



**FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES**

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# Lecture-26



Jayaprakash Narayan, Sarvodaya and Surrender of dacoits

Jayaprakash Narayan's notion of total revolution

Jayaprakash Narayan visualized the plan of total revolution as continuity or rather a new version concept of Sarvodaya. By "total revolution" he meant inclusive revolution affecting all aspects of social life including individual life. The nature of total revolution was to be governed by the needs of the time and situations pertaining in the country. He proposed to bring total change in civic life, civic relationships, civic institutions, and ultimately "beyond the sphere of civic life we enter larger spheres of the state of the national life". He believed there was need to bring changes in innumerable spheres.

According to him total revolution was a combination of seven revolutions- (i) social, (ii) economic, (iii) political, (iv) cultural, (v) ideological or intellectual, (vi) educational and (vii) spiritual. Economic revolution meant revolution in the structure and institutions of society. Since man's material and spiritual needs were to be fulfilled within a moral framework, he suggested modest living as the best solution at the individual level. At the village and city level, moral-spiritual constraints arising from natural-environmental framework were to operate on material development. The economic framework for development that Jayaprakash Narayan contemplated was one that aimed at human welfare; he suggested 'broad spread ownership of industries and workers' participation' in management. Rural schools were to cater to the requirements of the countryside development. He had conceived definite principles of socialized economy suitable to the Indian circumstances. Concerned about the role of weaker sections and religious minorities in total revolution, Jayaprakash Narayan preached the Sarvodaya attitude of enhancing their strength by their effective organizations which was to be preceded by change in the attitude of stronger sections by taking more benevolent view of

their responsibilities and obligations to the weaker sections and minorities.

Jayaprakash Narayan and Sarvodaya.

His view was that protection to landless laborers; better wage structure as well as their social participation -which must be meaningful- was preconditions to development. He conceived total revolution to leading light for eradication of caste system. By which he dreamt to bring dynamism and mobility in social structure; this was the process which the social reformers advocated from days immemorial. Removing the persistent impediment in the form of 'caste system' could bring Cultural Revolution in rural society as India lived in villages.

To ensure direct and effective participation of people a unique demand for restoration of Indian polity was naturally. According to him, the Modern Western democracy was based on

a 'negation of the social nature of man and the true nature of human society'. This democracy conceives of society as a non-living 'accumulation' of separate individuals. The differences of religion, caste, community, language, culture have aggravated Indians to ambush on each other with all kinds of violence. Disunity of people had weakened the polity in the past, and could hardly be continued. Therefore Jayaprakash Narayan preached for elementary humanity for developing India as a decent community.

Jayaprakash Narayan and surrender of dacoits:

In his view for the problems that involve 'human beings', entirely legalistic or coercive solutions are not proper. His solution to the nuisance of Chambal dacoity consisted in human treatment of them to convert them into good citizens. Jayaprakash Narayan was a great organizer and motivator. He has previously organised Jana Sangharsha Samiti and Chhatra Sangharsha Samiti at Gujarat and Bihar in pre-emergency days to combat corruption, lawlessness and oppression of the poor, he demonstrated the potentiality of people's control over government. Also, regarding implementation of agrarian laws and struggles against benami transactions and other devious methods of land grabbing, he constituted struggle committees in each panchayat in order to unearth facts and remedy the grievances. His approach was central to his 'people oriented strategy'

Surrender of dacoits:

Dacoity means a robbery committed by five or more persons. Dacoity is a crime under Indian Penal code, 1960. Preparation for dacoity and to be member of a gang of dacoits is also punishable under IPC. The dacoits considered looting as a profession and the gangs were organized, reports The Hindu magazine. It also reports that, if a person had any dispute and killed anyone in a fury or committed a murder, would join the gang instead surrendering the police. Chambal's gun culture propelled due to the caste and class system as well as geographical condition. For nearly 1000 years Chambal had been a homeland to the feared dacoits—professional bandits for whom murder and robbery were a tradition as well as a way of life. Chambal's dacoits had captured the public imagination as the royal rebels (baaghi), who helped the helpless; the long-suffering farmer who took up arms against the rich feudal lord; the poor goatherd who could find no other escape from state atrocities; and the woman who swore blood-revenge against

her rapists. Because of the Robinhood character of the key leaders, they had some supportive social base. They acted as parallel police in providing security to the poor villagers who believed in them.

When the conventional police methods had persistently failed to control the dacoits, Acharya Vinoba Bhave gently persuaded 20 bandits to give themselves up in 1960 pointing out that everyone had both good and bad propensities and sins of life are burnt out by repentance and by following righteous path just like the darkness of cave is dispelled even by a small candle. He compared the rebellious character of dacoits to the rebellion against the social order

infested with poverty, inequality and injustice and preached for non- accumulation of wealth and donation of land to uproot the evil. He pleaded with the state authorities, “It is unbecoming of a welfare state to try to solve the dacoit-problem with the help of the police. It should be tackled as a human problem... Treat them as human beings.”

In 1972, a large number of dacoits surrendered in the Chambal Valley and Rajasthan owing to an important role played by Gandhian organizations under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan. Jayaprakash Narayan assured them that they won't be hanged i.e. the punishment under IPC would not be implemented. The Indian Government promised commutation of all death sentences, take care of families of dacoits and provided scholarships for their children. In response to the desperate poverty that led many of the dacoits to lives of violence the redevelopment program for the Chambal valley was planned by the government. After the multiple surrenders, the Chambal valley enjoyed a period of relative peace. As a result, agriculture and other development activities flourished. Most dacoits who did surrender lived peaceably, farming the 30 bighas of land that the government allotted to them as a measure of rehabilitation. The once turbulent Chambal became known for its prosperity. Compassionate advance put forward by voluntary action and governmental support to rehabilitate the surrendered dacoits within the legal framework provided a comfortable solution. What could not be accomplished by police force could be achieved by an approach of benevolence, correction and amelioration. How the Sarvodaya principle and procedure can supplement the basic aim of the legal system is fruitfully confirmed in the Chambal incident.