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Politics of Caste Mobilization

Smt. Anuradha
Naik

Shivaji Arts and Science College Baad, Karwar.

Dr. B. M. Ratnakar

Dept. of Political Science Karnatak University Dharwad

ABSTRACT

A new trend has begun to field a candidate of their own caste irrespective of the merits or demerits. The caste leaders pressurise the political parties to provide seats to those whose number is in majority so that people of a caste can vote en bloc for a candidate of the same or different caste either in pursuance of the decision of Caste Panchayat or their leaders. In case a single caste is not found to be effective, alliances are made on caste basis. At present the political parties are also intelligent to pick up the caste based leaders to mobilize the votes on caste considerations.

KEYWORDS : caste Politics, caste mobilization, Political mobilization.

Political mobilization has become an important component of political analysis. Mobilization involves releasing the inert inactive concealed and potential resources into active and usable resources to achieve goals. Elite play a significant role in mobilization process. Many leaders mobilize people on various ideologies. In democracy political mobilization ultimately leads to expanding participation in politics by various sections of the societies. Mobilized democratic political systems are always vibrant and dynamic which in turn will become responsive and responsible to people. Today of late the caste mobilization is gaining significance in the political process. Caste is considered as one of the main determinants of voting behaviour in India. It has a decisive role in political matters, particularly voting. Voting provides an opportunity to castes to assert their influence. Just as in Britain, voting is class determinant, in United States, it is race determinant.

Many scholars like D. Millar (1950), Key (1955), Colin Campbell (1960), Rajni Kothari (1970) and Norman Palmer (1976) and many others have contributed immensely on the linkages between caste and politics in India. These days the caste politics is on the rise. Right from the selection of candidates the caste plays a significant role. Several empirical field studies of elections conducted by sociologists and political scientists have revealed that caste not only exerts influence during voting but also acts as an important factor.

Most of the political leaders invariably attempt to mobilize caste groups and identities in order to gain political power. They utilize caste identities and solidarities to cast votes on caste lines in every democratic institution from Gram Panchayats to state assemblies and even parliament. Renowned sociologist, Andre Beteille is of the opinion that caste loyalties are exploited in voting. Bhikhu Parekh, Professor at the London School of Economics (India Today, December 26, 2005) observed, during 2004 national election survey, nearly 40 per cent of the people voted for their castes'. Rudolph and Rudolph also said that caste plays an important political role in India.

Caste thus provides an extensive basis for the organization of democratic politics in India. It is the most convenient means of political mobilization. Elections are always fought utilizing the resources of caste loyalties. Number of social reformers fought for centuries to eradicate caste practices but unfortunately the selection of candidates for a constituency is made on the basis of caste, who have a significant voice and can muster good number of votes in the constituency. Every party takes utmost care to see that its candidate in a particular constituency belongs to the caste which has a majority in the area.

A new trend has begun to field a candidate of their own caste irrespective of the merits or demerits. The caste leaders pressurise the political parties to provide seats to those whose number is in majority so that people of a caste can vote en bloc for a candidate of the same or different caste either in pursuance of the decision of Caste Panchayat or their leaders. In case a single caste is not found to be effective, alliances are made on caste basis. At present the political parties are also intelligent to pick up the caste based leaders to mobilize the votes on caste considerations.

As a matter of fact the political parties who once declared of being casteless and secular are encouraging the caste politics. Commenting on the role of caste in democratic elections, S.C. Dube a renowned sociologist commented on this some time before and opined that this is not a good sign for the developing democracy.

In India the political parties consider both, candidates individual capacity along with caste base which can bring votes. It observed over the decades that some castes supporting and being with some political parties and they are the strong vote banks of those political parties. People belonging some major communities and castes bargain with political parties and get political berths. Some times this affects the societal harmony. The political parties most of the time keep calculating on these factors. The ruling parties do influence caste groups by attractive announcements and concessions on the eve of elections. Most of the time this works out in encashing the situation.

