Features of Indian Political System in India before Independence

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ABSTRACT: The rulers in India tried to improve the quality of the crops and improved the irrigation facilities. The Mughal rulers endeavored to enhance the methods for water system, providing of enhanced seeds, taking care of cows issues, and offices of transport to expand the harvest efficiency. The state figures significantly in the common life and the hypothesis of life continues to determine itself into a hypothesis of profound quality. To put it plainly, political science turns into the morals of the entire society, an investigation of the obligation of man found in the mind boggling set of relations in the public arena. In any case, with regards to global relations, one can see the moral implications grappling with the hard reality. Managing about tact, Kautilya for instance, ends up plainly sensible in a way like Machiavelli. One may see a sudden tumble from moral statures to the rankest authenticity in a similar author.

Keywords: Medieval Period, history, India, architecture, trade, commerce, forts, monuments etc.

INTRODUCTION

Indian political philosophy might be arranged into a few particular conventions, including: the Vedic (c. 1200 BCE - tenth century CE); the Jain-Buddhist-Hindu (sixth century BCE - second century CE); the Indo-Islamic (tenth century CE-1857); the advanced or Indo-British (c. 1857 - 1947); and the contemporary (post-freedom - present).In India as somewhere else, political reasoning includes from one viewpoint theories on the connections between individual, society and state, and itemized treatises on the mechanics of statecraft, state arrangement, war and strategy and global relations.Contemporary Indian political rationality is a rising control collecting expanding enthusiasm with the ascent of similar political hypothesis. The Indian political scholar Aakash Singh Rathore has been endeavoring to develop the train with the 2010 book Indian Political Thought- - A Reader (Routledge), and the 2017 monograph Indian Political Theory: Laying the Groundwork for Svaraj. Political rationality, or political hypothesis, is the investigation of themes, for example, legislative issues, freedom, equity, property, rights, law, and the requirement of a laws by expert: what they are, the reason (or regardless of the possibility that) they are required, what, on the off chance that anything, influences an administration to authentic, what rights and opportunities it should secure and why, what shape it should take and why, what the law is, and what obligations natives owe to a true blue government, assuming any, and when it might be honestly ousted, if at any time. In a vernacular sense, the expression "political reasoning" frequently alludes to a general view, or particular ethic, political conviction or demeanor, about legislative issues, synonymous to the expression "political belief system".

The Rise of Islam

The ascent of Islam, in view of both the Qur'an and Muhammad emphatically modified the power adjusts and impression of inception of energy in the Mediterranean district. Early Islamic rationality accentuated a relentless connection amongst science and religion, and the procedure of ijtihad to discover truth - in actuality all reasoning was "political" as it had genuine ramifications for administration. This view was tested by the Mutazilite thinkers, who held a more Greek view and were bolstered by common nobility who looked for opportunity of activity autonomous of the Caliphate. By the late medieval period, be that as it may, the Asharite perspective of Islam had all in all triumphed.Islamic political theory, was, to be sure, established in the very wellsprings of Islam, i.e. the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the words and practices of Muhammad. In any case, in the Western idea, it is for the most part

gathered that it was a particular territory impossible to miss simply to the colossal thinkers of Islam: al-Kindi (Alkindus), al-Farabi (Abunaser), Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Bajjah (Avempace), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), and Ibn Khaldun. The political originations of Islam, for example, kudrah, sultan, ummah, simaa - and even the "center" terms of the Qur'an, i.e. ibada, commotion, rab and ilah-is taken as the premise of an investigation. Consequently, not just the thoughts of the Muslim political thinkers yet additionally numerous different legal scholars and ulama postured political thoughts and hypotheses. For instance, the thoughts of the Khawarij in the early years of Islamic history on Khilafa and Ummah, or that of Shia Islam on the idea of Imamah are considered evidences of political idea. The conflicts between the Ehl-I Sunna and Shia in the seventh and eighth hundreds of years had a certified political character.The fourteenth century Arab researcher Ibn Khaldun is viewed as one of the best political scholars. The British thinker anthropologist Ernest Gellner considered Ibn Khaldun's meaning of government, "a foundation which forestalls bad form other than, for example, it confers itself", the best ever.

