

Impact of Right Wing Politics in India in 21st Century

Alpana Kumari

Assistant Professor on contract, Department of Political Science, Ranchi University, Ranchi, Jharkhand (India)

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 07 August 2018

Keywords

Political History, Hindutva, Leader

ABSTRACT

The 2014 election has put an end to the long dominant political era that existed in India. It is a turning point in the political history of India. It gave a clear mandate to the BhartiyaJanta Party which shows the growing popularity of the Right Wing Politics in India. From just 2 seats in 1984 election to 281 out of 545 seats in 2014 general election is a remarkable progress which is worth noticing. Congress who is the oldest party and who also claims to fight for the national independence has somewhere lost its old status in the 21stcentury. The BJP slogan of "Sub ka saath, sub kavikas"(collective efforts inclusive growth) has gone deep into the heart of Indian population. The developmental agenda and the dream of "aache din" has attracted most of the people on its side. But behind all these glittering slogans and agenda, the hard reality is that, The Hindutva ideology has laid a foundation stone for the success of the right wing politics in India. The leader of the BJP has mostly been drawn from the RSS, which is a Hindu nationalist organisation. The right wing politics follows the ideology of capitalism and free trade. They treat majority and minority equally; therefore they do not prefer to give extra protection and privileges to the minority community. However India is a socialist and secular country and it also provides special protection and privileges to the weaker section of the society. In this backdrop it will be interesting to note the impact of right wing politics in 21st century.

1. Introduction

India is a land of diversity where people of different caste, creed, belief, faith and worship coexist peacefully. This diversity is reflected in our political system too where people of different mind-set is represented by different political parties. Basically there are three different sets of political parties in India called central, leftist and rightist parties. Politically the term "leftist" and "rightist" first emerged during the French Revolution in 1789, which referred to the seating arrangements in the French parliament: those who sat to the right of the chair of the parliamentary president were broadly supportive of the institution of monarchist old regime. That is, they favoured status quo while those who sat to the left wanted significant change. In between those two blocks was the centre and the moderates who fell in between left and the right extremes sat there. It was in this context that these terms were popularised and was then used in different countries of the world.

In India the most prominent right wing organisation which was established during the pre-independence period and is still able to maintain its strong hold in the entire politics of India is RashtriyaSwayamsevakSangh. It was established in the year 1925 and is still a dominant right wing organisation in the country. It is the only Right wing organisation which has its branches (shakhas) in the entire length and breadth of India. Most of the prominent leaders of BhartiyaJanta Party are drawn from this organisation. There are other Right wing organisation and political parties in India like Akali Dal, Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal etc... but these political parties and organisations are mainly contained or limited to some areas or states. They lack national fervor. There were many other right wing organisation and political parties that existed before and after independence too but they either got dissolved or got merged into some other parties. Although in 21st century India, there is nothing called a

hard core right or a left wing political party as elections are mainly fought on a issue that could earn more vote for a party. However, the basic difference between the right and the left wing ideology is that, the Rightist ideology is concerned with more traditional and conservative views who believe in just keeping everything as it is. It is also known as reactionary ideology of going back to the way that things used to be because they belief that all of the changes that have brought us to where we are have all been bad. The rightist ideology is found in parties and organisations like BhartiyaJanta Party(BJP), RashtriyaSwamsevakSangh(RSS), Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal, Akali Dal etc...The hard core philosophy of right wing politics is inclined towards capitalism and privatisation, that is, they believe in the policy of laissez-faire and free trade. They stand to defend the culture as this ideology treats tradition and culture important in order to protect the moral order of the society. Therefore, they treat change in the society with caution. It is because of this reason that couples celebrating Valentine's Day on 14thFebruary is opposed by right wing organisations like BajrangDal as it infuses westernisation in the Indian culture. They also close their border for immigrants as it may dilute their culture and also cause harm to economic stability. On the contrary, the left wing ideology stands for socialismand welfare state, they have more faith in the government structure, therefore, they are against free trade and they talk about the nationalisation of the economy, so that government could play a larger role in shaping people's life by laying down several social programmes like providing them cheap medical and educational facilities etc... They support change for the welfare of the common people, especially the poor section of the society. They also favour to give extra protection and care to the minority section of the society. The leftist ideology also do not support spending too much money on military because

according to them welfare of the common people is more important rather than security of the nation. They stands for Internationalism, therefore they do not stand to defend a particular culture. The leftist ideology separates religion from the state, which means that the state should not support or promote any religion. These are the basic features of the right wing ideology and left wing ideology

