

## A NEED OF A NEW MOVEMENT IN POLITICS

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The term "politics" is a derivative of Greek word "polis" meaning a city. To the Greeks city was a state and the subject which dealt with the city was politics. It began to grow with the emergence of Greek city states.

Politics is now commonly used for the state affairs or current political problems of the country and the government. It also means manoeuvring for power. Moreover it is conceived as a struggle for and use of power or a process in which the rulers try to serve their interests which may be in conflict with those of other groups or states by means of their policies and actions.

In the course of struggle for power among the power seeking groups or states, many theories regarding the origin of the state, sovereignty etc. were propounded. Many forms of political systems such as aristocracy, oligarchy polity, democracy etc. were developed and tried in the name of public welfare. Though democracy at present is the most popular system of government, its politics has been an issue for debate.

So much for democracy, it was said that no other systems were so much discussed and criticised as it was done in ancient Greece. Democracy to Socrates was an impossible form of government. To Plato, it was a charming form of government full of variety and disorder. To Aristotle, it was nothing but anarchic mob rule.

In connection with the changes in political systems, specially in democracy, the exercise of power was democratized by transferring it from a ruler to a group of individuals elected by the people as their representatives. In a process of democratization, not only different kinds of parties, groups, sections etc. came into being but also the tug of war, tricks, conspiracies, oppositions and supports for power between and among them began. Politicians were led by all these factors to play games of dissolving the government one after another in pursuit of fulfilling their interests. Thus a sort of political crisis or a chaos, that more often started up, came to become one of the features of democratic system.

So far the changes in politics are concerned, they seem to have just changed its nature, widened its scope and developed its means and resources. The leaders, rulers or power seekers intend to gain power by every possible means has remained much the same as it was in the past. However now democracy is said to be the last alternative to the

political systems developed so far and the best one in comparison to other systems.

The concept of politics developed so far has been put under two sections. 1) Eastern Concept and 2) Western Concept.

### 1. Eastern Concept of Politics :

Politics to the Eastern Political Philosophers and thinkers of ancient times was the policy of the king to rule over the kingdom. It was based on the rules of religion and ethics. In view of the then political situation. Brihaspati, the then champion of ethical science had a view that in politics, the emphasis should not be given only on the comprehensive influence and supremacy of power that occur in times and places, there are in politics some merits that help develop the life of the people and build ideals and love to them. The other philosophers such as Manu Sukracharya, Kamadak, Bidur etc. also had the same kind of views on politics. The religion and politics were taken as the two wheels of politics. Later the king's policy of punishment was regarded as politics. Immoral and unreligious activities were accepted as political crimes. However, people more often broke out in revolt against the monopoly of the rulers and ended in overthrowing them from the power.

"Kautilya of India in 4th Century B.C. emerged with his book on "Economics" regarding the king's policy as politics. The three alternatives to politics given in the book by him are 1. Individuals happiness is possible in perfect use of politics, 2. There will be enmity and unpopularity if politics is used with anger, jealousy and self interests and 3. There will be anarchy if there is no politics. In matters of playing politics also, his suggestion is that any policy no matter whether they be fair or foul, can be brought into use in the course of serving political interests. The four devices to achieve political aims propounded by him are 1. Balance, 2. Compensation, 3. Punishment and 4. Divide. They are still prevalent in modern behaviour politics. However his attention seems to have centred more on how to achieve political aim than on maintaining ethical values in politics. He is indcisive about how the rulers should be for the betterment of the people and the country.

Another political thinker Mahatma Gandhi of modern India viewed politics in a platonic way. Politics to him is inseparable from religion and ethics and politics without them is dangerous and kills human soul. His special emphasis is that politics should be based on religion and ethics for the better human beings. Religion is the base of politics and politics is the humanistic religion. Maotse Tung of China regarded politics as the power that comes out of the barrels of gun. Thus the views on politics seem to have reckoned on how the philosophers, thinkers or rulers make of it according to their context.

### 2. Western Concept :

As in eastern world of politics in western world also, the views on politics differ from one philosopher or thinker to another. Before

introducing their views on politics, to present a glimpse of ancient Greek political situation under-democracy would be relevant to this context.

There was direct democracy in Greece and it functioned well because every Greek had a deep and abiding reverence for the city state and its laws. However Athenian democracy, in the course of time, degenerated into mobocracy. It now became a government of the untutored multitude with no clear grasp of principles, who were conscious of the advantage of free living and believed that the majority could do no wrong. Justice became the interests of the stronger and this paved the way for the tyrant. The sense of freedom was to live on the sweated labour of the slaves. Greek democracy tainted with irresponsible individualism particularism, want of self-restraints personal ambitions and the spirit of factions.

Thucydides in his History of the Peloponnesian war draws a very vivid and gloomy picture of the crisis which had overtaken Greek Political life characterized by spirit of faction and other political evils. The cause of all these evils was the lust for power arising from greed and ambition; and from these passions proceeded the violence of parties once engaged in contention. The leaders in the cities sought prizes for themselves in those public interests which they pretended to cherish.

