CHAPTER – 5

THE VISION OF A COMMUNITARIAN SOCIETY

Democracy is considered as the best form of Govt. in modern times. It ensures liberty of thoughts, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity, fraternity as well as the right to participate on political decision making. Participation and control of governance by the people of the country is the essence of democracy. Such participation is possible only when the powers of the state is decentralized in the district, block and villages levels, where all the sections of the people can sit together, discuss their problems and suggest solutions and plan, execute, as well as monitor the implementation of the programmes. It naturally calls for a participatory democracy, Gandhi and Jay Prakash Narayan also described democracy as the govt that gives power to the people. Gandhi said, "True Democracy could not be worked from below by some persons sitting at the top. It had to be worked from below by the people of every village."\(^1\) He again said, "Our democracy can not be strong unless democracy in the village is strong. We can not have real development in the country unless the Panchayats are made responsible for development in the villages and the people who live in the villages are involved in their own development."\(^2\) Jawaharlal Nehru also said, "India is poor, because the villages of India are poor. India will be rich if the villages of India are rich. Panchayats should be given greater power. We want the villager to have a measure of real Swaraj in his own village. He should have power and not have to refer everything to big officials. We donot want the officials to interfere too much in the life of the village. We want to build Swaraj from the village up."\(^3\) JP
also dedicated his life for the creation of a new society, a society, where the powers would rest firmly in the hands of the people.

Decentralization of powers in the interest of efficient administration has been realized and recognized since the ancient times. Panchayati Raj, as a system of governance at the grass root level in rural India, has been rightly conceived as the most viable and proper mechanism for realizing goals of democracy and decentralization. A systematic effort was made during the British Rule to build and strengthen the institutions of self-govt. After Independence, the constitution of India, under the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 40), laid down that, the state shall take steps to organize village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-govt. It was Gandhiji who realized that democracy could not be complete, unless Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were invested with adequate powers.


Thereafter, various committees have been set up by the Govt. time and again to suggest a modified scheme of Panchayati Raj.

In Post Independent India, development in Panchayati Raj took place when the study Team on Community Development and Panchayati Raj or the Balwant Rai Mehta Study Team was set up in 1957, along with the launching of a nation wide community development programme aimed at bringing about an all round economic development of the rural areas. As the need was felt for an effective institutional mechanism to involve the local communities in the process of
development, the Mehta Study Team suggested the establishment of a three-tier Panchayati Raj, the middle tier being the key level in the scheme of decentralization. Later on, the then Congress Govt., under the leadership of Nehru accepted the ideal of Panchayati Raj and introduced it into several states with local variations. But, unfortunately, the interest in and support for Panchayati Raj, did not last long. And the process of decline started after the mid sixties. Therefore to improve the PRIs, various committees were set up. viz., Ashok Mehta Committee, Dr. G.V.K. Rao Committee etc. These committees suggested for regular election, compulsory item of taxation in the jurisdiction of the PRIs, to make them financially strong. The 7th Plan emphasized the need for change for providing substantial funds and autonomy to Panchayati Rai bodies. Dr. L.M. Singhvi committee also suggested more financial resources for these institutions. Sarkaria Commission on center state relation suggested once again the holding of periodical elections to these bodies. The Parliamentary committee under the chairmanship of P.K. Thungan hold that Panchayati Raj bodies should be constitutionally recognized along with the suggestion to hold timely and regular election.

Constitutional sanction through 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments guaranteed lots of hope and enthusiasm throughout the country, as it was looked upon as a bold step towards strengthening democratic and decentralized governance in rural areas. The 73rd Amendment conceptualizes PRIs as instruments of planning for economic development and social justice. The most important provisions of this Act ensures and enforces reservation of seats for women, SC's, ST's in Panchayati Raj and Nagar Palika Institutions. But relevant data and facts show that there has been very little progress with respect to the
transfer of funds, functions and functionaries to Panchayati Raj bodies across the country. Another thing which can be noticed is that, the newly elected Panchayat's members have little experience of political functioning and administration. Moreover, a section of them are illiterate and are easily influenced by the bureaucrats and the powerful local people. Devolution of power without prior political preparation has resulted in percolation of corruption at the local level. So far as reservation is concerned, it can be noticed that, the women or dalit members have been functioning under social prejudices and pressures. Again the caste factor has played a obstructive role against the spirit of the constitutional provisions, which has resulted in the mockery of democracy and democratic ideals. Another interesting thing is that while transfer of power from one segment to another segment of the society empowers the marginalized Dalits and women, it disempowers a section, which kept the power so far. Thus, those who were comfortable with the existing power structure may not like this amendment. People those who are going to gain benefit should understand the potentials of the Amendment and utilize it. But it has not happened. Moreover, the community practice do not allow the provisions of the constitutions to be implemented and, so naturally in many places conflict arises between community practices and constitutional provisions. Therefore, though efforts of energizing and activizing Panchayati Raj all over the country has gained considerable significance, some doubts have raised the eyebrows of many conscious persons. It is high time that the goals of PRIs should be achieved by mobilizing the people from below.

In this chapter we have tried to find the solution as to how to democratize the society through local democracy in real sense of the term from JP’s standpoint.
Simultaneously, we seek to analyse his plan for a partyless and participatory democracy leading to a communitarian society.

