

Criminalisation of Politics: Threat to India Democracy

Manpreet Kaur

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Science, Guru Nanak Dev University,
Amritsar, India

Abstract

It was widely accepted that the success of the government and the prosperity of people depended largely on the ruler. Therefore, Indian thinkers emphasized that the ruler should possess certain qualities and show also vices which flow from lust, anger, greed, pride and over joy. Founding fathers of independent India adopted for us a system of representative democracy. But due to criminalization of politics the people are losing faith in their representative, which is very cause for serious concern in Indian democracy.

KEYWORDS: Crime, Politics and Indian Democracy.

INTRODUCTION

The preamble of Indian Constitution declares India to be Sovereign, Socialist, Secular and Democratic Republic. The vibrancy of democratic system depends on the character and virtues of representative who are to run the country. A game can be fair only if the players are honest and true to its spirit. If they cheat, the game shall lose its sheen and spectators will lose all interest in it. Gandhi also observe that "Right person, a person trained by moral and ethical values, should occupy the politics and perfect state can be possible only in the hands of right person."¹This is possible only when politics is dominated by morality. The vibrancy of any system depends on the character and virtue of persons who are to rule the country. For this, it is very necessary that rulers are of solid character. But recent developments in India suggest that moral and ethical values are losing its importance very fast in politics as well as in public life.

Criminalisation of politics has been a major issue of concern in Indian politics. When crime is highly visible on the political agenda and with it new problems emerge in politics. Developed unholy nexus between criminal and politician is called criminalization of politics. Now in India, Politicians are involved in unlawful activities, but they achieve high position and power in government and become the member of Parliament and State Assemblies. In these days politics of India has progressively attracted criminal elements. Criminals enter politics to become politicians and then patronize other criminals. Day by day number of criminals is increasing in politics. More and more people with money and muscle power get tickets from the political parties. Indian politics now is run by 'muscle man' rather than 'great man.' The characteristic of the politicians as 'muscle man' is that he can use his influence to get things done on with muscle power.

The criminalization of political has negative impact on our political system. With criminalization of politics, law-breakers become law-makers and achieve high positions such as chief Minister and Minister. When person with bleak image sit on the high responsibility and reputative chair then there are less chances of proper working of a system. There seems to be a crisis of character amongst the politicians, as the system does not encourage the honest leader. Because of the falling moral

standard both in the public and among the leaders, criminalization of politics and politicization of criminals has become the norms. Nexus of crime and politics has posed a major threat to representative bodies Indian Parliament and State Legislatures. Under such situation it is not possible to fulfill the dreams cherished by our freedom fighter into reality. This leads to destruction of system. A person involved in the cases of murder, rape, dacoity and commit unlawful acts cannot be expected to do work for the growth of crime free society.

Some hard criminal's even murderers and looters, after joining politics have become leaders of big standing. When person with bleak image having no moral values enter the house, it effect the working temple of democracy. We see the use of abusive language, throwing chappals and shoes in the Parliament and Legislative Assemblies. Due to this it seems that in future the debates will no longer prevail in the house.

Earlier, we see the criminals used to help the politicians, but now criminals are being elected as MPs and MLAs. With increasing number of criminals elected as legislators we could see them as ministers inducted into the cabinet, It is a shocking to note that now criminalization of politics is leading towards criminalization of Government.

The System of democracy is now changing into the dictatorship of some, because the democracy of India is now in the hands of criminals who are not capable anyway to hold this post of responsibility. With the increase of anti-social elements in Indian politics ethic value have decreased. Generally, in India all believe in blame game instead of finding collective solution of problem. The role of muscle power has been over on ascendance and it has reached a pass where the entire democratic edifice feels threatened. The anti- social elements who till yester years were playing a supportive role have now come to the fore. Their threats and Robin –Hood methods have trounced such persons who have lived a life of dedication and service. Some of such worthies- who in common parlance are called goondas, have also occupied the chairs of authority and governance.

On August 1947, when the congress minister of west Bengal came to meet father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, the latter advised the former:

From today you have to wear the crown of thorns strive ceaselessly. Cultivate truth and non- violence; Be humble. The British no doubt put you on your mettle. Now, on your own you will be tested through and through, Beware of power; power corrupts; Do not let yourselves be entrapped by its pomp.²

But politician disregarded his advice and teaching on the need to maintain highest probity in public life and pursue politics of morality. This advise was forgotten by the successive leader of free India. As a result, the criminalization of politics is eating into our political life and system and it is serious threat to our democracy. Strangely, when these criminals having links with high politicians, then latter try to justify the election of former. Statement of Laloo Prasad Yadav about the election of hardened criminal as a legislator, "None of the MLAs can be called criminal as people have elected them."³It is sufficient proof of this. The criminalized polity leads to the criminalization of law enforcement machinery.

