

## IDEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN: A STUDY ON TOTAL REVOLUTION

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### **Abstract**

*Western thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Karl Marx, Hegel, Machiavelli and Gandhi developed their ideology based on their contemporary socio-economic and political circumstances. JP's Total Revolution was unique because it did not promote any partisan, sectarian or violent struggle. Instead of targeting a specific party, leader, class or caste, it aimed at removing widespread socio-economic and political evils through peaceful mass participation. The movement emphasised human dignity by placing the individual at the centre and tried to combine spiritual and material development. The movement encouraged people to learn through experience and to become active makers of their own destiny. Both Nehru and JP were inspired by the ideology of socialism during the freedom struggle. JP was not a blind follower of Fabianists like George Bernard Shaw or Sidney and Beatrice Webb or Marx, Lenin or of Gandhi. JP criticised Nehru's socialism in the following ways.*

### **Keywords**

*Sarvodaya, Total, Revolution, Democracy, Corruption, Elections, Social, Politics, Morality, Ethics, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.*

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## **Introduction**

The internal functioning of Congress itself was a training ground for democracy. Gandhi's respect for dissent served as a practical lesson in democratic ethics. From Dadabhai Naoroji, leaders instilled high standards of public conduct and moral politics. The theme of the article is democratic resilience, the role of values and morality in politics, the decline of institutions, danger of forgetting historical lessons, and the contrast between idealism and present-day political pragmatism. Despite the victory of the Indian National Congress in 1971-1972, despite massive electoral wins, the Congress Party is described as lacking internal strength, democracy and leadership substance. The Congress survived in the elections in several states only because of by money and charismatic authority of Mrs. Gandhi. The undemocratic structure of the Congress is seen as a danger not just to the party but to Indian democracy itself. Indian democracy is 'democratic centralism' and Soviet style authoritarianism. To JP, the erosion of internal democracy within the Congress is not a party issue, but a national democratic crisis. The consolidation of power, fear of dissent and intellectual submission threaten both democracy and social progress in India.

True freedom of the press is being undermined by the values of democratic socialism, such as decentralisation, industrial democracy, education and ethical leadership is being replaced by bureaucratic socialism, centralized socialism and an elitist model run by a small, powerful class. There are some reasons for hope for JP for Indian democracy in the ways of active civil society and youth participation in governance, an independent Election Commission, the judiciary still acts as a check, and social media enabling grassroots mobilization are needed to achieve Indian democracy. JP was concerned about the erosion of democratic norms, reducing space for dissent; majoritarianism threatening pluralism and growing disillusionment with political processes. The prospects of Indian democracy depend on the citizenry's vigilance, the institutional checks and balances, and the commitment to constitutional values. JP believed that "A great revolution is not only possible but necessary". He meant a democratic, peaceful, moral revolution, not on a violent one.

### **I. JP from Sarvodaya to Total Revolution**

JP launched a massive student movement in Bihar in 1974 and subsequently it spread all over India. He organized and united to all opposition parties and civil society under the banner of Sampoorna Kranti. In his book "Prison Diary" stated that "there has been no real change in the social, economic and political structure of our country" (Narayan, 1977, P.31). JP observed the violence, fraud, corruption among the Mrs. India Gandhi Government by which Indian moral, spiritual, economic

and political conditions has declined and polluted poisonous the every blood of the society. According to JP, “since independence there has been a steady decline in political, public and business morality” (Narayan, 1977, P.33).

Corruption was the central issue of the Total Revolution which he is called ‘Public Enemy Number One’. In his delivering lecture in a public meeting in Bombay on 22 January 1975 JP regarded Indian corruption as the ‘modern God of India’, ‘omniscient and omnipotent God’. Corruption spread its tentacles in Indian politics, education, science, business and agriculture. On 6<sup>th</sup> March 1975, in the People’s Charter of Demands which was send to the Speaker of Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, JP stated that “corruption is eating into the vitals of our political life. It is disrupting development, undermining the administration and making mockery of all laws and regulations.” (Narayan, 2002, P. 270). In his letter entitled “Growing Feeling of Hopelessness” to the President of Janata Party in 1978 expressed his deep disillusionment with the pervasive corruption that had infected not only political institutions but also the social and administrative fabric of the nation. In his article “First Things First” Prasad states that all Ministers, including Chief Ministers, most of their representatives, from Gram Panchayat Presidents to Members of Parliament, officers of the government from high to lower, are involved in corruption (Prasad, ed., 2009, P. 459).