5.1 Jay Prakash Narayan wanted to make India free not only by taking power from the alien ruler but, by building up a 'gram raj,' i.e., a self-governing village, 'a village republic.' Thomas Vettickal writes "JP's concept of free India goes way beyond the mere 'transfer of power,' from an alien to a native ruling class, to the building up of a 'gram raj,' a self-governing village, a village republic."

During his involvement in Bhoodan movement, JP wrote two essays one is "A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity (1959), and the other is 'Swaraj For the People' (1961). In these two essays he expressed his views on an ideal political system for India based on a synthesis of socialism, Sarvodaya and democracy. JP prepared his thesis 'Reconstruction of Indian Polity in 1959, which was published by Bharat Sarvaseva Sangha. Here he cited Harold Laski's views and system of Yugoslavia; emphasizing voluntary participation of the masses. Inspite of the communist system, Yugoslavia organized worker's council to manage factories and people's committee to manage their local municipalities. Consequently Jay Prakash Narayan found the remedy of our socio-economic political ills in the People's Socialism, rather than state socialism.

According to Marxism, "in a class divided society democracy exists practically for the members of the dominant class. In a bourgeois society democracy is a form of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It frames constitutions, forms parliament and other representative bodies and introduces adult franchise and formal political liberties. But, the bureaucratic machinery of the bourgeoisie
state is so patterned that the political activities of the working class keep them out of the decision making power. The rights are proclaimed formally and are not guaranteed, the representative bodies are no more than an instrument of policy of the ruling class." The liberal writers associated democracy with political institutions like elected legislatures, universal Adult Franchise, several political parties competing for power, freedom of thought, expression association and assembly. Marxism associated democracy with the dictatorship of the proletariat or peoples democracy and the establishment of a socialist society. JP also tried to establish a socialist society through peoples democracy. Socialist democracy according to Marx is the highest form of democracy because it is genuine democracy for the majority of the people. It is peoples democracy. Economically it is based on the social ownership of the means of production. Politically it will involve the masses directly in the administration of the state and social affairs. It is in this context that Marx defined democracy as "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. In the higher state of communism, democracy as a form of govt. will wither away and it will become a habit or a way of life."

According to JP, the future polity of India should be suited to its needs. He rejects the western model of democracy on the ground that it does not give full scope to the people to participate in the management of their affairs and is based on a atomized society. According to him, this goes against both the social nature of man and the scientific organization of society. It should be mentioned here that, along with JP, Gandhi also attacked the western political institutions and practices. But most surprisingly "Decade before them, "Swami Vivekananda characterized
'Parliaments' as 'Jokes,'" and "'Party Politics' as degenerate 'fanaticism and sectarianism.' "Preoccupation with political power was part of a distinctly western 'vanity', a reflection of the 'material tyranny', which tyrannized over both colonized and colonizer, a terrible evil, for by this power they can deluge the whole earth with blood."10

JP pleaded for a model of democracy which is based on an integrated conception of society and gives the individual fullest possible scope to participate in the management of his affairs. Such a model of democracy would be outside the interference of political parties.

JP derived enduring truths from the lessons of ancient Indian polity in visualizing future Indian Polity. He claims that his plan is based on principles that have been 'enunciated' and practiced in ancient Indian Polity. The ancient Indian polity is characterized by community, self development and the self regulation of communal life. It is also said that JP borrowed from Aurobindo Ghosh's essay, 'The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity' and on the basis of his work he "contends that in ancient India the political order was founded on the system of the self-governing village community, which lasted with remarkable 'sufficiency and solidarity' until it was recently steamrollered out of existence by the ruthless and lifeless machinery of the British bureaucratic system."11 Traditional India had discovered the key principle of an organically self-determining communal life. "...and today it is only a question of an ancient country finding its lost soul again."12 According to Gandhi, Britain had seduced India into selling its soul to the demonic spirit of modern civilization, which included the false charms of Parliamentary government (Hind Swaraj).
JP has drawn from a variety of political commentators, European, American and Indian to point out the intrinsic defects of the parliamentary system. "The electoral system pretends to represent the wishes of an informed public, but instead serves only to fragment the body politic, confusing voters who are cynically manipulated by powerful, centrally controlled parties, with the aid of high finance and diabolically clever methods and super media. Consequently, only the forces and interests behind the parties and propaganda machines are represented, while the masses are subjected to continuing exploitation, and the society becomes increasingly atomized."  

According to JP, the most serious defect of Parliamentary democracy is its 'tendency towards centralism.' Gandhi also believed centralization to be inconsistent with a non-violent structure of society. JP was of the opinion that centralized authority led to vast impersonal bureaucracies and huge interest groups that made 'organic integration' impossible. Removing and replacing the parliamentary system with a communitarian democracy and decentralized political economy is the only remedy for this. JP actually pleads for communitarian or partyless democracy which is a new kind of polity and more consistent with India's own tradition.

