

Understanding Dalit Identity Politics: Root of Political Crisis and Recombinants in Uttar Pradesh

Abstract

Dalit is a dehumanize category in India. Present paper will analyse the current political scenario of Dalit politics in Uttar Pradesh .what is the reason for poor performance of BahunSamaj Party (BSP) in election by election in Uttar Pradesh for a last one decade almost? How this affect the social as well as political life of dalit community . What are the emancipatory ways for them? How Dalit movement could rebirth on political plot of utter Pradesh and rest part the country.

Keywords: Identity Politics, Dalit, BSP, Political crisis, Emancipation.

Introduction

The Dalit in India are dehumanized social category. Let's understand who are Dalit and what Dalit identity politics is and for? The literal meaning of Dalit are ground down, broken to pieces, crushed. Dalit is a word for community and identity that are in making. Dalit are historically untouchable usually known by degrading name as chamar, mahar, mang and periyar, were dehumanized by caste Hindu order.

Aim of the Study

Thematically this paper centric on political economy of identity politics extensively it covers the cultural intervention in modernity. identity politics is a modern phenomenon whether different peoples and group clime for recognition of their difference. The conception of 'I' and 'you' or 'we' and they' comes here simultaneously. Who I am? or who you are ? Answering these questions the significant other is necessary. It means defining who I am or who we are first we have to identify who not we are or from whom we are different. Person's identity derives from cultural narrative. We ness constituted with where we live, how we live, what we believe in etc.

The claim for identity emerges from western notion of 'individuality'. Identity based politics started from late nineteenth century and early twentieth century with second wave of feminist movement, and black movement. Dalit movement in India also get stimulations from there. It flourished in modern democratic state through getting extra care (reservation) from state. But in India, the cultural interventions to state in forms of traditional caste system or patriarchy, limits the behaviours of Indian state as a modern state.

Review of Literature

Utter Pradesh hardly saw any anti-brahminical movements led by dalits prior to independence. Although it became the laboratory of dalit identity led by BSP (Pai, 2002) .Decline of the congress party in UP, alienation of dalit from the congress in 1977 and the high growth following the spread of green revolution and the politics of affirmative action gives the birth of BSP In 1985. BSP reached at door of weakest section of society through its Mother organisations -trade unions of dalit civil servants - the *BAMCEF*, and the *Dalit Shoshit Sangharsh Samiti Sanghatana (DS4)*.

BSP was third phase of dalit assertion in UP, first was the schedule caste federation and second was formation of republic party of India (RPI) in 1956 in western UP both are failed due to not sufficient distinction from congress - on the basis of ideology and mobilization pattern.

For dalit emancipation we have different kind of paradigms viz, the political paradox, religious paradox, paradox of Indian feminism, paradox of Marxist and non- brahmin ideologies, paradox of the postcolonial state, and paradox of the market.(babau,d .shyam ,in epw) dalit emancipatory ideal goal have failed at all six front. Gail Omvedt (Omvedt , 1994) address to

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the meaning and significances of the caste-class question that has occupied the attention of marxist and liberal thinkers and the practitioners.

She trace the origin of caste , critiques the historical materialist analysis in handling the question of dalit and offer an alternative explanation with the help of empirical evidences from three specific regional contexts which shaped the dalit movement. BadriNarayan argued that BJP co-opting DalitIn Its own Hindutwa fold only for capturing the state power by using the cultural memories and spiritual epics. But not willing to broke the traditional caste system which is birth pace of Dalit exploitation

Conception and Hypothesis

The argument of this paper is the BSP's credibility for Dalit emancipation and failure in up electoral politics could be seen in its Sarwjan ideology.It has compromised with own Dalit community's interests for gaining state power. The organizational structure of party and leadership weakness, adding with strengthens of hindutwa politicsand changing political culture are another reason too. For overcome from these failure it have to do an stronger effort for same, by join hand with other dalit and weaker section's social political organization.

Methodology

Research methodology is way to systematic solved the research problems.it may be understood as a science studying how research is done scientifically. Here I am using historical as well as analytical research methodology.Historical research has been defined as the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events. It involves acritical inquiry of a previous age with the aim of reconstructing afaithful representation of the past. In historical research, theinvestigator studies documents and other sources that contain factsconcerning the research theme with the objective of achieving betterunderstanding of present policies, practices, problems andinstitutions. Analytical research, as a style of qualitative inquiry, draws from the disciplines of philosophy (the meaning of concepts), history, and biography. In analytical research, the researcher has to use facts or information already available, and analyzethese to make a critical evaluation of the material.

Understanding Dalit Identity Politics

Caste, one model form of social organisation identified with backwardness and underdeveloped, is today a vibrantly contested category of political identity. Dalit belongs to Schedule and Schedule Tribe Caste in the Indian Constitution. The history of Dalit identity politics is not merely concern of those with interest in the subcontinent but it is also a key chapter in global history of political emancipation.Immanuel Wallenstein writes, Dalit movement and non-Brahmin anti caste movement are anti-systematic movement. In the last decade of colonial era Dalit movement were led by some caste radicals. Caste radicals thought was forged around a critique of Brahmanism as a historically located ideology that justified caste power in its entire manifestation- religious sociological and economic.