Today, the Indian electorate, like the electorate of other nation are also influenced by several elements such as religion, caste, community, money and personality or charismatic leadership. A unique feature of several political parties in India is that they mobilize caste support. Many studies relating to the role of caste in politics Rajni Kothari, Andre Beteille, Sydney Verba, B. Ahmad and Anil Bhatt and others have studied the role of caste in the present political situation and conclude that political parties invariably mobilize castes for functioning and seek their support in winning elections.

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Political Mobilisation and Assembly Elections in Karwar

Smt. Anuradha Naik Shivaji Arts and Science College Baad, Karwar.

Dr B. M. Ratnakar Dept of Political Science Karnatak University Dharwad.

ABSTRACT

Political mobilization has become an important component of political analysis. Mobilization involves releasing the inert inactive concealed and potential resources into active and usable resources to achieve goals. Elite play an significant role in mobilization process. Many leaders mobilize people on various ideologies. In democracy political mobilization ultimately leads to expanding participation in politics by various sections of the societies. Mobilized democratic political systems are always vibrant and dynamic which in turn will become responsive and responsible to people.

KEYWORDS : political party, Politics, Mobilization, Democra

India is the largest democratic country in the world. The success of democracy depends upon the political parties. Democracy revolves around the pivot of Party organization. In India there is a multi party system. Various political parties exist and they present alternative political programmes before the electorate and seek the mandate of the people. The party which secures majority in the legislature forms the government and the other parties form the opposition. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. The opposition parties have to be alert and vigilant as to strengthen democracy. As Lord Bryce observed "the Parties keep a nations mind alive as the rise and fall of the sweeping tide freshens the water of long ocean inlets. The political party always try their best to organize and mobilize public opinion, Put forth their manifesto of an alternative political programme before the people and seek the mandate of voters. Thus the concept of mobilization gains significance. It provides an opportunity to the voters to select and vote for any party of their choice. Mobilization of voters is traditionally considered as an principal function of political parties. When traditional societies move towards modernity and ideal democracy, political mobilization becomes a necessity. In this transitional stage different leaders organize people on various socio economic and political bases to achieve certain goals. Newly emerged groups have to compete to secure goods and services, to achieve social equity and to participate in the democratic political process. In such process competition develops among the various groups to mobilize their own people to the maximum extent to gain optimum benefits. Such mobilization provides as input to the political system which in turn comes out with output in the form of reforms, concessions, and facilities etc to the various mobilized groups. Political mobilization has become an important component of political analysis. Mobilization involves releasing the inert inactive concealed and potential resources into active and usable resources to achieve goals. Elite play an significant role in mobilization process. Many leaders mobilize people on various ideologies. In democracy political mobilization ultimately leads to expanding participation in politics by various sections of the societies. Mobilized democratic political systems are always vibrant and dynamic which in turn will become responsive and responsible to people. The area which comes under the present Research scheme also has witnessed such kind of frequent shift in mobilization due to caste consideration, money and influences. This study aims at throwing light on the shifting mobilization from one party to another and tries to apprehend the reasons for this shift. The study shows that there is an assertion stating that the institutionalized hierarchical relationships between individuals and parties is weakening. The loyalties of voters are diverted from parties to persons.

Uttar Kannada, which is considered as a back ward area on socio economic grounds, has been witnessing a major shift in mobilization. As

far as the political history of Canara Parliamentary Constituency is concerned, there was the hold of Congress party. But after 1996, there was a sudden change on the political scenario. In 1996, B J P won the elections only on the basis of the votes of the forward communities. In 1999 election on account of the support by the Minorities, Congress won the elections. It was caste consciousness which was the cause for the change in party affiliation. But in 2004 election congress party lost miserably because of the negligent attitudes of its candidate. No developmental activities were undertaken in the area as a result of which Public opinion was diverted as against the party. In 2009 election once again BJP won as against congress. Thus, the study reveals the fact that, the socio political reasons led to political mobilization in the coastal politics. Y.B.Damle opines that there is a close link between the caste and the democratic politics. He concludes by saying that castes will continue to be in the politics of India as a partner in the process of democratization. Mobilization comprises of motivating factors and they must influence the people at large. As Prof. S.S. Patagundi and others plead mobilization is a process through which energies of leaders and masses are expanded to the maximum extent and channelised through certain means to achieve certain pre determined goals.

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