Modern industrialism and the spirit of economism that it has created has led to a disintegration of human society and made man an alien among his fellow men. The problem of present day civilization is social integration. "The problem is to put man in touch with man, so that they may live together in meaningful, understandable, controllable relationships." He wants to avoid competitiveness because it is necessarily exploitative.
5.2 PROBLEM OF DEMOCRACY AND J.P'S VIEWS

While formulating a plan of future polity for India, JP also pointed out some problems of democracy itself. According to him, the ideal of democracy can never fully be realized in India or anywhere else. "All that is possible is to approach the ideal as nearly as possible." Abraham Lincoln, an internationally recognized political authority, defines democracy as a govt. of the people, by the people and for the people. Again it may be defined as 'Govt. of the nation by its representatives.' But these definitions appear to be empty. JP writes, "No people has ever been known to govern itself, and non ever will. All government is oligarchic, it necessarily implies the domination of the many by a few." JP has referred from H.B. Mayo's Democracy and Marxism. "The extreme case of political democracy is that in which people govern themselves directly, making the laws, dispensing justice, and (although this is more difficult), carrying out or over seeing the administrative functions. But not such democracy ever existed, or ever will so long as men live together in large political units. Inevitably then, political democracy must be translated into law and representative government. Democracy does not assume that the 'people' actually govern themselves, and its theory makes plenty of room for leadership. Democracy in western usage stands for the free conflict of ideas and leaders, from among which the electorate makes a choice." That means only direct democracy to some extent can be regarded as true democracy. But such democracy is not possible in large political units. Hence, political democracy must be a representative govt.
According to JP, democracy in the west has become democratic oligarchy. In fact, democracy should be a peoples govt., govt. ruled by people either directly or indirectly. Since, we have indirect democracy as in western democracy and in Indian democracy also, it has become a democratic oligarchy. It has become a Govt. of the elite people who are distinctly away from the common man.

Therefore, JP was disturbed with the question, whether people will remain permanently satisfied with such a situation or such a western definition of democracy, i.e., there has been a worldwide totalitarian assault on democracy, and people are not able to experience self govt. Hence there is the need of a demand for a more satisfying participatory democracy.

In Elitist theories, power of decision making is the monopoly of certain elites or groups and the role of the masses is reduced only to the selection of the elites once in a few years. The Participatory democracy seeks to distribute decision-making power more equitably. The concentration of decision making power in a few hands led to a number of movement calling for the direct involvement of ordinary people in the decision making. Participatory democracy wants to extend political equality by some sort of grass root decision making of an authoritarian nature. Participatory democracy has two broad features viz.,

(1) Decentralization of authoritative decision making, so as to bring it closer to the people affected by the decisions.

(2) Direct involvement of common man in making the decisions.

Participatory democracy agrees with the classified liberal idea that democracy is not only a form of govt. but also a means of equal right to self-development. Such a development can be achieved only in a participatory society,
which cares for collective problems and helps in the formation of politically active citizens who take a continuous interest in the governing process. It believes in the direct participation of citizens in the regulation of key institutions of society making political parties more open and accountable. Participation is the essence of democracy and without the involvement of common man in the decision making, it is meaningless.

JP was thinking over the problem of discovering the ways and means by which more and more people could govern themselves more and more. He came to some considerations about democracy such as —

(1) The problem of democracy is basically a moral problem. Constitutions, system of government, parties, elections, - are all needed to run the business of democracy. But, JP says unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people are appropriate, even the best of constitutions and political systems will not make democracy work. He offers a list of the moral qualities and mental attitude which are necessary to make democracy a success. These are —

“(1) Concern for truth
(2) Aversion to violence
(3) Love of liberty and courage to resist oppression and tyranny
(4) Spirit of co-operation
(5) Preparedness to adjust self-interest to the larger interest.
(6) Respect for others opinions and tolerance
(7) Readiness to take responsibility
(8) Belief in the fundamental equality of men
(9) Faith in the educability of human nature.”
Again JP says that these qualities and attitudes are not inborn in men. But they can be educated and trained to acquire and practise these qualities. “This task is beyond the scope of the state. The quality of the life of society should itself be such that it inculcates these values in its members. The prevailing social ethics, the family, the religious and educational authorities and institutions, the example the elite set in their lives, the organs of public opinion – all these have to combine to create the necessary moral climate for democracy to thrive.” Thus, the task of preparing the very soil in which the plant of democracy take root and grow is not political but educative task.

(2) The most important problem of democracy faces today is that, in democracy there is liberty, but liberty leads to abuse and necessitates state interference. Again when there is state interference, it leads to curtailment of liberty. Therefore, the question is how to preserve liberty and prevent its abuse. According to JP, by any political means, this problem can not be solved. Only through moral means, this can be resolved. The opposite side of liberty is responsibility. People should be given responsibility. Liberty and responsibility are like two sides of the same coin.

If the individual is not prepared to take social responsibility, if he use liberty for increasing his own power, or interest, and neglects the interest of others, then some form of ‘statism’ becomes inevitable. JP remarked that, the only democratic solution to ‘statism’ and totalitarianism is trusteeship. But again trusteeship is not easy to practise. Trusteeship can not be practised without voluntary limitation of wants. An individual can not function as a trustee unless he is prepared to share his possessions with his fellowmen and unless he has learned
to curtail his wants. "Thus voluntary limitation of wants, in other words, the rejection of materialism or the unlimited pursuit of material satisfactions is essential for the achievement and preservation of democracy."  