INFLUENCE OF ETHICS & CASTE

The social thought in ancient India not only assures certain fundamental principle of morality, but it always seeks to direct the material life as well. The king must consciously stimulate virtue and act as a guide to the moral life, morality as stipulated in the Dharmasastras. The state figures considerably in the communal life and the theory of life proceeds to resolve itself into a theory of morality. In short, political science becomes the ethics of the whole society, a science of the duty of man found in the complex set of relations in society. But when it comes to international relations, one can see the ethical meanings coming to terms with the hard reality. Dealing about diplomacy, Kautilya for example, becomes realistic in a manner similar to Machiavelli. One may notice a sudden fall from ethical heights to the rankest realism in the same writer.

Government as a Partnership of the Upper Varnas

In ancient India, the Kshatriyas, Brahmanas and later the Vaisyas together formed the ruling class. The Shudras were the serving class. 'Kshatra' the temporal power derived its strength and authority from 'Brahma' the spiritual power. The Vaisya engaged in such occupations as agriculture and trade provided the economic basis of the state. The priest held the highest status. He was identified with the God 'Brihaspathy' instead of the temporal power 'India'. His function was to interpret dharma and preside over the rituals. Coronation by the priest was a necessary pre-requisite to the exercise of royal power. Symbolically, it meant that the Kshatriya derived his power from the Brahman. The priest was the chief adviser to the king. Interestingly, unlike in Europe, priesthood in India did not contend for temporal power, a phenomenon that raged in Europe for a considerably long period. The influence exercised by the priestly class was of a peculiar kind. They had the monopoly of education and were the sole interpreters of dharma. No one, not even the king could go beyond their prescription. With its intellectual leadership of the community and religious control, there was no need for the priestly class to organise itself into a church or any such spiritual organization.

The Influence of Caste based Social Structure on Politics:

Caste occupied a prominent place in all social speculation during the later Vedic period and had a direct bearing on the theory of government. Varnashramadharama in the society was fixed on the basis of caste. Each Varna was assigned specific functions. It was the foremost duty of the king to see that every individual confined himself to performing functions of the Varna to which he was born. Caste was an ascribed status. The individual was not to seek his own interest or expression; he was not to determine his own ambition or ends. Varnashramadharma exalted the society at the cost of human values. Much that was personal gave way to collective elements. Not all castes or varnas were equally privileged in their enjoyment of rights and duties assigned to them. The super varnas' **Brahmanas and Kshatriyas'** were the ruling class. The duty of an individual was social. Since the varnas were related to each other in such a fashion that together they constituted the social order, if an individual transgressed his duty, he not only violated the order, he, infact, became antisocial. It was in this way that the Hindu theory would overcome the anti-thesis of man v/s state or society.

Political Life conceived within the framework of Dharma:

One cannot find in ancient India any classes exclusively dealing with political and social life, which is comparable to the 'Republic' and the 'Politics' of Plato and Aristotle. A supernatural element is present in all the writings. The

divine is omnipotent and is visible in the formation of society and government; the divine purpose is to be enforced by the king, divine punishment reinforces earthly punishment and sometimes supplants it. This is what we find in almost all the texts that deal with the life of the people. But one should not be led to believe the reality. There was a wide gap between the 'sastras', traditions and the actual lives of human beings. The brahminical religion, which is commonly taken as the Hindu religion, was not all-pervasive. There were non-Brahminical traditions, which were materialistic in nature and which played an important role in guiding the activities of ordinary people. Buddhist contribution is significant in this respect.

No Clear Distinction between State and Society:

The governmental organization and politics were looked at as a part of the larger whole called society. In other words, society was at once religious, political, economical and military. It was generally viewed in a comprehensive manner. The habit of looking at society from a political angle was not cultivated. As a result, there was no clear conception of either the state or the government. Both were interchangeable terms

Monarchy was the normal form of Government:

Since the four fold division of society entrusted the ruling power with the Kshatriya caste, monarchy was s the natural outcome. There were also non-monarchical forms of government. Kautilya's Arthasastra for example, mentions 'dvairajya' (rule by two kings) 'vyrajya' (state without a king) etc., There were also 'ganasanghas' which according to K. P. Jayaswal are comparable to modern republics. But still monarchy was the normal form of government. Though there were non- monarchical forms, they were more of an exception rather than a rule.