In view of the then political situation the contemporary political philosophers such as Stoics, Sophists, Socrates etc. gave due places to ethical values in politics, so as to make it a fair and ideal one.

Then came Plato, a renowned Greek philosopher, with his political idealism. He saw the growing ruins of Athense under democracy. He describes the follies of democracy reflected in the life of Athense. He views democracy as a charming form of government full of variety and disorder. The laws of democracy remained a dead letter; its freedom is anarchy; its equality is the equality of unequals. He conceives of democracy as a politico-civico system of society in which everybody is free to do what he pleases and considers himself the equal of everybody else.

Being disgusted with the evils of Athenian democracy, he conceived that only by the rule of philosopher king could an end be made of the incompetence of ignorant factitious and self-seeking politicians and justice, order and harmony could be restored to Greece through conditions obtainable only in an ideal polity painted by him in the greatest of all his dialogues, the Republic.

Politics to Plato, was not so much the art of administering laws and maintaining peace and order but primarily, the art of making man better. As a man is so is his politics. It is a bad politician who makes politics bad. Since the corruptions or immoral acts done by the ruler or politician in relation to politics, give a negative impact to the society, he suggested that in order to be free from those acts and to lay down fair politics the ruler should live a life of a saint or a philosopher having no any care about his personal interests. Thus Plato seems to have given

more emphasis on the quality of ruler and the system for the attainment of an ideal state.

After Plato, another renowned philosopher Aristotle came up with a slight different view from Plato's on politics. His view is that state came into being for the fulfilment of the bare needs of life and will continue for the good life of human beings. As the state is meant for the good life of man, there should not be any difference between politics and ethics. Because the base of good life is ethics and in its absence no good life and system is possible. But he further says that as the ruler should be expert to rule over the good or bad state according to the situation, Politics should be to some extent, kept free of ethics in times of need. His concept on politics was regarded as the realistic or practical one. However politics to the Greeks was the ethics of the whole society.

In periods of the theory of two swords in the 10th Century, politics was viewed as a crime and religion as holy. Even then some philosophers of medieval age such as Cicero, St. Thomas Aquinas, Marsilio of Padua etc. were not out of the impression of Plato and Aristotle's moral concept towards politics. They had though accepted political power as a means to achieve aim they had over looked the evil deeds like deceive tricks, hoodwink etc. to be done in relation to politics.

In the 16th Century, Machiavelli of Italy came out with his book on "Prince" supporting the royal absolutism. He, by breaking the traditional concept of politics propounded a theory of practical politics on the basis of the theory of opportunism. In west, the theories of modern realistic politics is regarded as a development of his concept on politics, which is also known as Machiavellian concept of politics.

The aim of politics to Machiavelli is to achieve maintain and extend power. There is no matter whether the means or policies to achieve aim be just or unjust, political aim must be attained by every possible means. The aim justifies the means. Politics has its own morality different from the social ones. It is the morality of success in defending itself and thus guaranteeing the safety of its people success in quest when this was necessary to protect its own interest. Again the thing which is justified from the political point of view, is unjustified from other point of view. Any policy or means helpful to achieve power or aim is justifiable to the ruler.

As Kautilya of India, Machiavelli too did not make much of religion and ethics in politics as Plato and others did. He made the distinction between public and private morality an issue which still survives to this day in practical politics and in international politics. Thus he seems to have left politics in the hands of politicians without any restraints on them. He sees politics as a battle a constant struggle for power. All politics in his sense are power politics.

However in the 18th Century the philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, Basanque, Bradly etc. were not in favour of Machiavellian concept of politics. Politics to them was not only a means to attain power, it was

indeed an ideal and a means to achieve man's moral freedom.

During 17th to 20th Century some landmark revolutions such as glorious revolution of 1688, French Revolution of 1789 American war of Independence etc. against the monarchy and colonialism took place for the establishment of democracy. These revolutions not only ended in bringing about democracy in those countries but also became the source of inspiration courage and political awareness for the people under colonial rule to make struggle against colonialism to gain independence. After the second world war the break-down of colonial empires began. Consequently, almost all the colonial countries gradually got independence and adopted democratic system of government. But because of their backwardness in social, cultural, educational, political, economical aspects, most of them could neither improve their politics nor get on in their democratic model of governance. Contrary to their hopes and aspirations for peace, progress and prosperity and rule of law, unfortunately, the evils like Greek democratic follies were restored in those newly independent countries. The system which had been adopted as a democracy turned out to be a hybrid one-a mixture of some features of all systems.

In the first half of 20th century two schools of political thoughts such as Idealistic politics and Realistic politics re-emerged in respect of how politics really should be in the political horizon.

#### **Idealistic Politics :**

Politics to idealists is a value based on philosophy close to morality and ethics. The key-note of this thought is that people should abandon ineffective modes of behaviour and instead act with knowledge, reason, compassion and self-restraints. It is based on an idea of reformed political system free from power politics, immorality and violence. It promises to bring about a better society with the help of education and morality.

