

A Sociological Perspective of the Criminalization of Politics as the Root Cause of the Failure of Democracy in India



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Abstract

The democracy of India is now in hands of the criminals who are supported by the administrators. A new trend of giving tickets to the confirmed criminals or even to the persons behind the bars has grown very rapidly more than that the situation appears to be more alarming when we find such persons being elected for the State Assembly or Parliament. Elections are won not by right but by might. It seems that we are living in a „jungle raj“ where there is no law. Criminalization of Indian politics and the consequent cult of the gun is the greatest danger that faces Indian democracy today.

The elections to Parliament and State Legislatures are very expensive and it is a widely accepted fact that huge election expenditure is the root cause for corruption in India. Criminalization of politics and corruption in public life has become the biggest threat to India, the world's largest democracy. The political parties and independent candidates have astronomical expenditure for vote buying and other illegitimate purpose through these criminals or so called goondas. For the sake of the revival of the democratic and ancient political values, it is essential check the criminality of the leaders so as to ensure their working in the interest of the nation. So long as there are the criminals on the political scene, there cannot be democracy in the real sense of the term. Both the democracy and politics had genuine causes for their existence at the beginning, but now in the darkness of growing corruption, they have disappeared. They need to be highlighted and practiced for the sake of the promotion of the public and public interests.

The paper surveys the contemporary socio-political scenario which witnesses the complete disappearance of the spirit of democracy which is the soul of the Indian politics. The paper focuses the corrupt trends in politics and their impact on society at large.

Keywords: Academic Achievements, Educational Environment.

Introduction

Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy 'a government of the people, for the people and by the people' has always forced the thinkers around the world to analyze and reanalyze the socio-political and democratic trends. The classical tradition of democracy was supportive and promoter of the public interests, but the contemporary tradition is just opposite to what it was earlier. The democracy with the change in times has lost its spirit and got a new meaning which does not befit to its actual meaning.

India is a democratic republic which pays compliments to itself to have democracy. The question is whether India has any right to call itself to be democratically rich: whether democracy has worked or working on the set principles or whether democracy is successful. The author finds all this absolutely undecisive and unclear. His sense of perception and observation says that India is not democratically rich, as democracy survives in India only in theory. In practice, democracy has lost its spirit as it has nothing to do with the interests of the public. In theory the set principles of democracy are still referred to from time to time, but no political leader who is liable to the protection of the public interests is working on them. Though the public opinion is divided on the issue, the majority of the thinkers have the same notion as the author has. In the context of India, democracy cannot be called successful for several

reasons, the most prominent being the criminalization of politics which allows mostly the people with criminal background to contest elections, to be elected at the various levels and to represent the people. The modern politics sounds the politics by the criminals who succeed in surviving for a long time through their power.

Criminalization is a fact of Indian electoral politics today. The voters, political parties and the law and order machinery of the state are all equally responsible for this. Misuse of state power and criminalization of politics can be reduced and eliminated only if people participate on a larger scale in running the affairs of the state. Power must be decentralized, rules and regulations must be transparent, and there must be greater involvement of people in the government running through citizen, committees, cooperatives etc.

Public opinion needs to be mobilized on all these fronts. Opposition to individual politicians with criminal antecedents is necessary; but only deeper systemic reform can address the real crisis.

Objectives of the Study

General Objectives

1. To select the theme & ponder over the subject to be selected for the study
2. To select the relevant and useful literature available on the theme
3. To review the literature keeping in view the subject and objectives
4. To classify it in accordance with the nature
5. To analyze the contents
6. To develop the thought in the context of the selected subject

Specific Objectives

1. To get absorbed in the spirit of democracy
2. To set mind on the classical tradition of democracy & to make focus on its implications
3. To interpret it in the Indian political system
4. To keep an eye on the election scenario in India at large
5. To go into the depth of the ongoing political trends
6. To attempt to be familiar with the causes and effects of the various political leaders' joining politics
7. To attempt to peep into their socio-criminal status
8. To analyze the state wise criminal record of the various political leaders
9. To comment on the constitutional provisions about the eligibility and criminal background of the contestants
10. To focus the impact of the criminality of the political leaders on the public and society

Review of Literature

Baruah, Deepom (2014) in Criminalization of politics in India a study of linkage between politicians and criminals finds that the nexus between the politicians and the criminals has become very prominent in all the states. From the study of the nexus between the politicians and the criminals,, it is found that as their relation is growing in all the Indian states, it may be said that the growing relation between them is responsible in criminalization of

politics. There has been a pervasive trend towards criminalization of politics and a phenomenal rise in gangsterism and mafia rule in the Indian political process. In dealing with the criminalization of politics in India, it is seen that a large number of cases have come to light to indicate that the unholy alliance between the politicians and the criminals have reached an alarming state. In many cases criminals are found to be aided and abetted by politicians. The nexus between them has become a pervasive reality.