The Government was not sovereign:

From its very nature of existence, the government in ancient India could not be regarded as sovereign in the Austinian sense of the term. It did not impart validity to the orders; rather, it shared in its j validity. On the contrary, the government had no independent existence of its own. The sustenance of the social order was merely its function. Sovereignty was, in fact, ultimately sourced in the divine will. On the part of the individual, there was no unified allegiance, no single loyally except to society as a whole. ; Only the pluralistic theory of sovereignty can grasp the Indian phenomenon. The scenario of post-1857 India was ideal for English colonialism. Political opposition by soldiers and princely states had been crushed. Religion, that in ancient India had been an integral part of individual and social life, was now segregated into a separate compartment, which helped the clergy to prosper and pushed the followers into a path of escapism from life by imbibing their brand of opium. In this dark hour, India had neither religious leaders nor any political leaders. British realized that every country needs its own leaders. They were afraid that if there was a political vacuum, it was most likely to be filled up by extremist elements opposed to British Empire. Hence, they created Indian National Congress in 1885. But the course of history was changed by two leaders who are known today as Hindu religious leaders but who were bitterly opposed by the orthodox Hindu elements consisting of all shankaracharyas and saints. Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) founded Arya Samaj on 7 April 1875 at Bombay. This was the first religious-political movement in India after Sikhism. But there were three crucial differences between Arya Samaj and Sikhism –

(a) Sikhism had grown from Bhakti movement, while Arya Samaj rejected Bhakti and emphasized knowledge and action
(b) Sikhism had evolved into a militia; Arya Samaj did not take this route
(c) Sikhism, though rooted in Hindu traditions, outgrew its Hindu roots and became an independent religion; Arya Samaj stuck to the Hindu roots.

The then prevalent orthodoxy of Hindu saints and clergy opposed Arya Samaj tooth and nail. Fourteen attempts were made to poison Swami Dayanand Saraswati. He survived all but the last. Arya Samaj accepted the Vedas but rejected caste system. It advocated education for all including women, who were also encouraged to read Vedas. This was a sacrilege to the orthodoxy. Most important was the fact that Arya Samaj had a nationalistic agenda. Swami Dayanand Sarswati was probably the first to talk of swadeshi, many years before Gandhi arrived on the scene. Arya Samaj became immensely popular in Western India particularly Punjab. The educational institutions set up by Arya Samaj in Punjab created a generation that fuelled the freedom movement in years to come.

Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902) did not set up an organization like Arya Samaj, but his influence on development of Indian political thought was no less. Like Swami Dayanand, he broke away from bhakti cult and stressed on knowledge and action. But, unlike Swami Dayanand, he did not reject idol worship. Swami Dayanand's primary focus was reform of Hindu society and political message, though important, was secondary. Swami Vivekanand wanted Indians to develop pride in their culture. To that extent one can say that Swami Vivekanand's message was more political than reformist. He belonged to a sect that worships Kali, the goddess of strength that kills demons and has human skulls hanging around her neck. It is this image of strength that Vivekanand represented. For him service of mankind was more pious than any rituals. He rejected caste system. Swami Vivekanand, like Swami Dayanand, faced severe opposition from the then prevalent Hindu orthodoxy all his life. He decided to go to USA and talk of Hinduism when crossing the sea was declared to be a taboo by Hindu orthodoxy. In 1893, he delivered his famous speech at the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago. For three years he preached in USA and England.

Communal and Caste Politics before Independence

Jinnah's journey from liberalism to Islamic extremism is typical of the political career of many Indian leaders who chose any particular group as their constituency and identity. Sooner or later the leader becomes a slave of his chosen identity or rather of the perceived image of the said identity. Hindu leaders who followed into the footsteps of Swami Dayanand or Swami Vivekanand also faced the same fate. Swami Dayanand and Swami Vivekanand had started a revolt against the ruling orthodoxy of Hindu religion. The followers of the two swamis set up Hindu Mahasabha at the beginning of twentieth century. Hindu Mahasabha wanted to bring all Hindus under one forum. It was not a political party till 1937. The desire to unite all Hindus forced Mahasabha leaders to collect diverse sections of Hindu society including the most orthodox ones. In the process the Mahasabha lost touch with the agenda of reform set by Swami Dayanand and Swami Vivekanand. After losing the reformist agenda, Hindu Mahasabha was left with no ideology that could act as a binder except the identity of being Hindu. This identity was never defined in explicit terms by Mahasabha. As a result, slowly but surely, the progressive reformist elements were pushed into the background and rabidly orthodox elements took over. In pre-independence India this process was aided by the British who arrested progressive elements (since generally they wanted to work for independence) and let the rabidly orthodox go scot-free (since the orthodox had no political agenda and British believed in freedom of religion of natives). Nothing illustrates this better than the extraordinarily harsh treatment of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883 – 1966) by the British.
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POLITICAL PARTIES

