

Violence And Politics

Dr. Shivpriya Sitiesh*

Force and violence is not a peculiar phenomena particularly in context to politics since origin of the institution of abstract super entity called state. But with the passage of time the mankind has checked it by moralistic ideologies. In the recent years, there has been increasing propensity to use force and violence rather it has become a form of political action. Politics is no longer a moralistic value with any super ordinate values' and has a strong manipulative orientation in which an indiscrete choice of both political objective and the means to attain them has become common. The political actors very easily resort to violent action to press and express the political wills. It has been always found that even non-political or apolitical violence become political because political actors miss no opportunity to use them as instrument of their political progaganda. L. N Sharma has rightly raised a question whether political violence is a system? He suggests that whole electoral a process from electoral rolls to polling—is vitiated to breed violence. Not only this the politics has agitated caste and community based violence at social level. Bihar, as a political system, started getting competitive. Since 1967 the game of politics became tough. The violences in politics were not strong even before 1967 but one can easily mark that the politics appear to be the main cause of turmoils in the state. Let us examine the whole thing in details.

Although violence has become a universal phenomena, still Indian society seems to be suffering from it badly. Violence in politics has been gaining recognitions as a feature in our society. Any society is conducted by certain norms, values, beliefs, modes of thought and action and institutions established by the constitutional, governmental and social practices which through many deliberations legitimized in the minds of common man. Once it is legitimized it takes the form of a code of

conduct manifested in the policies and action of the society. An evaluation of the social conduct would be decided by the whole structure.

An Overview of Violence Theories:-Before we endeavor to examine the dimensions of violence in Bihar, let us have an overview of the theories of violence. The violence theories can be classified three fold. Justificatory , amounting to normative ands empirical as explanatory theory. Maxist view of evolution –revolution accompanied by violence can be placed in the first category.

However, the violence or qua-violence was also considered undesirable in the Marxian thought. Mao also justified the violence at the first step towards revolution but not to continue sorrel's and Fran Fanon's views can be placed in the second category who hold that blood is purifier. The empiricist or explanatory theories are represented by Mac Duggal who has raised question of rationality of man. He has posited that – (1) there is irrational streak in man, and (11) men individually may be rational but in mass they are irrational.

However, there is lack of agreement among social scientists on the questions of behavior emergent in relations to insecurity and caused of violence. Two opposed theories explanation of violence, more particularly revolutionary violence. One esplanator5y theory examines the roots of violence in poverty and inequality. More specially deepening misery. This theory is identified with Marx. Its key proponent was De Tocqueville and the position is supported by Crane Brinton. James Davies has tried to synthesize the two contradictory theories by propounding his 'j' curve theory of revolution. He argued that revolutionary violence took place in a situation where there had occurred a relatively long period of economic growth but is followed by a short phase of reversal growth, slow down or stagnation. It is a mark able fact that the situating in India is not so. India is passing through a stage of development and economic growth and which has been keeping rising trend instead of slow-down or stagnation. Ted Gurr has p9ostied a hypothesis that the relative deprivation is defined as a perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities –value expectations are the people's belief of rightful entitle ands value capabilities attainment. Such values pertain not only to the economic sphere in terms of welfare but, also to politics and society in terms of power and status. Factors

*Ph.D, P.G.D/H.R.D, Department Of Political Science Patna University, Patna.

that effect expectations are the value gains of other groups and the promise of new opportunities. Since both expectations and capabilities rest on perception, the value orientation of a group, its past traditions and historical pattern. in short, political culture have and important bearing on the way its members will perceive deprivation the targets to which it will be directed and the form in which it will be expressed. Subject to similar forces, different societies or their parts may well respond differently in terms of violence or social disorder⁹.

Various Dimensions of Violence and Politics-Criminalization of politics, violence and castes rivalries have become more striking features of Bihar politics since 1967. the caste bitterness and social animosities are accelerated by political high-handedness. It has to be seen that violence in Bihar politics has how many dimensions. Various researchers have categorized in various ways. Such as S. D . Gupta has categorized violence into... (a) societal violence, (b) Violence of protest, and (c) Counter violence. However , we find that our contention to explain the features of violence in minutes will not be fulfilled by these these classifications. Sharan has also classified in the following ways— (1) violence of assertion (ii) Violence for political power, (iii) religious communal violence (iv) Custodial violence and (v) Violence by establishment. As we are dealing mainly with the violences which have political implications, we classify it in our own way as given below:-

A. Electoral Violence-Bihar has gained terrible ill fame for the violence and rigging in elections since 1967. Such development in Bihar politics is gaining political legitimacy. A number of recorded criminals have been acquiring place in political activities and offices. In 1985 elections, there were “between 35 and 40 among Congress (I) candidates with criminal records while the number of those having links with criminal elements was considerably more. The Opposition parties also had among their contestants criminals and gangsters- having been charged with serious crimes including murder. The criminalization of politics and politicization of crime has significantly featured the political system of Bihar.

