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Social Split, Multiculturalism and Rising Space for State in India under Global Domain

Prof. Prashant V. Ransure
Dept. Of History
KRT Arts & Commerce College Vani

Abstract

This paper emphasis on social cleavages based on class, caste, religion and ethnicity in India. It tries examines the political salience of caste and class conflicts and addresses the translation of social cleavages into political oppositions in India. This paper contend that political argument becomes more severe when social cleavages based on class, caste and ethnicity help to mutually underline one another. It presents Indian evidences in order to demonstrate the link between social fragmentation and fiscal policy outcomes under liberalization organization. After globalization movement in India, the state is fast losing its aura. Its authority is being chipped away and its monolithic monopoly is crumbling. Polity, economy and society, every domain of life of Indian thus facing an unprecedented trauma under statelessness. Its sweep and magnitude are irresistible. Samuel Huntington once spoke of a clash of civilizations: it seems more like a crash of civilization. But there has been a enormous change in the information and communication technology .Urban life for the elite class has become as glamorous and comfortable as anywhere. Every corner of the earth is hooked up in global transmission net work. A digital divide has taken place with haves and have not's of internet capability. There is veritable grip of social cleavages, communal conflicts, false belief and myths in the society. The contemporary rise in Hindutva movement is more or less necessary by product of the process of globalization. The two are also mutually contradictory. It is useful to observe these two sets of relations-one is complementary and other is contradictory. So it is very difficult to predict the emerging role of the state and future perspective for Indian society.

India's Secularism

It was India which supported the Human Right Declaration in 1948 , which had become a member of the United Nations soon after the attainment of its independence in 1947. While Article 2 of the Declaration guarantees all the rights set forth in it without any distinction on the ground of religion and such other attributes as race and color. Article 18 specifically focuses on the freedom of religion. The declaration reads as follows: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion It was only in 1976, during the 'Emergency' regime of prime minister Indira Gandhi, that the word 'secular' was introduced into the Preamble of the Constitution by the 42nd Amendment. It was thus that India came to be characterized as a 'Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic'. Article 15 of the Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, caste, sex, or place of birth; Article 16 guarantees equality of opportunity in matters of public employment irrespective of one's religious identity; and Article 17 abolished the practice of untouchability. Articles 25 to 30 deal specifically with the freedom of religion. Secondly, all

the freedoms and rights conferred by Articles 25-30 were made "subject to public order, morality and health. It is well known that conversion has been the principal means by which the Christian faith was established in India two thousand years ago. Those who arrived from abroad and made converts, and those who came specifically to make converts, never came in hordes, and they did not have the support of the state. 1 In the years following independence, the work of Christian missionaries, who included foreigners, continued to be the large case of suspicion, particularly in areas such as Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, which has large tribal populations, and where strict anti-conversion laws of some of the erstwhile 'native' states had lapsed following the integration of these states into the India union. The government of Madhya Pradesh took the lead and set up a committee. Nevertheless, they became basis of new legislation on the issue of freedom of religion in Orissa (1967) and Madhya Pradesh (1968). The basic premise of the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act (1967) is that: "Conversion in its very process involves an act of undermining another faith. This process becomes all the more abhorrent when this is brought about by recourse to methods like force, fraud, material inducement and exploitation of one's poverty, simplicity and ignorance. An intractable problem that persists in this context is how to determine with absolute certainty that a particular act of conversion is voluntary or not, that it is fair and not fraudulent, sincere and not contrived. The criteria laid down in the various pieces of legislation are not wholly feasible. The best guardian of freedom of religion, is the civil society¹.