(3) Another problem of democracy is that the social institutions and attitudes of mind represented by the caste system and the practice of untouchability pose a problem to the proper functioning of Indian democracy. JP says that, the system of caste hierarchy and untouchability is the greatest and most stubborn enemy of democracy in this country. "A society, in which men are considered high, low or untouchable, according to the families into which they are born is far from being democratic." In other words, a stratified society is not a democratic society. The fact that individuals are endowed at birth with different abilities and aptitudes is a biological phenomenon. It has nothing to do with caste. But, to abolish caste system is not a political but educative task. According to JP, to an extent it is an economic task also. With the improvement of economic condition, the socially depressed and backward caste will also rise in stature. But, there is another difficulty in this, i.e., the economically advanced castes also follow hierarchical distinctions among themselves.

(4) JP has pointed out the economic backwardness of the countries like India, who have been under foreign rule. In such, countries according to JP, the problem of democracy is further complicated by the fact of economic backwardness. The problem of capital formation (which includes the problem of fixing the limits of present consumption and saving) the direction and utilization of labour and resources and similar problems of economic development can be easily and quickly solved, in dictatorship, communist or any other form of government
but which is not easy in democracy to solve. But JP says that economic development of the dictatorship countries aim at power rather than peace and prosperity. The standard of living of the common people in erstwhile Soviet Russia inspite of the phenomenal industrial and economic development, even noticed after forty two years of communist dictatorship is lower than that of the U.K. or Sweden, considerably lower than that of U.S. except Czechoslovakia. The standard in other communist countries is perhaps still lower.

JP poses a question whether the poor democracies like India should go for building military power for their defence or depend on the forces of peace and happiness and moral strength of their own people. In his words, “The least that is expected from a nation that calls Gandhi its, Father is that it will refuse to build for power and will build for peace and happiness.”

Then JP considered the problem of building democracy in the backward countries and which do not have democratic experience or tradition. In some Asian and African countries, there is the possibility of even rise of dictatorial regimes. But in case of India, JP says, some positive factors are there in this respect. These are :-

(1) Since India was under the influence of British liberal democracy, the intelligentsia or a large part of it was subjected to its influence. That means, some people were (a section) was already trained in democratic ideals.

(2) Secondly, the struggle for power under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, inculcated some values of democracy in the intelligentsia as well as in the masses.
(3) Though India had no democratic traditions in recent past, democracy developed in many parts of ancient India. Ancient India's democratic tradition could also be drawn upon in order to build democracy in the present.

Therefore, it can be assumed that, JP wanted to say that the base of democracy should be made stronger or in other words there is the need to strengthen the base of democracy. He hopes that, even if something happens wrong at the top, the foundation of democracy would be stronger and secure. This was the virtue of the village councils, the town committees, the traders and artisans' guilds of ancient India. So many developments have taken place in India, i.e., Kingdoms and empires rose and fell, conquerors came and went, but these organs of popular democracy were functioning which were getting sanction from the people. These grass root democratic institutions, have been responsible for the continuing of Indian society and culture and that is the reason, that JP wanted to build up properly these basic structures of democracy.

In JP's, words democracy “...is a 'function' of so many factors, the resultant of so many different activities. There is no single human or social activity by which democracy is created. The house of democracy has many mansions and many types of bricks, and various types of material and builders are needed to construct it. It is a pity that this is not realized more widely in this country.”
According to JP, many people may not take interest to look back to ancient India for democratic traditions. India is said to be the earliest home of democracy and some of her republics existed for even thousand years. Kingship and monarchy were the predominant form of Indian polity. Kings in the earlier times were elected by and subject to the Kshastriya aristocracy. It can be noticed that even when hereditary Kingship became the ruler and the samities ceased to function, the village and town-communities, the merchants and artisans' guilds, the varna order, the dharma, or social ethics continued to function independently of the central government. The democracy of the village communities was so stable and efficient that it continued functioning during the British period also. Therefore JP says, the underlying principles of ancient Indian polity are to be taken as guiding factor in building up democracy in India at present. "Community and self-development and self-regulation of communal life are the distinguishing marks of ancient Indian polity. The state of India evolved through many forms beginning from the small Rigvedic Kingdom to vast monarchical empires of the Mauryas and Guptas. In between, there were aristocratic republics spreading over the Punjab, Sind, Eastern UP and Northern Bihar. There were the Sanghas and Ganas. Other forms of state were known variously as Rajya, Swarajya, Bahurajya, Dvirajya, Vairajya, Maharajya and Samrajya." They persisted and developed according to their own inner law. The communal bodies were far more stable and enduring than the ever changing state.

In ancient India community had two forms. The first was the territorial community, the village or township. Later on these became larger communities,
sometimes embracing a whole kingdom or republic. The other was the functional or occupational community, the varna. The persons performing the same occupations shared a common way of life. They had common problems and common rights. They had common responsibilities towards the larger society. "The relationship of the individual with the two forms of the community and the interrelationship between the later two made up a remarkable self-determining pattern of a complex ethico-socio-economic life."  

