

From Marxism to Total Revolution and the leadership role of Loknayak Jaya Prakash Narayan: A study

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Abstract

JP never compromised people's interest with any 'ism' in his life. Jayprakash was an active supporter of the Sarvodaya Movement started by Gandhiji and spearheaded by Vinobha Bhave after Independence. JP's Sarvodaya meant a new order to set up a classless and stateless society for the people's socialism in the fifties. To eradicate the dominant party politics, he proposed the concept of partyless democracy and communitarian democracy to develop democratic values and culture. He devoted himself to establish people's democracy eliminating power politics. Sampurna Kranti or total revolution was the last intellectual contribution of Jayprakash in his unending quest to seek and set up such a socio-economic and political order in the country which would turn India into a democratic, participatory, prosperous nation in the world. This study will focus on the social, political contributions of JP after Independence. He devoted himself to purify the political, socio-economic and moral aspects of the country and to the welfare of all.

Keywords: *Sarvodaya, Socialism, partyless democracy, non-violence, Total Revolution.*

I. Introduction:

Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan (JP) was a freedom fighter and a social reformer. Jayprakash, who was dedicated himself to free the nation and never wanted any power or position for himself. JP always wanted to serve people as much as he could. (Gandhi; A.K.;2016) Jayprakash Narayan was born on 11th October 1902 at Sitabdiyara Village in Bengal Presidency at that time. Now, the village is in the territory of Saran District in Bihar. He received his education both in India and U.S.A. While still a young boy, he became an ardent nationalist and leaned towards the revolutionary cult of which Bengal was the noble leader at the time. But before his revolutionary leaning could mature, Gandhi's first non-cooperation movement swept over the land as a strangely uplifting hurricane. JP had an unusual experience of soaring up with the winds of a great idea.

It was then that freedom became one of the beacon-lights of his life, and it remained so till his death. His passion for freedom, with the passing of years, transcended the mere love for the freedom of his country and embraced the idea of freedom of man everywhere and from every sort of hindrance – above all, it meant freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind and freedom of the spirit. This freedom Jayprakash never thought to sacrifice either for the sake of position or power, security, and prosperity, the glory of the state, or for anything else. He wanted a non-violent and cooperative society in India with equality. This paper has been studied on Loknayak Jayprakash, an indomitable revolutionary and traveled a long journey from Marxism to Total revolution. (Bali; M; 1988)

In the modern history of the world, Mahatma Gandhi is one person who has changed the trend of violent revolution with Satyagrah philosophy. He opined that a good aim is achieved only by good means. The gram swaraj, satyagraha, non-violence, Sarvodaya and truth are the main components of Gandhian philosophy. Gandhian thought deeply attracted the attention of many thinkers like JP. (Shah; K; 2002). Before the Independence of India, he was a follower of Marxism but after Independence, he realized the depth of the philosophy of Gandhiji. He devoted himself to complete the aim of Gandhiji's Loksevak Sangh.

II. Objectives of the study:

- a) To understand JP's contribution as a Sarvodaya worker.
- b) To know about JP's criticisms on party politics and corrupted leaders.
- c) To understand the importance of JP's total revolution.

III. The methodology of the study:

This research is historical, ideological, and analytical. This study is observed on secondary data mostly on the books and articles related to Jayprakash Narayan. An attempt has been done to evaluate JP's role in the reformation of the Indian political system. JP's writings and speech have been used as primary data for this study.

IV. JP's difference with Communists:

Although a Marxist, Jayprakash Narayan never became a protagonist of Russian communism. He had a deep moral revulsion against the atrocities of the Russian Bolshevik party. Lok Nayak Narayan's differences with the Indian communists and their brand of Marxism arose soon after his return to India from the U.S.A. (Miliband; R;1977) Naturally, he kept away from the CPI and joined the ranks of the soldiers of freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. But as Marxism had left its deposits in his mind, he could not commit himself whole-heartedly to Congress policy and program, despite the famous Karachi declaration. The Karachi Resolution appeared to him quite vague and inadequate. He realized that the Congress, even under the leadership of Gandhi, could not provide Indian people with a real socialist program and conduct the fight for independence in a more revolutionary manner. The Congress Socialist Party with the help of other disillusioned congressmen of socialist persuasion. The Congress Socialist Party, he said: "played a notable part in giving shape to the socio-economic content of congress policy."