Multiculturalism in India

Multiculturalism is fundamental to the belief that all citizens are equal. Multiculturalism in India ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance gives each Indian citizen a feeling of security and self-confidence, making them more open to, and accepting of, diverse cultures. India has embraced diversity, or cultural pluralism in both policy and practice. The Indian Constitution which is the source of many state policies can be said to be a basic multicultural document, in the sense of providing for political and institutional measures for the recognition and accommodation of the country's diversity. Cultural diversity is viewed as one of India's most important attributes, socially and economically. Through multiculturalism, India recognizes the potential of all citizens, encouraging them to integrate into their society and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs. Our advantage lies in having been a multicultural society from our earliest days. Our diversity is a national asset. India contains the entire globe within its borders. Multiculturalism is a relationship between the state and the Indian people. The essence of inclusiveness is that we are part of a society in which language, color, education, sex and money need not, should not divide us. A multicultural society cannot be stable and last long without developing a common sense of belonging among its citizens. Although equal citizenship is essential to fostering a common sense of belonging, it is not enough. Citizenship is about status and rights; belonging is about acceptance, feeling welcome, a sense of identification. The two do not necessarily coincide. Although members of these groups are in principle free to participate in its public life, they often stay away for fear of rejection and ridicule or out of a deep sense of separation². Multiculturalism is best understood neither as a political doctrine with a programmatic content nor a philosophical

school but as a perspective on or a way of viewing human life. Cultures grow out of conscious and unconscious interactions with each other, define their identity. A dialogue between cultures requires that each should be willing to open itself up to the influence of and learn from others, and this presupposes that it is self-critical and willing and able to engage in a dialogue with itself.

Social Cleavages in India:

Social cleavage denotes a meaningful and enduring division in society, around which social forces define themselves and may engage in political mobilization. Cleavages based on class, caste and ethnicity polarize the society. Debates over class, caste are often very confusing. First, class represents a special kind of status group marked by distinctive life styles, tastes, and sensibilities. It is represented by non economic sources of social cleavage – such as caste, religion or ethnicity. Second, class explains inequalities in economically-defined life chances and standards of living. Here, it is not defined by subjectively-salient attributes of a social location, but rather by the relationship of people to income-generating resources or assets of various sorts. The system of inequality generated by their relationship to these resources, and lifestyles in turn may be consolidated into salient identities. Third, class represents economic cleavages in society that systematically generate overt Conflicts. Inequalities in economic opportunities, generate antagonisms of interest. Finally, class represents a sorts of struggles against exploitation and oppressions This is a much more complex and normatively contentious question. By virtue of the nature of the cleavage on which the conflict is based, contain the potential to transform the very nature of the game itself. Some sociologists proclaim that class is disappearing, which they mean that people are less likely to form stable identities in class terms and thus less likely to orient their political behavior on the basis of class, while others proclaim that class remains an enduring feature of contemporary society, by which they mean that a person's economic prospects in life continue to depend significantly on their relationship to economically valuable assets of various sorts³. Here we analyse the real situation prevailing in India. In India , political parties evolve in response to the interests of social cleavages. We also found that attitudinal factors have less influence over partisan strength, when compared to constitutional and institutional factors. Also, many factors could increase partisan strength in certain areas but decrease partisan strength in other areas at the same time.

Hindutva and Hindu Religion

In order to understand the specific spatial strategies of hindutva today, it is necessary to look into the historical context from which they have emerged. From the perspective of this paper, the relevant historical context .is that of the interaction among the spatial aspects of colonialism, nationalism and communalism, which was also the process through which 'India' emerged as a nation . The spatial strategies of nationalism involved the attempt to translate the facts of social geography into matters of faith, belief and, ultimately, received experience. These included conscious efforts to 'historicise' the nature, the most obvious manifestation of which is the figure of 'Mother India', Through insistent and widely disseminated patriotic songs and writings, the physical features of the subcontinent- mountains, rivers, oceans and