In Ancient India, the concept of Dharma played an important role and it acquired a place of great importance. It prescribed and regulated individual and group behaviour in all walks of life. The territorial and functional communities had developed laws and codes of behaviour to regulate the internal life of their communities and groups and their relations with the rest of society. In addition to that, there were codes and laws which were common to all and accepted by all. As a matter of fact these were considered the universal social ethics.

According to JP, since communal life have been completely destroyed, dharma has also declined, and "ceased to exercise any influence not only upon present polity, which is a wholly foreign implantation and has no root in the Indian soil, but upon all social activities such as commerce, education, labour, administration, priesthood."  

JP says that, if life in India is again not organized, on the basis of self-determining and mutually co-ordinating and integrating communities, that organic self-regulation of society will not be possible which was the 'Dharma' of that time. In that case, democracy is bound to remain distantly
removed from the life of the people. JP therefore pleads that the ancient concept of Dharma must be revived and appropriate Dharma for a democratic set up of society has to be evolved. But according to him, it is not to be brought about by a legislative process, but only in an organic manner. Dharma must arise from life itself... but the main mould of life must be indigenous and consistent with the spirit and principle of Indian social organization.

JP admits that man is a social animal and he always lives in organic relationship with other men. It is the totality of these living relationships that constitutes society. But modern western democracy is not based on the social nature of man and the true nature of human society. Modern democracy is an arithmetic of votes. "The individual voter casts his vote as an atom of society, not as a living cell in organic relationship with other living cells." Further, modern industrialism has led to profit and loss theory of economic progress, which has disintegrated human society; even the family is disintegrated. Therefore, the problem of present day civilization is social integration. The problem is to put man in touch with man, the problem is to recreate human community.

5.4 IDEAL OF COMMUNITARIAN SOCIETY – FORMATION OF PRIMARY COMMUNITIES

JP, proposed a scheme for recreating human communities. And as a first step he mentioned about the formation of primary communities. According to him, the present day Indian village are not proper communities. In a true community, there should be sharing participation, fellowship, identity of interests, a feeling of unity in the midst of diversity, a sense of freedom within the framework of
accepted social responsibilities etc. The caste, class, race, religion, politics – all these divide men in to different conflicting groups. The community brings them together, unites them and harmonizes their interests. In the community, agriculture, industry, capital, labour, skill, intelligence, all are synthesized in the service of the community. In a community there is understanding in participation by the members in all communal affairs. The community is a co-operative society. The only difference between it and the ordinary co-operative society is that co-operation in the community embraces the whole of life, but in a ordinary cooperative society. Co-operation is there only in economic sector. Every one in the community has a share in its fortunes and misfortunes. In the internal matters, the community is self-regulating and self-determining. Division is poison for the community. According to JP, such a community must be the ideal for future social reconstruction in India. Then only the social nature of man and the great humanist ideals of modern civilization can succeed and it will be a true democracy. However, JP said that this type of community is not possible in heavily industrialized and in urbanized countries of the west, it may be a difficult task. But for India, and other countries of Asia, which are away from totalitarianism – may go for this type of communal society.

JP also considered the fact that small local communities are fit for only rural pattern of life. He pointed out that, both industry and agriculture are essential for human life and its development. But it should not be forgotten that industry is for man and not man for industry. Science and technology is not the forces of nature like an earthquake, they are the product of human mind, and they should be used for human purpose. But, it has been seen that they are used only for private
profit by the capitalist system, and for power by the centralized state, whether
democratic or totalitarian.

JP hopes to make the human beings conscious human beings, not
automations. He visualizes a society which will be neither 'urban' nor 'rural', it
will be communitarian, a true society. The communities of the future India, will
have a balance of agriculture and industry, i.e., it will be agro-industrial, they will
make full use of science and technology to serve the ends of their life only. Due to
geographical and historical conditions, agriculture may predominate in one and
industry in another area, but a balance between them will be the general principle.
The big cities will be decentralized as far as possible.

The communities should not be so small that a balanced development of
communal life and culture becomes difficult. They should not be so large that life
becomes impersonalized.

**Formation of Regional Community**

The next step to build up an integrated society is to build up a regional
community by making co-operation among a number of neighbouring primary
communities. The regional community comes into existence by an organic process
of growth. It is not a mere sum of the smaller communities. "It is an integrated
community in itself. In other words, at the regional level, there is an integration of
institutions and activities of the primary communities, the village Panchayats are
integrated into the regional Panchayat, the village co-operatives in the regional
co-operative union; the primary school in the regional high school, the village
youth and cultural association in the regional ones, the village plan's in the
As in its internal administration the primary community is autonomous, so in the spheres in which the primary communities have delegated their powers to the regional community, the regional community is autonomous. This must be mentioned here that the need to delegate powers arises from the fact that the primary communities are unable by themselves to do everything that needs to be done. However the regional community is not a superior or higher body, which can control or interfere with the internal administration of the primary communities. Both are equally sovereign in their respective spheres.

**Formation of District Community**

In order to tackle some other functions such as running a techno-agricultural college, a major irrigation project, production of electricity, manufacture of machines etc., the regional communities will have to come together to form a still larger community – the district community. This will also be an integrated community and its relationship with the regional communities will be a similar pattern to that of the latter with the primary communities.

