



THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN INDIA AND ITS POLITICS

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Abstract:

It was the opinion of the Socialist Party that India had found a non-violent way of fighting against Britain (the U.K.) and American imperialism and capitalism. The Socialist Party had decided to take the people on this line. The Socialist Party was led by Jayprakash Narayan and other farsighted revolutionary leaders. India had found a new way of fighting an unarmed revolution which was going on for last 30 years under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The socialists and Jayprakash Narayan thought that the socialists should continue to tread the path of Mahatma Gandhi. The socialist revolution would take place if they followed democratic way. The people of our country would not have to suffer the dictatorship like Russia. 1

INTRODUCTION

Acharya Jawadekar criticised the policy of the Congress about the Socialist Party as “The Congress captured votes by praising those who were underground and worked under the leadership of Socialist Leaders for the freedom of the nation. The Congress took all the governments in its hands with the help of others and then shut its doors for them, and drove out the Socialist Party. It had established good links with the capitalists in the country and promised them that their interests would be protected. The Congress had wanted to monopolise power and wanted no opposition party against it. It denied that the Congress is the only representative of the nation. It is a dictatorship when Congress thinks that others should not be organised and should not try to win power by the democratic method. The Congress is very strongly influenced by this approach and when it says that the Socialist Party, which was trying to come into power by the democratic means, it is a party of power-seekers. The Congress was making mockery of itself; in fact the socialists were trying to end the capitalism by democratic means.”²

Jawadekar asked the people to support Socialist Party in order to protect democracy by strengthening opposition parties. For healthy democracy there should be two-party system.³ Acharya Jawadekar held that the Congress was unable to curb anarchy in the Country and on the other hand the ways and the means communists had adopted were not likely to uplift the society. Communists were encouraging anarchy everywhere in the country. But the socialists had recognised that economic equality could not be established in the state of anarchy. The country needed a strong government that would curb the capitalism in the first place. ⁴ The intention behind the Satyagraha of the socialists was to compel the government to have strong policy against the capitalists. He thought that socialists were getting the support of the people. He hoped that the socialists would come down heavily on the capitalist and communists. Acharya Jawadekar hoped that the people would like to establish socialism with the help of Satyagraha. They could not prosper by backing the communists who wanted to turn India into China. The people should be made aware of the socialists alternative. ⁵

FORMATION OF PRAJA SAMAJWADI PARTY

In 1952 General Election the Congress won almost everywhere and the Socialist Party was defeated very badly. The defeat was frustrating for them. Acharya Kripalani's Kisan-Mazdoor Praja did not do well. So, in June 1953 discussion was held between Jayprakash Narayan and Acharya Kripalani and out of it was born the Praja Samajwadi Party with the chief objective of "Forming a classless socialist society by peaceful means". The leading lights of the party were : Jayprakash Narayan, Dr. Lohia, Acharya Kripalani, Ashok Mehta and Narendra Dev. The aims envisaged by the party were:

- (1) Belief in sovereignty of the nation.
- (2) Forming a socialist society free from political and economic exploitation.
- (3) Decentralization of administration and economy.
- (4) Redistribution of land.
- (5) Production system based on machine on a small scale.
- (6) Nationalization of industries which needed capital.
- (7) Handing over administration of nationalized industries to the independent corporations.
- (8) Supporting an independent democratic workers' movement.
- (9) Encouragement to the 'Swadeshi' products.
- (10) Policy of non-alignment in the international politics. 6

The people who formed the Socialist Party called themselves 'Marxist' and the mentor of 'Krushan Mazdoor Praja Party' Acharya Kripalani called himself Gandhian. It was a principle that all the members of Socialist Party should have agreement about Marxism but Acharya Kripalani had not formed his party on a single theory. But people took it for granted that the main principle of Socialist Party was Gandhism and the leaders of the Party were trying to spread this kind of thinking. Thus, both the parties believing in Marxism and Gandhism merged on 26-27 September 1952 and a meeting of executive council of both the parties was held in Bombay in which 'Praja Socialist Party' was formed. 7

Acharya Jawadekar opined that Mahatma Gandhi through his Satyagraha made the society aware that they should not do any work or follow any order which would be harmful to allround principle of truth. The socialists thought this way and then tried to find out shortcomings in the concept of communist party organisation. Many of the socialists had a belief in Marxism. Socialist leaders agreed to combine Marxism and Gandhism and it was natural. 8

Acharya Jawadekar hoped that the socialist leaders made their party more integrated and more broad-based and helped to bring out Indian socialism which was hampered by the framework of communism. They created awareness that there was a need for a party today which would do a practical politics ready to give their driver's seat to Gandhism and that was good for both Socialist and Praja Party. 9

Acharya Jawadekar thought that the Praja Socialist Party believed in Gandhism and socialism. But they did not want to make dogma out of Gandhism or Marxism, because both of them – Gandhi and Marx – did not believe in blind implementation of their ideas. Hence the new party was liberal, tolerant and non – dogmatic. It propounded the principle of democratic socialism. 10

SHUDDHA SATYAGRAHA AND SHABAL SATYAGRAHA

During the course of discussion on policies of the PSP Jawadekar expounded the concept of 'Shuddha' and 'Shabal' Satyagraha. 'Shuddha' stood for pure form of Satyagraha and 'Shabal' stood for the Satyagraha that was launched within the framework of political party. He wrote :

Those members of the PSP who want to establish socialist democracy are not 'Pure Satyagrahis' but are 'Shabal' Satyagrahis and those who are not members of any political party but are working against the party in power and have not ambition to secure power are 'Shuddha' Satyagrahis. The people like Acharya Vinoba Bhave are Shuddha Satyagrahis and the leaders like Acharya Kripalani are Shabal Satyagrahis. But the 'Shuddha' Satyagrahi should have good relationship with the Shabal Satyagrahis so as to bring about a social revolution. 11

Gandhians like Acharya Kripalani joined the PSP to secure political power. Practical politics entailed politicians to accept inevitability of minimum violence for the protection of social institutions. Acharya Kripalani was trying to capture political power by forming his own party. Jawadekar thought that since he wanted to secure political power he had become 'Shabal' Satyagrahi. In the past followers of Buddhism took part in politics and from them ensued the new sect called 'Mahayana'. 12 Jawadekar was of the view that emergence of the class of 'Shabal' Satyagrahis was inevitable but he hastened to add that they would not be able to enhance the cause of non-violence in the polity and for that purpose they might

have to seek the support of Shuddha Satyagrahis like Vinoba Bhave. They would establish revolutionary democracy in India and the support of Shabal Satyagrahis was necessary to establish new social order. Hence both types of Satyagrahis realised the importance of revolutionary non-violence but they knew that it had certain practical limitations. He held that they should come together to establish Socialist Democracy in India. They could bring the necessary discipline in India.¹³

It was the goal of the Praja Socialist Party to establish a Socialist Democracy in India. It had accepted the principle of non-violent revolution. Acharya Jawadekar held that those who wanted to serve the people through political work should join the PSP. He opined that if the PSP brought about socialism, the Gandhism would also spread everywhere.¹⁴

REFERECES

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- 7)Ibid – P. 6-7
- 8)Ibid – 9.
- 9)Ibid – P. 1
- 10)Ibid – P. 6, 10.
- 11)Ibid – P. 12
- 12)Ibid – P. 12, 13
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- 14)Ibid – P. 14.