V. JP's role as a Socialist leader:

For nearly twenty-four years, from 1930 to 1954, Jayprakash Narayan worked as a socialist. He had been the foremost leader, propagandist and spokesman of Indian socialism. Mahatma Gandhi had accepted him to be the greatest Indian authority on socialism. He not only took the initiative in the formation of the Indian Socialist Party in 1934 but also showed a remarkable genius in popularizing the party and its program. (Barik; Radhakanta; 1977). Socialism for him was always a way of life. It represented a set of values to which he owed allegiance voluntarily, and which he tried to put into practice in his lifetime. These values he did not see developing anywhere as a result of merely institutional changes, whether economic or political. And some years after it became quite clear to him that socialism, as we ordinarily understand it, could not take mankind to the sublime goals of freedom, equality, brotherhood and peace. Socialism, no doubt, gives the promise to bring mankind closer to these values than any other competing social philosophy. But he was persuaded to believe at Bodh Gaya Sarvodaya Sammelan (in 1953) that unless socialism was transformed into Sarvodaya, the beacon-lights of freedom, equality. (Gupta; Ramchandra; 1981) JP viewed that communism, democratic socialism and Sarvodaya are the different forms of socialism. Communism is a violent method and democratic socialism is a government program but Sarvodaya is a nonviolent movement in which socialism is established by ideological changes in the society. So, JP accepted the Sarvodaya concept for social reconstruction. (Narayan; J; 2001)

VI. JP on Democratic methods:

Lok Nayak Jayprakash Narayan concluded in favor of democratic methods and realized the need for decentralization. He also realized that means must be morally consistent with the ends. He took socialism in the context of Indian needs and the dominant values in Indian culture. He stood for reduction of land revenue, the limitation of expenditure, and the nationalization of industries. The fundamental social and economic problem in India was to eradicate the exploitation of the masses, and this could be achieved if the people through their efforts came to control their political and economic destiny. He felt the need for village reorganization and urged like Gandhi that villages should be made self-governing and self-sufficient units. This necessitated a drastic reform of land laws. He submitted a resolution to the Ramgarh Congress in 1940 in which he emphasized the idea of transferring land to the actual cultivator. Supporting co-operative farming in India he wrote: "The only solution is to clear away all the vested interests that lead in any manner whatever to the exploitation of the tiller of the soil; liquidate all agrarian debts; pool the holdings and establish co-operative and collective farming, state and co-operative credit and marketing system and co-operative subsidiary industries". Co-operative efforts alone, according to him, could provide a balance between agriculture and industry. The primary economic problem in Asia, particularly in India (also in China), is agrarian reconstruction. (Ghose; Sankar; 1971) Hence, the state has to set up its industries, and also embark upon other avenues of economic rehabilitation. Jayprakash

considered the present individualistic organization of agriculture wasteful. The acceleration of production in the agrarian sector was dependent upon “co-operative and collective farming”.

Even as a socialist, Jayaprakash Narayan was not opposed to the dominant values of Indian culture. Indian culture has exalted the ideal of the emancipation of the individual from the thralldom of the lower ego and acquisitiveness. It has never sanctioned a false immersion in the petty satisfactions of the narrow self. Sharing has been one of the most dominant ideas of Indian culture, and hence it is ridiculous to condemn socialism as an importation from the West. The organized economic doctrines of socialism have been formulated in the west, but its fundamental idealism is a part of Indian culture