The prima-facie result which comes out while comparing the difference between leftist and rightist ideology is that the rightist are pro-rich and stands for nationalism while leftist are pro-poor and stands for internationalism. The primary motive of the leftist ideology is to create an egalitarian state by lifting the standard of the poor by providing them special incentives while on the other hand the rightist ideology feels necessary to create a class division in a civilized society. The rightist ideology is very perfectly stated by an American conservative Russell Kirk who states that "Men are created different; and a government that ignores this law becomes an unjust government for it sacrifices nobility to mediocrity". It is also important to note that since independence congress was the major ruling party in India which is a central leftist party. The reason for success of congress in most of the election in India after Independence is not only because it was an oldest party but its success is also hidden in its socialist ideology because in a country like India were most of the people are poor, illiterate and could not afford the medical services need government help to support them in order to raise their living standard. But, does the sudden rise of the rightist party in 2014 election means that the Indians has become self-sufficient enough to withdrew government subsidy and the capitalist class of India has become wise enough to take a good care of its workers and are ready to share their extra profit with them??? To some extent this is true as it is seen that most of the people who were well off and could afford to buy LPG cylinder has given up their subsidy so that the people who were still cooking their food by burning wood and charcoal could afford to have a gas cylinder. The Pradhan MantriUjjwalaYojana: A Giant Step Towards Better Life For All, has modified the life of most of the rural women of India. The initiative, in line with the dream of the Prime Minister of creating smoke-less villages across the country, has come as a moment of pride for getting LPG connection as an identity of their own and to lead a smoke-less, less polluted, convenient and healthy life. Similarly, other schemes like BetiBachaoBetiPadhaoYojana, Jan DhanYojana,SukrakshaBimaYojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan JyotiBimaYojana, Pradhan MantriAwasYojana, Pradhan Mantri Gram SadakYojana, Digital India Programme, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal VikasYojanaetc are the recent schemes which has been brought by the present BJP government. This shows the socialist model in a right wing politics which is a prudent idea because it is not possible in India to form a right wing politics like U.S.A and U.K as most of the people in India are poor or are middle class people who struggle hard to earn their living and in this scenario it becomes the responsibility of the government to help them to come out of their poverty by providing them basic facilities like educational and health services and other subsidies. It is also a good sign that most of the other social scheme which was launched during the UPA regime are also not closed, they are also functioning side by

side. The most prominent example among this is Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which was launched by the UPA government in 2006. It is a sign that even the rightist regime could not withdraw functioning such welfare schemes despite failure of such scheme to bring significant change in development and revenue generation for villages out of fear of losing rural vote bank. It is also a good sign in the sense that the regime change does not change the whole administration all at once. Apart from all these, the fact is that, in 21st century, the pure leftist and pure rightist model has lost its credibility. It was only after the Second World War that the ideology gained prominence and the cold war begun because of ideological differences. But after the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1990's this ideological war had come to an end and the capitalist ideology gained prominence. During this era India was too bound to leave its licence raj and move towards an open door policy. Although this step proved to be beneficial for India in later years but one cannot negate the positive points of the socialist ideology. As it was this model which transformed USSR into a superpower in just few years and in case of underdeveloped and developing countries implementing this model is a necessity because here poor people really need the government incentives for their livelihood support and as far as India is concerned, India too is a developing country where 20 percentage of people still strive to get their daily meal, struggle to get employment and strive to get other basic facilities. However, the positive point for India is that, India is a socialist and a secular country as mentioned in the preamble of the constitution which is a basic feature of the Indian constitution and therefore cannot be amended. It is because of this reason that whichever party comes to power in India holding any ideological belief will have to tilt towards socialism and also to keep up the huge vote bank the welfare schemes are required. This is there a sons why Bhartiya Janta Party which follows the rightist ideology has also moulded its policies and programmes to certain extent towards socialism. Apart from this one more fact is that, India cannot afford to have a right wing party like one finds in the western countries of the world because India has an entirely different demography from the western countries of the world. That is why, the change of government in 2014 has nowhere resulted in the change of whole setup of the government, because India is a socialist country but it is also true that only sticking to socialism will not work. National interest should be the basic point for the prosperity of any nation. Soviet Union disintegrated because the state worked only like a welfare state, it no where functioned like a profit making institution which detroitied the condition of the state. The state did not have enough money to sustain its people. Therefore, it is important that the government of the country should function both as a welfare institution and as a profit making institution.