Zahoor Ahmad Dar (2015) in An Assessment of the Impact of Criminalization of Politics on Democratic Process of India examines that in recent years, criminalization of politics in India has become a very serious problem. There have been allegations that certain elements in politics don't have faith in democratic values and practices. They indulge in violence and take refuge in other undemocratic methods to win elections. Undoubtedly, this is not a healthy trend in politics, and there is an urgent need to apply serious check on such tendencies. The author argues the fact, that after independence, criminalization of politics has remained a dominant factor, affecting the democratic process of India. The candidates with criminal background enter in politics and become elected representatives of the people; they at times create such situations where it seems that there is no rule of law but the rule of dadas and mafias. The Indian democratic institutions are in the dirty hands of criminals being supported by the institution of the corrupt bureaucracy. The criminalization of politics has detrimental effect on the administration of law and order as well justice delivery system. The chances of procuring convictions of criminals in major offences have become increasingly difficult if not possible. So it is the need of the hour that people should wake up at once and force political parties to mend their ways.

Dr.Lakha Ram Choudhary (2017) in Criminalisation of Politics and Administration (India) observes that the growing criminalisation of politics and politicization of criminals have taken heavy toll on policing in the country. This phenomenon has further eroded the credibility, effectiveness, and impartiality of the police and resulted into lack of trust and confidence in police forces in large sections of the society. After Independence „criminalization of politics“, people with criminal backgrounds becoming politicians and elected representatives and „criminalization of administration“ or politicization of administration, not rule of law but rule of dadas and thug seating into the vitals of the country have become chronic and administration was accused of inaction and collusion.

Chakshu Roy (January, 2018) in Crime in Politics: The Dirty Game observes that criminalisation of politics is the focus of public debate when discussion on electoral reforms takes place. This issue gets amplified when data highlights an increasing number of candidates with criminal cases contesting elections. Candidates who win from jail bring out the stark reality of our electoral politics. The supreme court and the election commission have

called out for a change in our electoral laws to prevent candidates facing criminal cases from contesting elections. The parliament has made some amendments to electoral laws to incorporate the orders of the apex court and recommendations of the election commission. However, the policy response to address the challenge of criminalisation of politics has been one dimensional. Only changes to the law have been made with the hope that it will solve this issue permanently. However, the changes made in the law haven't worked so far. The reason is that there is a gap in their intent and their implementation. This gap then ensures that the purpose of the law is defeated.

Insightsias (August, 2018) in the paper Criminalization of politics is a disease that will make our democracy hollow if left unchecked observes the following-

1. Section 8 of the Representation of Peoples' Act, 1951 disqualifies a person convicted with a sentence of 2 or more years from contesting elections. But those under trial continued to be eligible to contest elections. Lily Thomas case (2013) ended this advantage to criminals
2. Introduction of NOTA in PUCJ vs Union of India, 2014
3. Candidates need to mention criminal records if any, while filing nomination for elections.

The paper emphasizes that this issue needs to be tackled to maintain the health of our democracy and discuss how to do it.

Hypothesis

1. Democracy has ever since been a popular theme for the writers and thinkers
2. Democracy has got a different meaning in the modern world
3. The modern politics and democracy have lost their associated values
4. Democracy in India has failed and has lost its spirit
5. The root cause of the failure of democracy in India is the increasing graph of the criminality in the political leaders
6. The criminality of the political leaders is multi-faceted
7. Most of the political leaders in India are corrupt and have a criminal record
8. The constitutional provisions about the eligibility of the contestants are flexible
9. The political leaders conceal the facts of their criminality while submitting their candidature
10. The Indian politics is criminalized
11. The Indian politics is more theoretical than practical
12. The leaders can win the faith of the public only when they are fair and public interest oriented
13. For the fair politics in the country, the criminality of the leaders must be checked
14. Only fair politics can protect the interests of the individual