He argued that true democracy is where the safeguard of democracy lies in the people’s faith, capacity and participation in self-governance. The corruption, nepotism, favouritism, fraud and dishonesty were major threats to Indian democracy (Bhattacharya, 1980, P.127). To him, elections have turned into a mockery of democracy where corruption, muscle-power and excessive expenditure prevent poor candidates or parties from participating meaningfully. True spirit of democracy destroyed through corruption in elections (Dr. Ramendra, ed., 1986, Patna, P.4). Indian society is based on several castes, creeds, religions and evils practices like nepotism, favoritism, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, and corruption and stratification between rich and poor, unemployment and malpractices in the appointment of the employees of the universities and civil services. These are the problems of Indian society and politics. He was trying to educate to his followers to remove all of these problems without which no revolution could be possible. He also replied that in the capitalist way revolution is not possible, need for material and spiritual solutions (Vasant 1980, P.4). He discarded the Marxian dialectical and historical materialism for the transformation of society. He did not provide consent to over-centralization and total statism. (Narayan, 1954, P.20). After rejecting the Capitalist path, the Marxian path and the Vinobabian path he took the concept of Total Revolution.

Total revolution is regarded by JP as an effort to bring out into the existence the Gandhian-Humanist Version of an Ideal society. He has pointed out that “It will be the fulfillment of one of any dreams if the intellectuals in this country can provide a systematic and comprehensive content to the concept of a total revolution”(Sebasti. 1986, P.39)

The centralized power of Congress ruled over the entire administration. The demographic profile of the masses of the country changes its ideology in its present political order. Besides, these unbalanced economic growth, corruption, unemployment, and poverty can be changed in the society. (Kothari, 1970, P.939). To observe this dominant party model, Morris Jones elucidated it as a rise of ‘market polity’. He argued that ‘the dominant party model has started to give way to a more differentiated structure of party competition’. He later said that ‘the market of politics has expanded by the participation of new groups in government’ (Kohli, ed, 1988, p.156). In 1970, the economic system in India was completely biased in nature. Unemployment, poverty, corruption, black money, and nepotism were responsible for the degraded condition of the economic system. Black money was another source of various malpractices. Describing this unbearable condition of money (Kar, 2013, P.76). In an article entitled ‘Constitution in Crisis’, published in Everyman’s publication, JP expressed his views that there is no dearth of talent in the student. (Prasad, ed., 2003, Vol.IV, p.135).

### **Check the Canker of Corruption**

He urged the government to study and act upon various official reports on corruption, such as the Santhanam Committee Report (1964) recommended the creation of a Central Village Commission and stricter anti-corruption laws. The Wanchoo Committee Report recommended on tackling black money and tax evasion. Administrative Reforms Commission proposed to establish Lokpal at the centre level and Lokayukta at the state level to investigate corruption among higher civil services. JP welcomed and supported for Central Vigilance and Accountability Bodies and CVC which included investigating against ministers and higher and lower civil servants. The Lokpal and Lokayukta India and later it became as India’s Ombudsman framework for accountability.

JP observed that despite the Prime Minister’s Power, popularity and legislative achievements, the poor condition of India has been ignored. JP suggested for solutions with serious, statutory and impartial mechanisms to investigate corruption in public life.

- i. The bodies including the Chief Election Commission have already studied the issues of corruption and made valuable recommendations, but no action

has been taken or progress has been slow or hesitant. The Santhanam Committee suggested “If 10 legislators both from MP and MLA submit a written allegation of corruption to the PM or CM, then the leader should feel bound by convention to refer the matter to a respectable, impartial investigative committee” (Prasad, ed., 2009, P. 150). The Santhanam Committee was established in 1960 and recommended curbing corruption. Some recommendations were implemented, but key ones were ignored, especially regarding ministerial conduct. The Central Vigilance Commission was recommended to be a statutory body with powers under the Commission of Inquiry Act of 1952. But in reality, it was created via an executive order. Some public servants face scrutiny, but ministers were exempted from inquiry. JP here makes the anti-corruption measure via implementing the Santhanam Committee properly.

