitalism.

At this moment the Communist Party in India, both the CPI and the CPI M has remain lazy for quite a long time. Both have never tried any renewal to their ideology which is compulsion for bringing a revolution. This perhaps is one reason for the decline of the Communist party in the state.

To some one aspire to become an elected representative, first they will see who is in the power at the center and where will he get more support in getting support. Ideology is not a matter for any persons in the state of Manipur.

The political sensibility which each and every outspoken politician was a mere joke as they don't have a political ideology.

Their believe system is that Communist is too small to capable of reviving even in India and also across the world.

But thing needed to be reminded to all the fellow politicians and those aspirant politician is that Left ideology has been written in the DNA of the Manipur Politics. So anything of the kind cannot be simply disappeared. It will come back.

As we all know that Marxism, Maoism or Leninism means concrete analysis of Congress condition. If you fail to change the analysis as per the condition then you are not a Communist at all.

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India's Silent Majority and the Battle for 2019

By- Bishwadeep Moitra
Courtesy- The Wire.in

"My interest is not in the capture of power, but in the control of power by the people"

<" Jayaprakash Narayan, 1977
In independent India, people's verdict 'to overthrow or substitute by another governed' - definition of a revolution - has happened nine out of 16 times since the first general elections in 1952. The first 30 years since independence, Indian electorate voted back the incumbent government, whereas, elsewhere in the world, during this period revolutions were quite in vogue: France got its Fifth Republic, China its Cultural Revolution and the marquee revolutionary of all, Che Guevara was already on T-shirts. It was not until 1977 that the Indian people rose up to overthrow a regime. On March 3, 1977, thousands of people gathered at the Ramlila grounds in Delhi to the call of opposition leaders just released from prison. It was a reflection of the nation's anger and a defiance of the jackboots of the Emergency. Two years earlier, the venue had seen tumultuous crowds cheer Jayaprakash Narayan as he warned Indira Gandhi by evoking Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar': *Singhasan khali karo ki janta aati hai*.

The silent majority of India, in a revolution-like verdict given a fortnight after the Ramlila ground rally in 1977, uprooted a dictator misguided into snatching liberty away from the citizens. Interestingly, unlike in the other countries where revolutions brought about new forms of governance, we, the people of India, in 1977 restored the constitution our founding fathers bequeathed on us.

A threat similar to 1977 stares back at us. Will the present generation of Indians, far more educated in numbers, reasonably more resourceful than before and wiser from the benefit of hindsight, rise up again eight months from now to reclaim liberty?

Indian democracy, despite its many imperfections, is regarded as functioning due to its people's right to elect or reject its ruler. The

electorate un-seated a 413-parliamentarians strong Rajiv Gandhi government in 1989 over bribery charges to bring V.P. Singh's minority government to power. Like a repeat script of the Janata experiment of 1977, Singh's government collapsed mid-term. Forced into a premature election by inept politicians, the 1991 electorate was perhaps the most listless one; voter turnout being among the least in any general election held so far. No political leader in 1991 had the charisma or an issue that could invigorate the voter. Rajiv Gandhi's assassination midway during the polls resulted in swing votes that helped the Congress form a minority government headed by a prime minister who had already announced retirement from politics before the elections were held.

P.V. Narasimha Rao's scam-a-day Congress-led minority government turned out to be epochal in changing the economic and political course of India. Public discourse shifted from India being a social welfare state to a state that is obsessed with camouflaging its criminal poverty by GDP numbers. 'Poor' became a cuss word. The hero in Bollywood, unlike his predecessor of belted-economy India, was no longer the coolie oppressed by the mill-owner; instead, he was the lovable rich bloke. We began to feel rich on finding some of our men and women in the dollar-millionaire lists. Net worth became our only focus even as voices of human suffering poked our growth-story like steel nibs. The state gradually abdicated its responsibility of the service to its people in private charge where only bottom lines mattered. Trade unionism died. Our new 'saviours', the wealth-creators of India, themselves became richer by selling our natural resources back to us. People revolted in our hinterland for being robbed of what belonged to them, and we marked them as Naxals. The Indian middle-class reached 250-million strong during the halcyon days of Vajpayee-Manmohan Singh. But our dream run hit the global economic iceberg in 2008.

The general elections held in the nine years between 1995 to 2004 and the 2009 election were electoral

contests between political groupings indistinguishable from each other in their intent on charting India's destiny. The political significance of these elections lies in the emergence of stable political groupings that could govern India ably.

In 2011, a poor imitator of Mahatma Gandhi, who drew tall patriotic merit for taking a bullet in his skull while in the service of the Indian Army as a truck driver during the 1965 war, proxyed an assault for the Hindu Right on the UPA government. Anna Hazare's demand for a legislation to punish the corrupt at Jantar Mantar found resonance with a public enraged by a series of financial scams of the UPA II government. Baba Ramdev, another saffron totem, set jitters in the government with his own rally, demanding to bring back Indian money deposited in Swiss banks.

Looking back, the anti-corruption agitation, when it started in April 2011, seemed apolitical, bearing the attributes of a genuine people's movement. But the agitation's real orchestrators, the RSS, had masterfully used the agitation in preparing the grounds for a Narendra Modi to launch himself as the BJP's presidential-like prime ministerial candidate in 2013.

It is now beyond doubt that the projection of people's anger against corruption during the Hazare-Ramdev shows were disproportionate to its purport. Television media equated RSS-backed rallies in Delhi and elsewhere to the Tahrir Square-like people's uprisings. Images of big protesting crowds, whether in Cairo, Tunis or Delhi evoke profound romanticism in its citizenry that can rattle any regime. Pranab Mukherjee, the number two in the UPA II government, admitted his nervousness to a group of editors before leaving to meet Ramdev at Delhi's IGI airport at the height of the agitation. "I will have to talk with him in Hindi, which I don't understand much." [He took along Kapil Sibal, then

the HRD minister, as his translator.]