Research Questions

1. How does the classical tradition of democracy interpret democracy?
2. How does Abraham Lincoln define democracy?

3. What is the root interpretation of the definition of democracy?
4. How are democracy and politics related to each other?
5. How can democracy be successful in a country?
6. What are the theoretical implications of democracy?
7. What is the practical status of the Indian democracy?
8. What are the causes of the failure of democracy in India?
9. What criminal tendencies do the political leaders have in India?
10. What are the state wise facts about the criminal involvement of the political leaders?
11. What forms of crime are they involved in?
12. What are the constitutional provisions about the eligibility of the political leaders?
13. What are the constitutional provisions for contesting the elections?
14. What criminal scenario in politics is observed at the time of elections in India?
15. How can the criminality among the political leaders be checked?
16. What will be the effects of the check of the criminality of the politicians and leaders?

Methodology

The study is all theoretical based on the study material available in books, journals and internet sites. However, in order to acclaim it to be scientific, the author uses his own sense of perception and observation which helps him arrive at practical findings on the theme. The steps include- pondering over the issues of the contemporary politics in India, deciding the subject aiming to study the criminal aspect of the Indian politics and the need to make the Indian politics free from crime and criminals, study and review of the selected literature, content analysis, development of thought through proper shaping keeping in view the analyzed contents, application of own perception and observation of the various political leaders and contestants, and drawing findings and conclusion. The study is secondary data based and all qualitative in nature and spirit. While drawing findings and conclusions, the author maintains objectivity, as without objectivity no scientific study is possible.

Findings

1. The classical tradition of democracy interprets democracy as the core of the socio-political system which promotes the public interests
2. Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy has nothing to do with the practical Indian democratic scenario which is founded mainly on the power and wealth of the elites
3. Criminalization of politics is the root cause of the failure of democracy in India
4. Democracy is the soul of politics and socio-political affairs, as it guarantees the superiority of the public interests over the individual interests of the people
5. Democracy can be successful in a society only when it works for the interests of the people, and not for the interests of the politicians and leaders

6. True democracy relates to the common participation of the people of a nation in governmental activities, as it is meant for public as a whole, and not for the individuals who represent the public
7. The practical status of the Indian democracy is horrible as it is now an arena of criminals whose sole aim is to govern the public through criminality
8. Individual interests, inclination to power and wealth, greed of the political leaders are some of the causes of the failure of democracy in India
9. The Indian politicians and political leaders have several criminal tendencies.
10. Monetary corruption in the form of bribery for doing any work for any public man, sexual corruption in the form of having illicit relations with men and women, misuse of the favoured ones for several things, appointing the favourites ignoring the real able ones etc. are some of the forms of criminality among the political leaders
11. No state in India is free from the political corruptions and from the corrupt political leaders
12. The constitutional provisions do not allow the individuals with a criminal record to contest elections at any level. However, the provisions allow even the criminals to emerge as political leaders
13. The election scenario in India is the best example of the criminality among the political leaders
14. During elections, there is the scene of bloodshed, murders, illegal confinements, kidnapping, violence, preventing the people from using franchise
15. The criminality of the political leaders can be checked only through the solid constitutional amendments, transparency of judiciary and police and public awareness campaigns
16. The effects of the check on the criminality of the politicians and leaders are in the interests of the people
17. Society approves only the genuine public representatives, as they are capable of giving the society a right direction to move
18. Society disapproves the fake public representatives who in the name of representation cheat the people
19. Sociological implication of democracy suggests only the socially approved people to join the field of politics

20. Social mobility can be maintained only through a fair working of democracy

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the Indian politics is working against the spirit of democracy and that it is an arena of corruption. Every political leader works more for his own interests than for the interests of the public. The leaders are running after money, name, fame, gratification. Even those who enter the field of politics with several commitments to serve devotedly the public at large, soon forget what they said while asking for votes, grow rich overnight with all the imaginable luxuries in life promoting their own family members. At every level of elections is apparent. Even those who enter politics as poor and innocent seem to be flying on the wings of several forms of corruption immediately afterwards going against all the set standards of democracy and politics. The contemporary political and democratic scenario in India is embarrassing as everything seems to have lost its meaning and value. Democracy is all changed and without soul; politics is now a means of earning money through illegal sources, and political leaders are all corrupt with a constantly increasing graph of their criminality. True democracy can never survive in such a chaotic political environment. It needs to be revived. It must really mean 'a government of the people, for the people and by the people'. So long as the corrupt political figures are there on the political scene, it cannot be there in the real sense of the term.

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