- ii. The Administrative Reforms Committee recommended the establishment of a Lok Pal at the centre level and Lok Ayukta in the states in 1966 to prevent corruption. The Indian government delayed action, although the Lok Pal Bill was introduced in 1968 and passed in the Lok Sabha in 1969; there was a lack of political willingness. The State of Maharashtra established a Lokayukta with statutory powers, but corruption was not eradicated from India.
- iii. There is MP, MLA’s interference in transfers, postings, and promotions of employees that led to corruption. JP proposes the legal and systematic reforms. To him, the ministers should only handle postings of IAS or equivalent officers, and all other cases should go to committees of departmental heads led by the chief secretary. The strong political will and leadership, corruption can be minimized (Prasad, ed., 2009, P. 152).

JP’s article under the title “Clean Elections: Not With Dirty Money” published in *Everyman’s* on 7 September, it is a powerful critique of political corruption in India on the issues of electoral funding and misuse of unaccounted party funds. He argues that the collection of party funds for elections is the largest source of corruption in politics. There is lack of transparency and accountability. The funds are not recorded in the official party register, nor are they audited. The funds are used to influence party members, buy defections, and election manipulation and are used for their own pockets. The government of 1970 was marked by rising awareness of corruption and cronyism, political turmoil, including defections and unstable coalition governments. The demand was raised for electoral reforms and clean politics.

The article titled “Moral Regeneration: A Study for You”, published in *Everyman’s* on 29 September 1973, was a thought-provoking appeal for civic engagement in the moral revitalisation of politics. It is a series of reflections under the broader title “First Things First” and a continuation of the article of about electoral corruption in “Clean Elections: Not with Dirty Money”. JP outlines essential principles for effective citizens’ actions that led to the removal of corruption. Public action must be non-violent, non-partisan, selfless, non-violent, impersonal, selfless, politically independent and personally integrity. Everyone in India has a crucial role in cleaning up the nation’s morality and political life, but the role of citizens must be thoughtful, principled, sacrificial and rooted in personal integrity. To advise to receive the policy of “break new ground” and “explores alternative, non-violent, grassroots-based approaches”, develop “a new civic consciousness rooted in self-reliance and community solidarity” (Prasad, ed., 2009, P. 175).

## **II. JP’s Left from Vinoba Bhave’s Gramdan and Bhoodan Movement**

There are some factors behind the causes of dissatisfaction with the Mrs. Gandhi Government which started to maintain distance from Vinoba Bhave’s Gramdan and Bhoodan movement.

- i. Vinoba Bhave’s rejection of Satyagraha and neglect of broader Gandhian constructive efforts.
- ii. The failure of Shanty Sena to respond effectively to communal violence, caste oppression and other social issues.
- iii. JP felt that parliamentary democracy had been corrupted by power politics, misuse of state machinery and erosion of public confidence.
- iv. Overall ineffectiveness of the movement in bringing real change. The much donated land was unusable or never reached the real poor.
- v. There was lack of mass support in the Sarvodaya movement. The Sarvodaya movement did not gain the genuine involvement of the common people. It remained confined to idealistic volunteers and failed to mobilize widespread social support.
- vi. The spiritual and moral appeals of Vinoba Bhave failed to achieve as a social or psychological force. This method was slow and ineffective in dealing with rooted socio-economic inequalities.
- vii. The Sarvodaya movement of Bhave was limited in paper and failed to achieve its actual objective. The goals of redistributing land to the landless and ensuring rural transformation were not fulfilled in reality.

### **Concluding Observations**

JP's approach was democratic, flexible and non-violent. He desired a central committee that included representatives from opposition parties, students, Sarvodaya workers, laborers, peasants, intellectuals, women, youth and backward communities. Leadership is not for one person, it would be for all. The institutions like voter councils, people-selected candidates, and 'Sangharsha Samitis' reflected the idea of a 'people's government' built on violent mass power and autonomous social action.

The grassroots mobilization challenged the Mrs. Indira Gandhi Government, and it resulted found the Janata Government in 1977. His Total revolution gave people the confidence that corruption and abuse of authority could be fought through democratic, non-violent means. The movement gained national importance because it emerged from the Hindi heartland and mobilized people across castes, communities and religions. The movement addressed major national issues such as corruption, authoritarianism in democracy, one-party dominance and other social and political injustices. He observed that the democratic values, freedom of expression, association and rule of law were undermined. Earlier students and youths were associated with violence, indiscipline and narrow demands, but under the leadership of JP they were guided by the non-violence and worked for larger public issues. The creation of student organizations at various levels strengthened unity and gave students a common purpose in national reconstruction. JP carried forward Gandhi's method of peaceful struggle, but used it to protect democracy and initiate social change in an independent nation. The movement strengthened democratic values such as freedom, equality and fraternity.

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