VII. JP's Contribution to the Sarvodaya Movement:

Sarvodaya is an innovative concept of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji used Sarvodaya as a module of development for human society. But, after Independence of India when JP understood the Gandhian philosophy, he believed that socialism could not be established through communalism and democratic socialism, it can be established only through Sarvodaya. (Narayan; J; 2001) He joined the Bhoodan movement led by Acharya Vinobha Bhave to reconstruct the socio-economic condition in India. He began to establish socialistic principles and ideals through his social activities. JP suggested the replacement of People's Socialism for state socialism. Sarvodaya rejected Rajniti or power politics to set up Lok Satta or Lokniti. Sarvodaya movement stood for a party less democracy which wanted to curbe the power centric party politics. Through Sarvodaya programs, JP wanted community-centric panchayats through a participatory way of the people. As a Sarvodayee, the people have to work in the spirit of co-operation and to support the happiness and elevation of all. (Mahajan; V.D;1998) Sarvoday workers strive towards a society based on truth and non-violence, in which there will be no distinction caste or creed and full scope for the development of both individuals and groups. Exploitation and discrimination will eliminate with the establishment of non-violence and cooperation in society. (Shah; Ghanashyam;1977)

Sarvodaya does not support this view that diverse social interests gave rise to different parties. This movement took the techniques of Ahimsa, truth, and Satyagraha rejecting Marxist violent action. By rejecting power politics, JP wanted an ideal social system which was not a heaven for corrupted politicians, bureaucrats and capitalist, but there was to be self-government, self-management, co-operation, equality, freedom, and brotherhood in the society. (Gupta; Nitishdas; 1997)

For an ideal and morally successful life, the discipline of physical needs is essential for the good growth of human personality. The socialist way of life is a path of sharing good things through common effort. A problem arises in the country unless members of society learn to keep their wants under control, willing sharing may be difficult to implement in society. According to JP, the remedy will be that every member of the social practices self-discipline and values of socialism. Sarvodaya was a way of implementation of socialist values in the society through voluntarily sharing and cooperative mentality for others. (Prasad; Bimal;2002) ¹²Since 1953, JP was deeply thinking about Sarvodaya ideas which might be helpful to achieve socialistic principles. For him, the aim of equality, peace, freedom, and brotherhood cannot be achieved unless socialism is transformed into Sarvodaya.

Jayaprakash completely broke away with Marxism and turned to Sarvodaya philosophy. He attempted to reinterpret the basic question of individual behavior that he was to exhibit in the realm of politics from an ethical viewpoint. The study of matter is an objective exploration, whereas that of consciousness is subjective realization. The study of matter, the objective exploration, science, in short, is necessarily amoral. The Marxists (and the materialists generally), having reduced consciousness to the behavior of matter, naturally knocked the bottom out of ethics. They talk a good deal no doubt of revolutionary ethics, but that is nothing more than the crassest application of the theory that the end justifies the means. Once an individual persuades himself, sincerely or otherwise, that he is on the side of the revolution (or the Party of the People), he is free to commit any infamy whatsoever.

Not only the Marxist and materialists but also those who differ from them in philosophy attempt to understand consciousness by the methods of science. Mental science also, therefore, provides no sure basis for moral behavior. Nor is it ever possible for science to understand consciousness, which can only be subjectively experienced. Subjective experience is by its very nature incapable of being expressed in material categories. Therefore all the mystics and yogis, who had an experience of subjective reality, or absolute consciousness, have been unable to express it in any language. Modern science has reached a point where the dualism of matter and consciousness becomes too tenuous to be real. And it cannot resolve this dualism completely, because in the objective study the seer and the seen must remain different, no matter how “inextricably commingled”. It is only in the ultimate spiritual experience that this dualism can be removed.