The Indian politics is facing many problems which are interlinked with each other. Communalism can also be seen in the form of criminalized politics. The naked dance of communal violence in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh riots has raised a question

that if a person who commit crime is called criminal, then what about those who are responsible for thousands of murders?

In India elections are the entry gate for the criminals through which they enter into the sacred house and in every elections, may it be Lok Sabha Election, Assembly elections, or any other election at local level.

Although, politicians talk about the ending criminalization of politics but all parties are involved in this process. All parties have taken the help of criminal elements to dominate the election scene in India. Now, unholy alliance between criminal and politicians for vote-banks has been created on caste divide and communal lines. There is no ideology. The nexus between criminals and politicians is at every level from bottom to top Panchayats, Municipalities, State Legislature and Parliament. Criminals contest election at party ticket, they get elected and thereafter after they occupy high positions. This is serious issue but no party is ready to discuss it seriously. Getting criminals out of politics is not in the agenda or manifesto of any major political party. Politicians forget about removing criminals from politics, for removing of criminals in politics some change in law need but politicians cannot do this. Entry of criminals in politics made them famous .Gone are days when it was very difficult for the criminal to enter in politics. Every political party hesitated to reward the criminal background person with high position. But in present time gap in crime and politics has disappeared.

The political parties invite criminals to be their candidates because in constituency, the local caste clout and ability to bribe or browbeat voters and resort to irregularities like bogus voting enhance chance of victory. Many criminal gangs which are in starting secular they soon split on caste and communal lines. They clearly take advantage of social cleavages and position themselves as protector of that caste and community. Due to this, many criminals enjoy fierce local support with rich caste clout, muscleman at their disposal and money accumulated through crime, they have natural advantages in the local elections. In the first post system, what matters is to gain more constituency votes than any of the rivals. Therefore there is fierce competition for the marginal vote that is a candidate can bring often to affect the differences between victory and defeat. And local malpractices have little impact on whole state or country. As a result, the politicians choose popular criminals masquerading as a caste or faction leaders as candidate. That is why sometime mafia dons in jail win election with ease.⁴

The affection and friendly behaviour of the politicians motivate such successful criminal entrepreneurs to enter politics.

Politicians needed huge sum of unaccounted money for political activities of their parties, election and for themselves. Nobody could pay his hard earned white, tax-paid money to the politicians; funds from the crime world came handy. Gradually the politician became subservient, dons of the crime world themselves entered politics and a stage came politicians began seeking not only their help in terms of money but also of muscle power to contest elections and for their own physical protection from rivals.⁵

Further, it appears that crime has become a non –issue for voters of India. Many underworld dons and scamsters who contest the polls either from behind bars or from hiding, were elected with big margins.⁶

Presently, sheer opportunism and valueless power politics has taken over the place of idealism, principles. Moral values in the politicians are decreasing day-by-day. Ministers are directly involved in booth capturing and openly consorting with smugglers, gamblers, gun –runners, secessionists and terrorists and pressuring the police not to enforce the law. Politician with integrity and strong character who only can save the cursory from chaos and anarchy has been very few. Many ministers of course, do not believe in the rule of law.

Crime is now politics. The crime or wrong committed is of no matter. Mafia dons discovered that they has become king –makers. For them entering in politics is short step to becoming king. By entering themselves in legislature, they win respectability and acquire leadership status in bargain. Some criminal get elected from prison. They hold durbars in jail, with all home comforts, as they instruct their minions by cell phone and rule their empire.

At last it can be said that although India is boasting to be the world’s largest democracy but the country needs to be vigilant to ensure that its parliamentary auster is not hollowed by criminalization of politics, because with the increasing percentage of anti social elements in the sacred house, the sacredness of the house cannot be preserved.

But all the blame put on the political class for current situation is wrong because political class does not exist or develop in isolation, but it emerge out of the society at large. While political parties have a serious responsibility not to put up criminals as candidates, voters have an equally strong responsibility of defeating candidate with a criminal record.

References:

- ¹ P. Sakthivel and R. Sivakumar’ “Declining moral values and politics in India” Third Concept, October 2007, Vol. 21, No. 248.
- ² N,K, Singh, *The Politics Of Crime and Corruption*, Harper Collins Publishers, New Delhi, 1999, p.5.
- ³ S.S. Gill, *The Pathology of Corruption*, Harper Collins Publisher, New Delhi, p.192.
- ⁴ *The Economic Times*, March 5, 2004.
- ⁵ Subhash C. Kashyap, *Political Reform and Asserting Civic Sovereignty*, p.29.
- ⁶ *Frontline*, Vol. 17, March 18-31-2002, p.30.