In this era where the ideological clashes have come to an end, national interest has taken its place. Here, National Interest means policies and programmes which are in the interest of the nation in other words, the policies and programmes which are meant for the development of the country. The most prudent model which is accepted today is the developmental model which is a blend of both leftist and rightist ideology. This development model has proved to be a great success in the 16thloksabha election. The slogan of

“subkasath sub kavikas” (collective efforts inclusive growth) has gone deep into the hearts of the Indian population. This slogan united all the people of the country from people belonging to below poverty line to the middle class and also to the richer section of the society. The ‘Make in India’ and ‘Skill India’ programme has proved to be beneficial for both the upper and lower section of the society. The developmental agenda and the dream of “aache din” (good days) has attracted most of the people on its side. The Gujarat model which came under the leadership of Mr. Narendra Modi allured the whole nation. Gujarat has been the fastest growing state under his leadership. This enabled the rise of Narendra Damodar Modi as Prime Minister of India and his party to come in full majority in Lok Sabha. In addition the anti-incumbency factors against the UPA provoked the people to vote in favour of BJP. Apart from this it is also true that “hindutva” ideology has also played its role in bringing Bhartiya Janta Party to power and in this scenario it will be also interesting to note the development of the policies and programmes of the right wing party to bring minority community also in its side. Then only the slogan “sub ka saath, sub ka vikas” will bear its real meaning. Although some schemes have been launched by the present government specially for the minority community but still it is not enough to convince them. Although the government has launched various schemes to create job among various sections of the society and to bring Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India. However, in just four years it will not be right to give a concluding remark about the impact of Right wing politics in India, but it can be said that it is a rise of the Right wing politics in India.

2. Objective of the study

Capitalist and Socialist ideology was a matter of great debate during the 20th century. With the disintegration of USSR in 1990, the right wing ideology has shown its prominence and in India in 2014 election, the rise of BJP government has further added a milestone to the right wing ideology. The objective of the study is to evaluate its relevance in the 21st century. Whether it was only because of the ideology that the BJP came to power or whether there were some other factors too which contributed to the rise of right wing party to come to power?

3. Research methodology

Secondary data were referred for the study. Content analysis method is used for the interpretation of data.

4. Scope of the study

The scope of the study is extended to the whole of India as the study is on the impact of right wing politics which has

emerged as a major political force in India. Therefore this study is extended to both rural and urban areas of India.

5. Limitations of the study

This study is on the impact of right wing politics in 21st century. there is no hard core right wing organisation or political party in India and there are many political parties in India who have a blend of both leftist and rightist ideology including the Bhartiya Janta Party. but this study is focused mainly on the Bhartiya Janta Party and Rashtriya Swamsevak Sangh which is said to be the so called right wing political party and right wing organisation. There are other right wing political party in the country like Akali Dal, Shiv sena etc but they are not included in the part of this study, only the national right wing party has been the part of this study.

6. Data interpretation and analysis

This article is primarily based on secondary data. The rise of right wing with such a huge majority is a very recent development and its full impact is yet to be seen in 2019 general election; therefore this article is not a field work study. Content analysis method is used for the interpretation of data.

7. Findings and conclusion

Today, almost all party in India has a blend of both leftist and rightist ideology. No party in India can claim to follow a hard core leftist or rightist ideology. Now, Indian elections are not fought on the ideological basis but are fought on the developmental agenda and on issues which could earn more votes for the party. Every political party share somewhat similar election manifesto with very minute differences. It is only that how much deep it goes into the mind of the voters and how voters perceive its leaders and how much impact a leader can make in the heart of its voters, that is, how charismatic a leader is and whether the party and its leader has the caliber to deliver the promises which is made to the voters through election manifesto. Now, the election should be fought on the developmental ideology. The development of the nation as well as of the common people.

8. Recommendations and suggestions

The aim of every political party should be the development and prosperity of its country and its countrymen. There is no point in making an ideological clash between various parties. There are both pros and cons in every ideology and every thinking. Therefore, the best should be picked up from every ideology in order to boost the country's economy. Therefore, it is a very positive sign that there is a dilution of ideology among the political parties in India for the development of the country.

References

1. Alder, Ketan (March 2, 2016): A short history of the rise and rise of Hindu nationalism in India. <http://qz.com> (assessed may 29,2018).
2. Bhambri, C.P. (May 27, 2018): Explaining the rise of rightwing social forces in India; Peoples Democracy; (assessed: may 29, 2018).
3. <http://www.bjp.org/>
4. [http://www.quora.com/ what-are-right-wing-left-wing-and-central-in-indian context.](http://www.quora.com/what-are-right-wing-left-wing-and-central-in-indian-context)
5. Kishore, Roshan (May09, 2017): Has the rise of BJP made India's youth less liberal? Livemint. (Assessed, May 29, 2018).

6. Mhamia, Ajay (deputy director, media & communication), PIB, Kolkata. www.pib.nic.in. Pradhan MantriUjjwalaYojana: A giant step towards better life for all.
7. Visvanathan, Shiv. (Dec 11, 2014): The Hindu, opinion page.
8. www.wikidepia.org; RashtriyaSwayamsevakSangh; Feb 2016 (assessed: May 29, 2018).
9. www.wikipedia.org; right wing politics (assessed: May 29, 2018).