VIII. JP's role in the Total Revolution:

The target of JP's total revolution was to evolve an egalitarian society alike Marxists but without their strategy of violent revolution since JP was deeply influenced by Gandhian socialism. He was keen to form a political strategy with a primary emphasis on peaceful transformation based on non-violence. (Brahmanand; ed.; 1975) JP's total revolution aimed to achieve basic changes in the social, cultural, political, and economic values of the Indian people. He used the term 'total' in the sense of a comprehensive revolution affecting all aspects of social life. (Brahmanand; ed.;1978)

By the lapse of years, Jayaprakash Narayan's belief that for the reconstruction of the socio-economic structure of Indian society, the practice of self-discipline and the establishment of self-government in the country, which he often called a 'participating democracy' were essential, became more and firmer. He questioned, "How long can a dictator, maybe seemingly a popular one, go on whipping and prodding you up? That is why Jayaprakash gave a call of 'total revolution'. It was in the last months of 1973 when he was at Paunar that he felt an inner urge to give such a call to the people. He arrived at the idea of 'total revolution' and got an inspiration to proceed in that direction after his encouraging experiences of a peaceful revolution in a sub-division of Muzaffarpur, a stronghold of Naxalites in Bihar, and re-settlement of the Chambal Valley dacoits. His faith in the power of the people and through them in the philosophy and action of 'total revolution' was further strengthened by the subsequent events in Gujarat, where a powerful student-led movement to disband the State Legislature came up in 1974.

As his call for 'total revolution' foreboded a death-knell for the then government, the latter imposed an emergency on the country in the last week of June 1975. Jayaprakash and his followers and sympathizers were sent to prison. But he was not dismayed; and while in prison, he tried to elucidate the aim of his 'total revolution' to remove any kind of misgivings about it. He wrote in his Prison Diary (1977); 'The struggle for freedom was not fought simply for national independence. The establishment of democracy in free India was also an important goal of the struggle. It was because of this goal that the constituent Assembly had drawn up a Constitution for democratic India and adopted it on the 26th November 1949 on behalf of the Indian people'. Because the spirit of the constitution was much abused and the real democracy seemed to be in great danger particularly during the past few years in India, the call for 'total revolution' was given to the nation.

'Total revolution' is a "combination of seven revolutions – social, economic, political, cultural, ideological or intellectual, education and spiritual". This number, according to him, maybe decreased or increased. For instance, the Cultural Revolution may include education and ideological revolutions. Likewise, the social revolution in the Marxian context covers economic and political revolutions and even more than that. This is how we can reduce the number to less than seven. We can also add to this number by breaking up each of the seven revolutions into different categories. Economic revolution may be split up into industrial, agricultural, technological revolutions, etc. similarly, intellectual revolution may be split up into two – scientific and philosophical.

The idea of 'total revolution' aims at bringing about a complete change in the present structure and system of Indian society. It may be regarded as a considerable development of the philosophy of Sarvodaya. Jayaprakash was a great humanitarian, and his socialism, gradually developed into the philosophy of 'total revolution' is not only a system of social and economic reconstruction of the Indian society, but it is also a philosophy of moral and spiritual rebirth of the Indian people. JP's exceptional role in Indian politics was to turn student movement into a continuous Total Revolution to meet the challenges against the development of the country. JP was deeply concerned with the existing troubles of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and inefficiency of the bureaucracy.

There was a common word about the Emergency period by Mrs. Gandhi that "India's first freedom achieved on the mid-night of 14/15th, 1947, ended on the mid-night of 25/26th, 1975." An authoritarian ruler and her government took some arbitrary steps against the voice of the people who were victims of corruption, unemployment, endemic inflation, and injustice, or oppression. The results of the JP movement created a huge turmoil in Indian politics and challenges for the ruling government to continue their regime. At midnight on 25 June 1975, President, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed on the advice of Prime Minister signed a proclamation that would come into effect on the next morning. The President declared a state of Internal Emergency that the security of India was threatened by internal disturbances. (Sharad, Mishra;2012) Leaders of the Opposition were arrested to stop the wave of Total Revolution on 26th Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi by calling of total revolution against authoritarian rule. The normal political procedures were suspended; the basic federal provisions of the Constitution and guaranteed under Article 19 were suspended. This Emergency created a dark period in the Indian political system. Mrs. Gandhi had been complaining that Opposition and its disrupting politics had been opposing her activities to move the country forward economically. ⁽²³⁾ She made a lot of complaints to denounce the Oppositions and their efforts. But a self-appointed dictator could not run the empire more as the voice on the truth line. JP had won with India regaining its freedom in March 1977 by destroying Congress dominion. In