It can be judged by the fact that the violence has kept rising trend in the Bihar elections, Besides it, a large number of incidents are left unrecorded. Some of the public representatives have accepted that

winning the elections is very tough and muscle power is essential for the purpose. Besides, a trend has been evolved in Bihar that political parties come on road and exercise violent modes. The violence created by students cannot be separated from the political violence in the State. Not only students create situations of law and order on the campus but they also create such situations even on streets which result in fight with police and damage to private shops and even houses. The unruly elements and unrecorded criminals remain on university rolls for long time with full backing of state resulting in irrational student's behavior. A professor has observed that society's violence corresponds with the violence in Patna University. For the first time the students were drawn into politics through 1967 further the politicization of the universities administration and even teachers which had also taken place prevented strong steps being taken to curb lawless elements. In such circumstances the student violence clearly corresponds to political relevance in the State. No doubt the student violence is increasing throughout the country but its most ominous features are to be found in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. Such political and administrative protection to the criminal-students violence. Now the lowering of voting age has strengthened this traumatic situation.

B. Industrial Violence-Violence in industrial areas had also significant relevance in undivided Bihar. Mafia in coal mines areas are worth mentioning. Prior to nationalization of coal mines, the feudal owners of the mines had acquired the ownership of human and other resources. Unions were formed but were controlled by the feuds through congress mechanism after enforcement of the Zamindari Abolition Act. Consequent upon the nationalization of the coal mines, the power of the owners dispersed into a large number of lathials who have emerged as 'dons' of mafias. They divided the jargess among the Congress, the janata and the left political parties and they have control over local politics and electoral operations undermining the administrative machinery. In a transitional society where order is maintained by physical force there is also a generative, creative violence of resistance. Not to talk only of mafia, the laborers in non-industrial areas also react with violence, the burning example is Nathnagar incident, in Bhagalpur district. (1987)

C. Caste and communal Violence-There has been caste and communal animosity prevailing over politics of Bihar. The feeling of

inferiority in political and economic power instigated certain castes to be organized in order to regain the political and social status resulting in formation of Triveni sangh, consisting of yadavas, Kurmis and Koerisi in 1930s and Kisan Sabha representing medium and small cultivators.

The caste rivalry was later (1977) accelerated by reservation policy in Bihar, in resistance to which the so-forward castes reacted violently. It has generated a permanent hatred and enmity in the so-called forward castes. During the last one decade social animosities of Bihar has led to some furious caste riots. These resulted in great carnages such as Belchi, Pipra, Parasbigha, Kansara, Luxipur Taufir, Piparia and Aurangabad, etc²².

Most of the caste carnages in Bihar are caused by reciprocal hatred and traumatic sentiments. The violences have taken place in retaliation. In other words, the victim caste members organize an attack on the aggressor, for example parasbigha and Dehia carnage in which the reason of dispute was 5 from possession of a poor shepherd. The Yadvas of the area reacted violently who could not tolerate the 'excess of Bhumihar'²³. In all such type of carnages political hands and motivation can be traced out. Karpoori Thakur stated that 'the carnage was politically motivated and was a cover to undermine the janata ministry'²⁴. On the other hand the powerful castes use their political link, money and buy freedom of others. In fact, the violences in Bihar are the gift of caste system because the caste in Bihar is the most powerful, effective and easily mobilisable weapon of human attraction and hatred.

D. Rural Violence-Rural violence as such cannot be separated from the above mentioned caste violence in agrarian structure and allied spheres of the rural Bihar. In other words, violence created by the struggle between rural so called aristocracies and labourers for their respective interests have been covered by this phrase for our purposes. There has been a spate of private senas²⁷, in rural Bihar such as Lorik Sena, Azad Sena, Samajwadi Sena, Lal Sena, Ranvir Sena etc. All these militant organization vie interse for their respective interests hence the spate of violence.