regions -were transformed into a common national heritage over which every Indian, even if she/he had never seen that particular part of the country, was made to feel a sense of proprietary pride. Our national anthem, for example, is a typical nationalist device for converting geography into ideology. However, crucially, such spatial strategies included those that explicitly or implicitly appealed to shared religious or communitarian sentiment. In other words, there was nothing inherent in nationalist spatial strategies that prevented their use by groups based on religious or regional identities. Indeed, there were areas in which religious groups, especially Hindus, were at a significant advantage, because they could build on the powerful base of sacred geographies. Given the absence of any national community that was supra- or non-religious, attempts to construct an 'imagined community' had to fall back on whatever existed in living memory that could be used to help concretize this new and unfamiliar notion. Moreover, the concept as well as the concrete political identity of 'nationalism' was flexible enough to permit communalists to not only claim but also to sincerely believe that theirs was a truly nationalist rather than a sectarian group. Matters were further complicated by the late 19th century religious revivalism, especially within Hinduism. With the advent of this new 'improved' variety of religious identity, it did not seem so self-evident as it had before that one had to choose between religion and spirituality on the one hand, and the ideals of modernism and science on the other. In the contest between communal and non-communal political formations, the burden of proof (to demonstrate moral or social superiority) was thus unequally distributed, usually falling more heavily on the 'secular' type of grouping. It is in this context that we have to examine the implication of communalism in the process of emergence of the Indian nation-space. Hindutva is not a word but a history. Hindutva, or 'Hindu ness' is not to be confused with Hinduism, which is a sectarian term, referring to the followers of the Hindu religion proper. Hindutva, on the other hand, includes members of other faiths (like Sikhism, Buddhism, or Jainism). The territorial test for defining a 'Hindu' is based on the claim to a sacred geography. Theorists of human territoriality have suggested that it consists of three main things: a form of classification, a mode of communication, and a method of enforcing control. So Hindutva can be seen as a very successful model of territoriality that includes all three features. In the case of Hindutva this boundary also acts as the means of endorsing power and control of the nation-space, given its social context⁴.

Party System Congruence

In some federations, issues, parties and voting behavior at the center and provincial levels are closely integrated, while in others, the state and federal electoral arenas appear to operate much more independently of each other. The degree of integration of party systems in Indian union, as indicated by party system congruence, is an important dimension of politics in a multi-level setting. The presence of party systems in a federation which vary a great deal in terms of the parties that compete, and patterns of aggregate voter behavior. Party system congruence, or similarity, on the other hand, may reflect a competitive environment in which issues, parties, and voter behavior at the state level are linked to the federal level. The allocation of resources between the federal and state levels of government is a key institutional variable explaining the congruence or similarity of party systems. It affects the

incentives voters and party-face, and opportunities for cleavage mobilization. Voter behavior, indicated by the degree of variation of electoral support for parties across units of the Indian Union and the similarity of swings in support between the state and Center, is most responsive to the allocation of resources. Party system structure is less responsive to this institutional variable. Party system incongruence occurs when the structural features of the party system, such as the number of parties, differ. Incongruence occurs in its starkest form when different parties compete at the state and central level. We can measure the congruence of party systems in terms of the uniformity of electoral support for parties across the state and center. Centralization and decentralization yield relative party system congruence and incongruence respectively. Decentralization process does matter. The party systems are most congruent in centralized federations, and least congruent in decentralized. Decentralization of power in India is a key variable for explaining the development of different provinces. First, decentralization makes the state level an increasingly important site of competition. This can affect the cognitive orientations of voters—whether they take their cues from the center when they vote in state elections, or whether they base their assessments on state governmental performance. Voters respond to the location of power in a general sense by directing their political demands to the most effective arena. Decentralization also affects the orientations of parties. The institutional allocation of power at the center serves as a better explanatory variable for party system congruence than social cleavage or political culture explanations. Variations in policy priorities across constituent units of the union affect the potential for differential mobilization of issues, and hence incongruent vote swings. Mobilization and politicization of issues also depends upon political leadership, as well as on political opposition. The institutional division of power between the Center and state levels is a key variable capable of explaining cross-national variations in party system congruence. The institutional environment influences the strategic behavior of both parties and voters. Decentralization of resources makes the state arena a relatively more important site for voters to direct their demands to and for parties to respond to. Decentralization also increases the policy weight of the state electoral arenas, making them fertile ground for the mobilization of local issues and the evolution of local priorities.