Caste radicals specifically polarised this aspect of nationalism by arguing that caste inequality was reproduced through practices that stalled spiritual and material domain beginning, they formed caste hierarchy as forms of exclusion and inequality and by the 1920s translated into terms such as "public exclusion", segregation and civil disability- secularised terms with expanded political range. Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827-1890) developed one of the earliest critiques of caste and Brahmin religious domination. His book *Gulamgiri* (Slavery 1873) was inspired by radical free thinkers such as Thomas Paine (Rights of Man, 1791) and the idea of protestant non conformism. Phule invoked the exemplary structure of modern un-freedom, Atlantic world slavery, to reform caste relation in idioms 'exploitation and inequality' rather than religious order.

Ambedkar provided the set of political idioms that most effectively converted the negative identity of the untouchable into the political potentiality and historical agency of the Dalit. Ambedkar first used the term Dalit to name a community most importantly imagined community outside Hinduism- and outside religion itself-as a strategy of political emancipation. He also created a Dalit identity outside the Hindu fold through conversion to putatively acknowledge Buddhism.

We could trace successful struggle of Dalits for right and social recognition on the one hand and the continued experience of being vulnerable citizen (dehumanized) subject to violence on the other hand. Before I come to the present scenario of Dalit identity politics of north India let me first discuss on dehumanized (awamanana) it's a kind of disrespect to an individual/groups as human being. AvishaiMargalit in his book *The Decent Society* (1996) discusses the different meaning and ways of dehumanization. Liberalist defines disrespect of marginalized section as lack of individual sovereignty/autonomy. Charles Taylor relates this with politics of recognition. For a human being it is important to being equally/positively recognized as part of society. Gopal Guru exposed the history and process of dalit vulnerability and shown that it's continuing in modern Indian political and civil society today.

Now we come on dalit identity politics in north India. Historically it started from Bhakti assertion led by Ravidas and Kabir but for general understanding I discuss here three important phase of it's as Sudha Painoted (a) late colonial period - schedule caste federation. It was failed due to not sufficiently distinct from congress (b) the formation of the ambedkarite republican party of India (RPI) in 1956 in western UP (c) the emergence of the BahujanSamaj Party (now on BSP) in mid 1980s constitute the third phase. The BSP under leadership of Kanshi Ram and later Mayawati has brought the most significance change in psyche of Dalit masses in UP. Mayawati formed the government in 1995, 1997, 2002 and 2007 and brought the most significance change in Dalit life in UP. BSP claims the legacy of Ambedkaritedalit identity movement but in its new avatar "sarvajan/idea of social engineering". BSP is leading the chariot of power with help of a community

(mainly Brahmins) which is notoriously condemned in history by the ideologues and thinkers of Bahujan (caste radicals), for its shrewdness and greed of power. Keeping such a partner in power compelled the BSP to dilute the vital issue of social justice and due to its fiction of power forget the ethical idea of empowering the Bahujan, Dalit identity construction process. And provoked the Dalit dehumanisation instead of ending it according to Sanjeev Kumar H.M. (2015). Uttar Pradesh is witness of Hindutva (saffronisation) politics which trying to again co-opt the dalit identity into hindutva fold as Badri Narayan highlights (2009). In this scenario one could question the process of dalit identity construction and effort for humanization of dalits by the custodians of dalit identity politics prevalent today north India.

Crisis of Dalit Identity Politics in U.P

In 2007, B.S.P becomes largest majority political party by winning 206 seats of 403 in state assembly election in Uttar Pradesh. Party supremo Mayawati seated on cheap minister's chair of Uttar Pradesh till 2012. She launched several plan and policy for weaker section of society especially of Dalit community. In 2012 assembly election B.S.P somehow manage to win only 80 seats. Further in 2014 general election B.S.P did not manage to gate a single seat out of 550 seats. Even in latest conducted U.P election, B.S.P failure had continued with losing their own core voter and supporter its gen only 19 seats .what would be major causes for such failure of such National recognised, cadre based political party.

One group of scholar question the BSP's new political strategy whether it shift from idea of Bahujan To Sarwajan .Initially, the party captured mass base by its strong anti Savarna(upper classes) agenda which manifested in slogans like "Tilak, Tarazu aur Talwar, Inkon Maro Joothein Chaar" (sandle wood paste, the scale and the sword, hit them with boots). Here, the metaphoric interpretation of the Tilak (applying sandle wood paste on the forehead) indicates toward the Brahmins (the holders of knowledge), Tarazu (scale) symbolises the Vaishya, (traders and businessmen) and Talwar (the sword) points toward the Kshatriya (holders of royal political power). Now, it got changed into an adherence to a grand strategy which would aim at involving and co-opting the Savarnas (upper castes) themselves, in its political endeavours. The signs of such a shift began to be visible in the changed nature of BSP's shibboleths which now stated that Yeh Haathi Nahein, Ganesh Hein, yeh Bramha Vishnu Mahesh Hein (this is not an elephant, it is Bramha, Vishnu and Mahesh). Dalits in India, is being done by a section of their own community with vested political interests, leading to a faulty representation of the very notion of Dalit consciousness. Also, making the emancipatory political struggles merely to look as electoral processes aiming at imparting a Dalit-based identity to a Government and not to ensure adequate representation of the Dalits in the structure itself. In this regard, denoting the Marxian notion of anxiously conjuring up of the spirits of the past is the attempts on the part of the Dalit led political parties' engagement in revitalising the caste-based Varna antequity, through their