The 2019 elections bear similarities to the elections of 1977. The people of India in 2019, like in 1977, will have to valiantly fightback to reclaim what was lost once before: liberty. 'Hindu Rashtra' is no longer a hidden agenda. The mask of a moderate BJP slipped a long time ago; the cremation rituals of that symbol has been performed as well. Since Modi cannot count many bridges he could build and his 'Vikas' remains the boy who still wets his pyjama in his dreams, the BJP's *Brahmastra* is in spreading the bogey of Muslims coming to rule over Hindus again if power goes out of Modi's hands. The dressing up of a tethering economy, a schizophrenic notion of India's place in the world, a faux nationalism - these are all a bid to gloss over a script that now beckons canned applause for an encore in 2019. The BJP's *chhaalisa* for the next bidding is unmistakably *Hum paanch, humare pachhis* ('We five, ours 25') and *Shamshad-Kabristan* - Modi's tried and tested clarion calls.

Eight months before the general election, there is a strong current of dissent blowing in the country that gathers momentum each day. Streets have begun to get filled again by protestors fighting injustice. Intellectuals - Modi's *bête-noire* - have kept the heat on the regime's excessive agenda. Even *pranayam* is failing to hold the chest at 56 inches!

The fight to save India from becoming a country for Hindi, Hindu and Hindustan is a fight similar to the one our mothers and fathers had fought against the Emergency. Can the million raging mutinies of today be harnessed into one J.P.-like movement before 2019? Or will we reject an India based on the ideals Nehru and Ambedkar as drivel and embrace fascism?

(Bishwadeep Moitra is a senior journalist. He was among the founding member of the Outlook magazine and the author of the illustrated book, *Brigitte Singh: The Princess of Mughal Garden*.)

Simultaneous polls against spirit of federalism

It is constitutionally not possible to hold simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. At best Modi can dissolve the Lok Sabha and the assemblies in the BJP-ruled states to have simultaneous elections - Rajindar Sachar

Prime Minister Modi has for the last six months kept a continuous refrain for holding Lok Sabha and state assembly polls simultaneously and the supposed advantages that would flow from it. As was to be expected, a number of newspapers and persons are picking up this matter. It is unfortunate that the Election Commission of India and Niti Aayog should have gone along with this suggestion without even the minimum constitutional requirement of a public debate, and more unforgetfully, without a discussion of the issue with other major political parties and the state governments. In order to have a worthwhile debate, it is necessary to know the legal and factual situation at present.

The present life of the Lok Sabha expires in May 2019. Modi's repeated emphasis on simultaneous polls is actuated by the realisation that the mood of exhilaration that he was able to create in the 2014 parliamentary poll is diminishing very fast. The UPA regime (2004-2014) had seen so many scandals, both financial and administrative, that people were unhappy with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh because of the domination of the Gandhi family. The

exposure by the Supreme Court of the telecom and coal scandals had made the BJP task easier. By itself, the BJP under a leader other than Modi (helped fully by the RSS) might not have done that well. But Modi had created an illusion of a strong and honest government in Gujarat that people were willing to ignore or even forget one of the worst periods under Modi, namely the state-supported mass slaughter of Muslims in 2001. Such was the communal passion aroused by the RSS that the country which was already disgusted with corruption and inefficiency of the UPA government and also heightened by the split amongst the various political parties that Modi romped home with an overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha with just 31% of the votes - of course greatly helped and boosted by corporate funding.

That illusion has now been exposed. Even ardent supporters of Modi now do not place a hundred per cent bet on Modi winning the Lok Sabha poll in 2019 - that is why the effort of Modi to work out a strategy so as to keep his rivals caught up with state assembly polls so as not to put up a combined pressure on him in the Lok

Sabha poll.

But this strategy of Modi is not constitutionally permissible. After the Emergency, the Constitution (44th Amendment) has provided in Article 83 and Article 172 that the Lok Sabha and state legislatures shall continue for five years from the date of their first meeting and no longer. Thus the factual situation at present is that it is constitutionally not possible to hold simultaneous polls in May 2019.

This is because it would require an extension of the terms of the state assemblies of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan (by five months), of Mizoram (by six months) and of Karnataka (by 12 months), which is constitutionally not possible. Of course, the terms of the assemblies of the BJP-ruled states could be curtailed in Haryana and Maharashtra (by five months) and Jharkhand (by seven months) but Delhi would not agree to it.

Five states, including Punjab and UP, are set for fresh elections. Obviously no one can expect Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal and Kerala to agree to simultaneous polls unless

opposition parties approve of the move. Assam can go to the polls in 2019 though its assembly's term is until 2021, but will Modi agree to curtail its term? The BJP has for the first time come to power in Assam. The non-BJP states like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, where the term of the assemblies expires in 2021, will never agree to the proposal. The Central Government whose term expires in 2019 cannot continue thereafter without holding fresh elections by May 2019.

If, however, Modi is so keen on holding simultaneous polls he can hold these with some states by dissolving the Lok Sabha and the assemblies in the BJP-ruled states. If Modi is not willing why is he trying to cover his government's failures by conjuring up these illusory, undemocratic solutions?

A greater principle of democracy is involved in holding simultaneous polls to Parliament and state assemblies unless by fortuitous circumstances the five-year periods of the Lok Sabha and state assemblies happen to coincide on their own.

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