Communalism in India

Let us observe the specificity of recent communal politics in the context of 'economic liberalization and the growth of mass media. Several scholars had asserted the existence of connections between these phenomena. Hindu communalism did serve, at least for a while, instanced in the Ram Janma bhoomi movement, as an ideology reinforcing economic liberalization and its accompanying consumerist ethos. There was no necessary connection between their narratives. But their shared emphasis, on reawakening long dormant powers (whether of the market or of Hindutva) against: a corrupt state, and so helping the nation to come into its own was striking, as was the temporal proximity of these narratives' prominence. Nor could there be any mistake as to the enthusiasm for Hindutva on the part of the beneficiaries of liberalization, or the willingness of Hindutva's votaries to countenance this support, and indeed to seek it. The medium in which these narratives came together most spectacularly was electronic: the growth of mass media saw the spread of Hindu images as

well as the message of consumption, and often these were brought together. There was an overlap between the narratives of communal and consumer identity formation: it was by apprehending the interpellation of the communal subject as a consuming subject that the extension and the mobility of communalism's appeal could be understood. If communalism was never an either/or matter, the proliferation of images which could be diversely entertained and identified with dramatized the importance of engaging with the plurality of subject positions available in the field of communalized politics. More than accomplishing any merely mechanical function of transmission the electronic medium namely television, helped to straddle the dispersed and discrepant sectors of an unevenly developed society to bridge their diverse temporalities with the simultaneity of its broadcast image, and thereby simulate a unity to the nation in an unprecedented sense. It is historicised at two levels: in terms of the crisis in hegemonising ideology and attempts by ruling classes to evolve a new conception of the collective project of the nation, and, more specifically, in terms of a shift in the Hindu right strategy. Previously, the main mode of mobilization was by means of slow and patient work at the grass roots, symbolized by the daily drill of RSS shakhas. Political goals were long-term, and conceived in terms of influence rather than direct control. Owing to a number of developments, this approach changed to a direct bid for electoral power, with all the vagaries of support it entailed. This shift signals the ascendancy of the VHP over the RSS, at least in respect to mobilization mode, with; the retailing of Hindu identity by means of discrete commodified images and the exhortation of discrete acts of support from consumption to kar seva⁵. In this way, the unity simulated by electronic capitalism helps inaugurate a new era in symbolic politics. It is in this context that the Ramjanmabhoomi movement has to be understood.

Communalism Vs Electronic Capitalism:

The growth of communalism is all too often firmly harnessed to one agency notably the BJP and its affiliates spotlighted as a threat to be understood and fought. The danger of such a view is that an entire set of phenomena tends to get reduced to the success or failure of a particular party. The wide variety of environmental factors enabling the rise of the party, its support by various social groups including many that were previously uncommitted, the communalization of everyday life and practices, changes in the wider culture reflected in and resulting from its propaganda even in the absence of its decisive political victory. All of these factors tend to get ignored. The extent to which the ruling party colluded in the Ram temple movement is one of the more important of a series of relevant factors here. Such factors should force a rethinking of the 'usual suspects' approach to communalism, one that holds the Congress as the secular party of last resort. It is much more useful to think of the Hindu right as having not one, but two parties, the Congress and the BJP, operating gyroscopically to keep an upper caste ruling alliance in power. That is to say, it is in the opposition of the two parties that space for the RSS /VHP is won, an opposition bounded and contained within a larger unity. This was succinctly expressed by Govind acharya in conversation: BJP minus RSS equals Congress. Extrapolating, RSS equals BJP minus Congress. Thus, the progress of the Ram temple movement could be accompanied by the appearance of political resistance at the center, even if this resistance was often perceived as Congress inertia or incompetence. In