Patna, JP declared at a massive rally, "...after 27 years of freedom, people of this country is wracked by hunger, rising prices, corruption.... Oppressed by every kind of injustice..... it's a Total Revolution we want, nothing less...." Indeed, Total Revolution was a strategy of direct action to bring about a radical change in the social system. It was considered to be a continuous movement. JP aimed that the Total Revolution would be able to purify the socio-economic, political, and ethical life of the country and to eliminate rampant corruption and nepotism among political leaders.

XI. Conclusion:

JP's life was a long journey with many phases like Marxism, Socialism, Gandhian socialism, Sarvodaya, and total revolution. After Independence, when he believed in Gandhian ideas then he moved from materialism to spiritualism. He said, "*I believed in materialist philosophy for a long time. But no inspiration is in materialist philosophy to be a good man. It means that social reconstruction is not possible through materialist philosophy.*" (Narayan; J; 1998) JP understood that the inspiration to be a good man and social reconstruction are possible through Sarvodaya and Gandhian philosophy. He believed that spiritualism based on truth and non-violence is necessary to make a good society. (Shah; K; 2002)

By the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and Acharya Vinoba's thought of Sarvodaya, JP followed the concept of Sarvodaya as a strong means of Sarvodaya society based on the concept of freedom, equality and fraternity. The Sarvodaya movement was an experiment in planning for social change through a non-violent social revolution based on Vedic Hindu values of service, sacrifice, freedom, salvation, etc. It was cultural management on a large scale. (Marriot; Mackim, 1963) Sarvodaya was meant to give freedom to the common masses from the bondage of age-old customs and dogmas which the society had imposed on them. The JP movement was not only a reform movement, but it called for a total revolution with the combination of seven revolutions- social, economic, political, cultural, intellectual, educational, and spiritual in the establishment of an ideal society. (Morris Jones; W.H; 1967)

JP's most enduring role to Indian politics was the JP movement, he led to oppose Mrs. Gandhi, Which provoked Emergency. The first Non-Congress Party to run the Central Government by Janata Party, JP can take credit to bring a change against congress domination in Post-Independence India. According to JP, total revolution no respite, no halt, not a complete halt. (Prasad; Bimal; 1985) JP wrote several books and articles on the reconstruction of the Indian Polity. He awarded Magsaysay award for public service in 1965 and was posthumously awarded "Bharat Ratna" in 1999 for the contribution of social and political leadership in India. JP never wanted any power, position, and fame for himself. This selfless leader was dedicated to making an ideal India with the establishment of equality, freedom, and justice for all. Indeed, his political ideas emphasized the need for moral development, non-violence and participatory democracy to solve the socio-economic problems in Indian society.

The Total Revolution suffered from a lot of limitations and failed to stop rampant corruption and backwardness in Indian politics. Firstly, it had the illusion that it was a revolutionary movement. The leaders did not concentrate on reformist demands. Secondly, the revolution aimed to bring reforms in all aspects of life. Hence there was confusion with a clear purpose of the movement. Thirdly, the movement had become a political struggle for leaders. Fourthly, the cadres of the movement were untrained to run and broaden a reform movement. Indeed, this movement protested against the failures of the Congress rule. The partners of the movement used the mass movement for dethroning the Congress. (Shah; Ghanshyam; 1977) The Sarvodaya workers were not interested in capturing power to reshape the socio-economic and political order. To them, the total revolution was another common slogan like that of "Garibi Hatao". After JP's death, Sarvodaya and Total Revolution have mostly remained academic terms in the domain of ideas rather than as revolutionary steps for bringing a progressive change of the Indian people.

X. References:

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