Constitution of India appears to usher a party-less democracy in India. The concept of a political party finds no mention at any place in the Constitution. This might have been an oversight by the makers of Constitution. One presumes that if they wanted to do away with the concept of political parties they would have said so. Notwithstanding the intentions of the fathers of the Constitution, political parties are a part of the political scenario of modern India. The Constitution (Fifty-second) Amendment Act, 1985 added a Tenth Schedule – "Provisions as to disqualification on ground of defection". The tenth schedule and new provisions enacted few weeks ago have given unlimited powers to party bosses who now control the voting rights of members of parliament and state legislative bodies. No elected representative has a right to vote as per conscience. Discussions and debate in parliament and legislative assemblies are nothing more than farce since no member has a right to think or alter opinion based on discussions in the house. Everyone must sit with a closed mind in the august house and raise hand or voice strictly as per party whip. It will not be an exaggeration to call Indian democracy as whipocracy, rule by whip rather than by discussions and deliberations. The unrestrained power enjoyed by party bosses in India is most undemocratic since all major parties are run as personal fiefdoms. Party membership registers are full of fictitious names; party elections are routinely rigged or not held at all and sycophancy is the norm instead of free and frank discussions. The roots for this state of political parties in India can be traced to the Gandhian era in Congress. Gandhi, for all his pious looks and soft appearance, brooked no dissent. Anyone who disagreed with him had to quit Congress. His attitude was like that of a legendary US carmaker who said, "A customer can have any colour of his choice as long as his choice is black." Gandhi's attitude was similar – everyone was free to express views as long as one agreed with Gandhi. After independence, Nehru carried forward this tradition. Fortunately for Nehru, Gandhi was no more on the scene, leaving the field open for him. After Nehru's death, his daughter Indira Gandhi and later her heirs have ruled Congress for most of the time. The dynasty rule in Congress is natural fallout of the culture where the only purpose of the second line is to praise the first line of leadership. In due course, second line leadership becomes incapable of

doing anything else except acting as errand-boys. That should explain why Congress had to choose Sonia Gandhi, widow of Rajiv Gandhi, as president. There is already a demand for getting her daughter Priyanka to lead the party.

This fascination for dynasty surprises many outside India. There are many explanations for this. Some are of the opinion that India has yet to grow out of its history of monarchy. This is a simplistic explanation that though partly true misses some essential facts. The other reason is that as a brand, due to its association with freedom movement, Congress has enormous emotional appeal and electorate is drawn to it. In other words, it makes career sense for a budding politician to align with Congress. This influx has kept the Congress survive. Moreover, a leader that owes his / her position to birth in a dynasty rather than to support of subordinates can supersede seniority and promote talent. This has meant that Congress 'high command' has been able to pick and promote bright men and women, as well as to reward performance without bothering about the discontent among rank and file. All other parties, except probably Communists, have followed the Congress model. Sycophancy towards the high command is the rule and any dissent or even divergence of opinion is scoffed at. In a way, within Congress there is considerable freedom – as long as one is loyal to the top ruling family there is full freedom of opinion and one can indulge in all forms of mudslinging, backbiting and arm-twisting of one's colleagues. A political analyst once wrote that open internal fights within Congress help the Congress high command select the best and most capable (no comments on what constitutes "best and most capable"). In contrast with Congress, the other major party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was born in 1980. It traces its history to Jansangh, which was founded in 1952 and was merged in 1977 into Janata Party (an amalgamation of all non-Congress and non-communist parties). In 1980, Janata Party split when a dispute arose about leaders belonging to erstwhile Jansangh being members of RSS. BJP and its earlier version Jansangh have been controlled with a tight fist by RSS.

CONCLUSION

Apart from the above mentioned characteristics, some other distinguishing features of the Hindu political traditions are:

a) The Hindu tradition is basically in-egalitarian. Although it developed the idea of the moral equality of all men, it never developed the social, legal and political groups.

b) The Hindu tradition of political thought is pluralistic in orientation. The Hindu political writers from the very beginning recognized the autonomy of social groups.

c) Political thought in early India was largely uncritical and apologetic of the established social order. Most Hindu writes justified the caste system as the caste based conception of dharma, the largely fatalist concept of karma, the degradation of the Shudras and the slaves, the extensive moral interference of the state and so on. It ignored the whole area of social conflict.

d) Many Hindu writers wrote mainly for the attention of the rulers. Their works are largely manuals of ethics or administration; hence, it is largely didactic and practical

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