The formations of such senas were accelerated by land disputes, not by class consciousness. Such Senas has limited jurisdictions and are run on Caste lines such as Kuenr Sena, Azad Sena, Kshatriya Mahasangh

and Satyendra Sena by Rajputs whereas Brahamrshi Sena, Simuj Sena and Prashuram Sena by Bhumihars. Likewise, Bhumi Sena and Maurya Sena are of Kurmis and Shri-Krishna Sena, Lorik Sena and Soshit Samajwadi Sena are the Senas of the Yadavas, all such Senas are, in fact, formed with a view to Protect the interests of the landlords against the Nexalities. It is blamed that Such Senas could not be checked because of hidden support from administration and politicians and other strong power holders.

Conclusion-On the basis of examination of facts and assumptions we intend to underline the following generalization.

The nexus between violence and politics is likely to be a feature of aggression but caste ridden society, most of the members of which are poor and uneducated but are undergoing a rapid political socialization processes. Legitimised by the electoral politics, the nexus between politics and violence has been strengthened by the type caste structure and political manoeuvring. Such violence are the part of gradual and inevitable change in the society. This is not revolutionary violence about which Marx, Mao, Serel, Brinpon, Davies, Gurr e.t.c., talked about. This is one of the indicators growing political consciousness among the anomic masses of expression of the political will. The character of the gradual change is complex having no direction. As discussed earlier, I view of the domain-protection and domain-acquisition as the reason of violence the dominance can not be clearly experienced in its either economic or social forms. Here the views of miliband can be referred who says that class-domination can never be purely 'economic' or purely 'cultural' it must always have a strong and privacy 'political' content, not list because the law is the crystallized from which politics assumes in providing the necessary section and legitimation of all forms of domination. In this sense, 'politics' section what is 'permitted' and therefore 'permits' the relation between members of different and conflicting classes, inside and outside there 'relation of production'.

The violence cannot be checked along with major like land reforms. It is high time to improve the quality of life in general, In case of Bihar the violences are rooted in 'values' not in merely 'poverty'. The institutions of exploitations have to be diminished and Panchayat Raj system should be strengthened in the state.

Notes and References

1. R.K.Verma, Basis of rural political leadership, Amar prakashan, Delhi, 1991.
2. P.P. Singh, Political violence in Bihar, Amar prakashan, Delhi, 1989.
3. L.N. Sharma, "Poll violence: A symptom indicating social-political affliction", Gandhian prospective, vol-IV, No. 1 1991.
4. B.R. Nayar, Violence and Crime in India, Macmillan, Delhi, 1975.
5. James Devide, Towards a Theory of Revolution, American Sociological Review, Feb. 1962
6. H.D.Graham & T. Gurr, Violence in America; Historical and Comparative Perspective (Washington D.C National Commission on Causes Prevention of Violence, 1969) pp 606-65
7. This section is based on V.P.Verma Assembly Election in Bihar in 1985 .J.R.I.P.S., Patna 1986, p.29
8. S.Das Gupta. A Gandhian Analysis in Violence Erupts (edited) by Udayan Sharma
9. S.Sharma "Predicting Fluctuation in Domestic Violence: An Anatomy of India Case" Paper read in vii world congress.
10. The Sunday, march 9, 1985
11. "Crime Politics Nexus", The Times of India, Patna, July 14, 1986.
12. R.K.Verma, "Electoral Malpractice : Problem and Prospects", Mainstream, Jan. 14, 1984.
13. F.Ahmed, "Patna University: Criminals on Campus" in the India Today Jan. 15, 1983.
14. A.N. Das, "Growing violence in Bihar: Social roots of the cult of Guns", Times of India, New Delhi, Nov. 21, 1985.
15. India Today, Feb. 16-29, 1980.
16. India Today, Oct. 15, 1981.
17. Bihar Overrun By Armies The Indian Expresses, New Delhi, 25, Nov. 1985.
18. Rajni Kothari, "The Great Divide" Illustrated Weekly of India, Sep. 01, 1985.

19. Rajni Kothari, "Behind The Facade" Illustrated Weekly of India, June, 16, 1985.
20. S.P.Verma, Modern political Theory: A Critical Survey, Vikash, Delhi, 1975.
21. Ralph Milind, Marxism and politics, Oxford university Press, Oxford, 1978.