electoral trysts with the upper caste Hindu elites and promotion of their interests at the cost of the interests of the Dalits for short term political profits. The Dalit middle class has acted as a bystander, by rendering its reified acceptance to this entire process of political revitalisation. Their reticence also indicates an urge on their part to dislocate themselves from the subaltern class identity and attempt at getting recognition on an equal footing with dominant classes. Thus, the lower caste struggles in India have merely represented a quest for equal status with the upper castes and does not encompass socialist values. Meaning that the calls for recognition by the lower classes was only for gaining equality and to be accepted as no different from the others. This mainly has shades of the struggles for bourgeois equality. Even Kanshi Ram had not called for land reforms, rather he wanted power for the dalits in the same way as the Sawarnas exercised over others. (Alam 1999: 759) All this has entirely relegated the Dalit masses into a state of oblivion and also provides a foundational explanation for the declining popularity and distancing of backward class movements from their bases.

Economic development and revolution of information technology brought deeper change in political culture specially in voting behaviours and strategy of political mobilization. the successes of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in general election in leadership of then Prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi have shown us that for winning election , you have to speak loudly . it does not matter you are telling right things or wrong but you should look like 'SAPANO KA SAUDAR' (the seller of dream) spread of saffron politics also undermine the BSP by co-opting Dalit group in Hindutva fold. The organizational structure of BSP and personal skill of its key leader is not well for mobilization of voter in current scenario .Mayawati always use to read a written paper in her election rally, in contrast of Modi . even BSP has not using the benefits of revolution in media sector .they gives logic behind not using national media and social media that its core voter are come from poor section of society , they do not used to see TV debate on national media and they do not have mobile phone too. This kind of perception is not valid today.

So coalition with sawarna group, unable to read the changing pattern of contemporary political economic scenarios and ignoring the digital accessibility of Dalit community, these are identified reason behind BSP failures.

Further way for BSP in UP

Dalits who, constitute 20.7% of the state's population as per the 2011 Census, have been the most loyal group for BSP. Coalition with sawarna in 2017 negatively impact on their believe in BSP. Thus writer like Sohani Guha are arguing that BSP was able to manage to both group when it was in power. Guha argued that chamar were offered what upper caste denied, i.e programmatic benefits, and denied what upper were offered, i.e representation and patronage. Because of programmatic gain, land reform effort, strong symbolic bond with apex

leadership, hope for future gain and secular Dalit were voted for BSP.

This kind of material benefit did not cultivate to change in structural cycle of Dalit exploitation .so BSP have to Re- focus on its ownbase. It is time to *Gharwapasi* (return to home) Time has come, it should pay their attention toward Dalit social organisations like – BAMSEF, D-4 and so on. Through the help of this BSP could mobilize voter and support from Dalit community as well as other sections society.

BJP and BSP both Two political party parallel play the identity politics to mobilising to different caste in UP. BSP is party of dalit and other lower and backward castes linked together under the rubric "BahujanSamaj". BSP was formed with aim of empowering dalit -who have been exploited oppressed and marginalised by upper caste hindu.the main ideology of BJP on other hand is spread the notion of hindu cultural nationalism under the hindutva nomenclature based on moral and cultural code preached by ancient hindu religion epic like Ramayana and Mahabharata and Manusmrititext.Both parties used the dalit past for mobilising them. On the on hand BSP used it for empowering community and providing them self-respect which may be ultimately transform the struggle for acquiring state and democratic power. on the other hand BJP is trying to acquire state power by appropriating the past and identity of Dalit as a Hindu past and identity so that it come leaving the dalit within itsfold. So it's needed to BSP overcome Dalit emancipation (Narayan Badri, 2009)

Finding and Suggestions

The history of Indian democratic state is considerable. Except for few months of emergency, it mangle democracy from independency till today. The project of modernity is limited in India due to hierarchical caste system and patriarchy. Vulnerable sections of society like Dalit and women are victim of limited modernity. For the larger goal , the nature of Indian state have to be change and also mind set of society should be transform towards democratic nature of behave for emancipation of Dalit community. For minor label dalit identity based political party like BSP must be revisit on their strategy, joint hands with other dalit social organisations for mobilising and emancipating them.

Conclusion

Therefore root of Dalit dehumanization is very deep in our society. BSP have to do effort trough coalition other similar likeminded social and political group. Strategically it can use socially privilege group for emaciating their own people without compromising their border interest. In contrast of short term political gain it should do attack on vicious structure of suppression.

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