But this thought suffered from weakness such as lack of adequate methods of arriving at universal ideals or a unanimous stand of ruler nation states of what constitute good politics. Consequently idealism began to decline and Machiavellian principles of realism started to impart strength. So now there seems to be no place for idealism in modern politics.

#### **Realistic Politics**

The realists on the other hand regard politics in terms of power defined in terms of interests and as such is concerned with actualities. The purpose and promotion of interests over-rule all ethical considerations. It tries to analyse actual political behaviour and identify main variables. Politics are guided by interests more than anything else. To the realists morality means weighing the consequence of political actions. Yet it argues the adoption of legalistic, moralistic and even ideological behaviour in politics.

In spite of all its weakness, much of the world continue to think about politics in terms of this view point. Besides the above two schools of political thoughts, politics has been categorised into fair politics and foul politics in modern practical politics, which are almost akin to the above two schools of thoughts respectively.

### **Fair Politics**

Basically it is an ideal politics based on the characteristics like ideal principles, policies, benevolency, morality, honesty, belief, public welfare and so on. It is supposed to be indispensable for good political system and also prerequisite to the peace, progress and prosperity in the country and the world. It seems good in theory but failure in practice.

### **Foul Politics**

It is a perverted form of fair politics based on realities and material needs not on moral and ideals. In addition, politicians come up with slogans, but inconsistent with them. It is also called dirty politics. However it is detrimental to the society it seems to have tremendous hold over the present, local national and international practical politics.

If a system is good but its ruler is unpleasent, it might be misused by him for his own shake. If a system is bad but its ruler is benevolent, it might be improved and implemented by him properly for the benefit to the people. Therefore the success of a system does not depend on itself however it might be it depends mainly on its proper implementation which is indeed possible only by the benevolent ruler. Not only at present but also from the time immemorial, benevolent leadership has been a crying need of people for law and order harmony and progress in the country. So the question is not only of a good system but also of a benevolent leadership.

It is absolutely true that there is a great role of social and religious rules and regulations in controlling the human behaviour. But in spite of all the suggestions and the legal provisions made for good ruler and governance the politicians are still free to play politics as they please. It is assumed that if people are highly motivated by the greed and less careful about their common interests, there is no way out but to live with the monopoly of the rulers.

However politics itself is not dirty or evil indeed because it is not conducted by itself. It is the politicians the political actors players participants and so forth who make the misuse of politics with foul means to attain their interests, and say that politics is a dirty game so as to present themselves as fair politicians. Unpleasent ruler or leader and foul politics are synonyms which come off well in the absence of adequate legal provisions to take strict actions against the politicians for their evil deeds and public consciousness to bear out and enhance the ethical aspect of the leadership and politics.

Persons involved in politics are dignified by calling them politicians. To elect them as leaders, ruler or representatives is meant

to authorise them, with hope and belief, to act honestly for the benefit of the general public. But it does not mean anyway that they are free to exercise the authorities as they please. Benefit to the general public is possible by them only when they are moral, honest and committed to their words and promises to the people.

But a strange thing is that most of the politicians when get into power become self seeking, suffer from gold fever, forget their promises and duties towards the nation, loose their morality and begin to do good into themselves and their few sycophants who please them by flattering. They enjoy in playing on the problems of the people in general. It is a historical fact that such situation has always been a cause to bring about terrible disaster in the country.

The question now comes up why political evils were not nipped in the bud after all the suggestions and efforts for making politics fair and ideal. Had the political evils been replaced with ethics and ideals and put them into day to day practical politics, as the evils were done, politics would not have been so worse as it is today. It could have been much better and beneficial to the society and the nation. In this respect, the realisation is that it is no other than the selfish rulers who found the ethical values of politics as obstacles in fulfilling their personal interests. So they went on making the use of them only in slogans and species so as to make beleive the people, instead of putting them into daily practices. The ethics and ideals are though accepted as the base of good life, the source of justice, the ground of honesty and so on, they seem to have now become a mirage. The politics which was considered foul seems to have a predominance over the present politics. The elements which were accepted as evils, have been essential ones in politics today. It is so said that modern politics, shorn of its ethical import, has come down to mean Machiavallianism political jugglery and unscrupulous political Chicanery.

So now it is felt that time has come for all the concerning political personalities to reconsider about politics for the good of all. Since the benevolent leadership and fair politics are the most important conditions for the achievement of the benefit to the people, they should be, for the first, maintained at any cast. For this purpose a unanimous agreement at local, national and international level is required. Because if national and international agreements can be made on various issues, why can't an agreement be made on this issue. The need is of only the initiative to be taken by the leaders and rulers towards this direction. But there seems to be so far no indication from any leader or ruler towards it. There is a feeling that it would be the most dangerous thing to continue the present politics as usual. It is therefore realised that there is a great need for a new campaign or a new movement to discourage politicians from promoting ethical nihilism in politics or to deviate the politics from its present condition to a better one for a better system for the betterment of the people.