In this manner, the district communities would federate together to form the provincial community. The provincial communities would come together to form the National Community. And JP hoped this way, a day might come when the national communities might federate together to form the World Community. JP was hopeful that this type of communitarian polity can alone guarantee the participatory democracy. People will be organized in self governing communities – to govern themselves.
Defects or Shortcomings of Parliamentary Democracy AND JP'S VIEWS

While formulating a plan for communitarian democracy, JP carefully considered the shortcomings of parliamentary democracy.

According to him, even the most ardent defenders of parliamentary democracy agree that it has serious defects, but since there is no better alternative, and that within limits it is possible to amend and improve it, they have accepted it. But JP says that though the system is capable of much improvement, its fundamental defects are bound to stay because these are the foundation on which the structure of parliamentary democracy has been built. The fundamental defects of Parliamentary democracy are:

(a) This form of democracy is based on the vote of the individual. It is the atomization of society that is responsible for this kind of political system. But the state can not be an arithmetical sum of individuals. The people, in a country, the nation or the community can not be equated with the sum of individual voters.

(b) The advocates of parliamentary democracy claims that under it the govt. is at least representative of the majority of the voters; though not of the people. But this is not true. Governments elected under universal adult suffrage are minority governments in the sense that they, represent a minority of the voters. Whenever, there are more than two parties, votes are divided among the people and as a result, the government becomes a government of minority only.

(c) Another serious defect of parliamentary democracy pointed out by JP is demagoguery. In order to capture votes, the party candidates arouse false hopes by making dishonest, but pleasing promises to the public. Issues of
public policies are not presented to the people in its true light. Everything gets distorted by partisan demagoguery with the result that the real interests of the nations are sacrificed.

(d) The most serious defect of parliamentary democracy, according to JP is its inherent tendency towards centralism. At one end there is the nationstate and at the other end the individual voter, with a gap in between them. The existing local bodies have little self govt. powers and have no direct or indirect influence on the nation state. The ordinary citizens do not understand the complexities of a highly industrialized civilization, and there is the all powerful central govt. The ‘Sovereign people’ in such a democracy are scattered over the length and breadth of the country. The issue of power is not decided by the people, but by political parties and interest groups. Therefore, a natural outcome of such centralization of power and administration is bureaucracy. Central govt. is overburdened with work and depend more on permanent officials, who gather more and more powers for themselves in course of time. This leads to dangerous autocracy. According to JP, the only answer to the problem of bureaucracy is more and more decentralization so that the people directly participate in the administration of their affairs and control the civil servants who are directly responsible to them.

As a matter of fact, parliamentary democracy cannot function without political parties and party rivalries actually give rise to demagoguery. Again centralization of power prevents the citizens from participating in govt. In short a
small elite of politicians rule in the name of the people. Hence it is an illusion of democracy and self govt.

(e) Again JP said, still another serious defect of parliamentary democracy is the system of election. The system of election is very expensive and wasteful. Here democracy is mortgaged to moneyed people and large sectional organizations like trade unions. A general election creates unnecessary passion and excitement, instead of educating and enlightening the people, which should be one of the merits of parliamentary democracy. Therefore JP proposed that this practice of holding general election should be abolished and a system of indirect election should be adopted. The system of indirect election in communitarian democracy would cost practically nothing. Hence according to JP, if the system of communitarian democracy is adopted along with the system of indirect election, then the defects of parliamentary democracy can be minimized.

5.5 COMMUNITARIAN DEMOCRACY

J.B. Nath writes, JP visualized a society of freedom, equality and human dignity, where people would live in justice and co-operation with his fellow men without outside restraints based on both moral and material prosperity of the society. He preferred to name it as communitarian “having a balance between agriculture and industry, and must be self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial, urban-rural in nature and according to him, such a communitarian polity alone could guarantee the success of the participating democracy.”
According to JP, the success of communitarian form of society depends on the success of the concept of belonging to community, which would not be possible by paid servants, who do not have faith in or understanding in community as they do not belong to the community. JP says that the young ones can be taught to belong to the community, by giving responsibilities. Similarly the villages can be made self-sufficient by giving them real responsibilities. As JP was totally dissatisfied with the party politics and the role of the centralized state, as a remedy or alternative he proposed to extend the benefits of the participatory democracy and socialism to the people. Here he suggested some alternative measures of party-less democracy and decision by consensus of opinion to overcome the shortcomings of election system of the parliamentary democracy.

Communitarian democracy which JP visualized would be a partyless democracy. JP tried to establish a system consisting of human rights, and equality and for this he thought, so long there is party system it will not materialize. According to him, political party gives birth to demagogy destroying political ethics and rigidity. In the name of discipline of the party compels man to act against conscience killing his talents and sensitiveness to moral values. The internal structure of the party is autocratic and as such it is anti-democratic. According to J.B. Nath, with his strong sense of freedom, JP could not tolerate such a party system in a democracy where peoples rule become the party rule and party rule become the rule of a caucus or coterie and as a result democracy is reduced to mere casting of votes.

However, JP did not insist on complete and immediate abolition of party system. He suggested that parties should undertake the responsibility of educating
the people and asked the various parties to co-operate through an honest agreement for the all round development of the country. According to him, the idea of partyless democracy must not be terminated at the district level, but be extended up to the town, cities and up to New Delhi. As a continuation of party less democracy, JP suggested some procedures of election without involving the party in it. He was quite aware about the present party system and the system of election which is too expensive with a greater chance of moneyed persons to be elected. He was also very much aware of the corrupting role of money in elections “with a little chance for a poor but good independent candidate....”30 Therefore in his ‘Swaraj for the people’ and ‘A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity, JP suggested an alternative and elaborated system of indirect election procedure.

**ECONOMY OF THE COMMUNITY**

Society is a complex whole. Therefore social and human reconstruction requires an all-sided approach. Hence, while visualizing the future Indian polity, JP dealt with the economy of the polity also. According to him, without describing the economy, the polity can not be described fully. The new political structure would also require for its base a new kind of economic structure. According to JP, social revolution basically included economic revolution. “*Social in the Marxian sense also includes 'economic'; social revolution, therefore, is basically an economic revolution in the Marxian formulation*”31 and in a sense “*social equality meant economic equality and equality of status.*”32

According to JP, the aim of the community’s economy is the welfare of the community and each of its members. The aim of the community cannot be
individual profit, without taking into consideration the welfare of other individuals
in the community. "The community's economy is neither exploitative nor
competitive, it is co-operative and co-sharing."33 The community is interested in
all-sided development of the 'whole' man. The life of the community is therefore
balanced, and not one-sided. "The economy of the community must aim at a
balanced development of human life. Therefore, it can not be a economy of
unlimited wants as, it is in the existing society. The present 'science' of economics
would be inapplicable to a balanced society. For it a new science of economics
will have to be worked out."34

According to JP's concept of community, the community is interested not
only in the present members of the society, but it is also interested in the members
who are unborn. That means the community thinks for the future generation also.
There is the need of a balanced economy for the future generation. "The
community should try to restrict consummation as far as possible to renewable
resources and use as little as possible of the resources it can not put back."35 The
economy of the community should be nature friendly. On the other hand, the
present day economy of the west and east is going against nature.

JP advocated for a self-sufficient economy in the community. It should be
self-sufficient as far as possible. According to JP it may sound parochial,
isolationist, and reactionary in this age but for the community it is most natural.
The primary duty of the community is to satisfy the primary needs of its members.
It is natural for the community to produce all it can i.e., food, clothing, shelter, and
other necessities of life. Community would see that every able-bodied persons find
employment. If the economic activities of the community are not primarily related
to the needs of the community, then it will depend on national and international market. The institutions and processes of society must be adapted to the human scale and man must be made the master of his fate. With this end in view JP proposed for communitarian way of life. If in this life, the people again become subject to the domination of macro-economics,’ JP say, we would find ourselves exactly where we started from i.e., Robotism. “The greatest pity of the present day world is that though it is itself a product of the life of mind, it is getting out of tune with it, for mechanization and industrialization are reducing man, to a robot corroding the life of the mind. According to Erich Fromm, we are not in danger of becoming slaves any more, but of becoming robots. We are governed by the anonymous authority of conformity. We have no conviction of our own, no individuality and almost no sense of life.”

Therefore, according to JP, the community should engage in activities which are completely under its control. The sphere of production for self-consumption should be within the community, which will be in the field of primary needs of life. However, no community can be self-sufficient in everything. The economic life of the communitarian society should be organized as to satisfy the human needs, first in the primary community, then in the regional, district, provincial, national and international community in an ascending order. This means that each expanding area of community would be self-sufficient as possible. According to JP, this would save much of the unnecessary energy and time devoted today to the business of commerce, advertisement etc.

This would require planning and planning would start from the primary community. All natural resource would belong to the community. Its distribution
would be decided by common agreement. Each community would have possession of the natural resource that fall within its boundaries. But some resources are distributed unevenly, such as forests, mines etc. These would have to be shared by common agreement.

As work is the most essential thing required for the community, the position of the worker would be considered central in the community. Without work the community can not exist. Every adult would be a worker in the community. Work would be a meaningful expression of human powers. There would be no over specialization which reduces the worker to an automation. JP hopes, that the agro-industrial nature of the communal life would make it possible for him to follow a diversified occupation.

In a communitarian society, on the basis of faith, sharing and acceptance of responsibility, interests will be harmonized. Such things as strikes and lock-outs would not be there in the community. However, non-co-operation might be possible in extreme cases of moral issues. According to JP private enterprise, in a communitarian society, would also take the communitarian spirit and work for communal as well as private good. It will be subject to the principles of self govt. and responsibility to, and integration with the community.

5.6. RECONSTRUCTION OF THE INDIAN POLITY

According to JP, the foundation on future Indian Polity must necessarily be self-governing, self-sufficient agro-industrial, urbo-rural local communities. The existing villages and townships provide the physical base for such construction.
JP first pointed out the defects of India's community development programme. In India, the beginning is made by establishing gram panchayats and by taking programmes like community development, intensive area development (of the Khadi & village Industry commission) and co-operativization of the rural economy. But JP says that these programmes suffer from several serious defects and he pointed out the defects as:

(a) They lack an integrated and social philosophy.

(b) They have no clear concept of community.

(c) They do not aim to create a balance within the community between agriculture and industry.

(d) Even though the aim is to create communities, at the bottom level the concept of social organization and at the higher levels remains the same as that of the atomized industrial society of the west, (JP mentioned here about Russia).

(a) According to JP, social philosophy, behind the countries development programmes have two parts

(1) Philosophy of economic development and

(2) Philosophy of democratic socialism.

Regarding the first JP says that there is need for economic development but, at the same times he questions, should that development be without limits as in
the West. He finds that philosophy to be incompatible with the outlook of community development and communitarian outlook of society.

Regarding democratic socialism, he says that in the west in practice it means state socialism and it has the philosophy of welfarism from the top. It does not mean the socialist way of life. "If socialism and welfarism from above, are to be the ideals of our social reconstruction, development of the community at the bottom had neither any social significance, nor any chance of success." According to him the base and the superstructure will contradict each other, and as the top will be all powerful as it is under state socialism – the superstructure will weaken the base. JP referred to Soviet Russia, where a communitarian system was started, but as the top became all powerful, the bottom became weak. Therefore, according to him there were no true Soviets in Soviet Russia, only there was one monolithic state.

The Socialist Philosophy as JP conceived, need not be opposed to the communitarian system, of the society. The socialists should concern themselves more with man than with institutions. According to JP, the old idea of state ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange and planning as a theory of socialism has proved to be false. But a new idea is yet to be developed in place of the old. JP says that for this the socialists will have to go to the pre-Marxist and Socialist idealists, i.e., the Philosophical Anarchists, like Tolstoy, Ruskin and Morris and to the Post Marxian Social Idealists i.e., to Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave. He also referred to the ‘communities of work’ of France and Kibbutzim of Israel and some of the Gramdan villages of India, from which the Socialists can learn. He said that the socialists must also take from Marx what is
still valid and from science the best it has to offer. But this task will require, in JP’s words, "...a vast capacity for moral and intellectual synthesis,"38 if socialism is to go back to its original idealism. As Lenin pointed out that Marx had synthesized German philosophy, French socialism and British classical economics to create his grand and noble structure of thought, JP says, "Another moral and intellectual genius must arise to perform anew a similar creative act of synthesis so that socialism might become a faith for the future rather than one of the ‘Wasms’ of the past."39

(b) According to JP, the concept of community was not clearly defined. The reason is that the task of ‘development’ of the community is given to paid ‘Servants’ of the state who have no faith in or understanding of community. Further who do not belong to any community. According to JP, in a communitarian form of society the concept of belonging to a community is very important. He referred to Switzerland, where the community still exists. Every Swiss belongs to his home commune. But in India, the official developers have no such concepts of belonging. But JP admitted that, though the Indian village is far from being a community its inhabitants have a sense of belonging to their village and to one another. But the men who have been entrusted with the responsibility of community development programme, are not developing the community spirit.

(c) According to JP, the community development and other rural development programmes have no conception of balanced agro-industrial communities. Village industries are being developed from the point of view of unemployment problem and raising the living standards of the villagers. But JP says the idea behind it is the atomized society sharply divided between urban and
rural sections and the urban is always dominating the rural and if this is the concept, JP says, villages of India will remain underdeveloped and depressed areas.

(d) JP says that, though the aim was to create communities, but since the social organisation at the higher level i.e., the superstructure is individualistic, the community could not be established at the base. For instance, the village panchayats do not function as they were supposed to do. Though there are several reasons for this, JP pointed out that, one of the most important reasons is the influence of the existing atomistic polity.

Panchayat elections are under the influence of the conflicting parties and the result is that the community is disrupted and the panchayat is unable to function as every one desires it to function.

Therefore, JP says, the planning does not start with the village and the region, but it starts from the centre, to downwards. JP repeatedly says that this does not help to develop communities. The communities are not given chance to plan for themselves as communities. At the same time, the economic organisation; whether state or private, are also top organizations. JP says, "...whose activities, are in the nature of economic 'invasions' from outside the community, tending to dislocate and disintegrate the communal life...."^40

From the above it can be assumed that according to JP, the foundation of future polity of India must be self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial, urbo-rural, local communities. In such a communitarian society, the highest political institutions of the local community should be the General Assembly, - the gram sabha. All the adults should be considered members of it. The Panchayat i.e., the
executive should be selected by general consensus of opinion in the Sabha. No one should stand for any post, i.e., there should be no candidates. For all selective posts there should be clear cut qualification as it was in ancient times. No individual should be permitted to hold the same post for more than a defined period of time. The Panchayat should function through sub committees, with different responsibilities. In the Panchayat or sub committees no member should be appointed or nominated by the state government.

JP said that such selections would be made by general consensus. But a question may arise, is it possible to have a general consensus of opinion among the villagers who are divided into castes and factions and have conflicting interests? But JP was hopeful that since India has centuries of experience of electing the village executive councils by general agreement, the system can be repeated. JP also referred to selection by lot and he said that the villages should be given an option to choose between the methods of selection by general agreement or by lots. Here he referred to Bhoolan movement. When the landless families were unable to agree about the distribution of lands amongst themselves, they decided it by lots.

The duties and responsibilities of the Gram Sabha and the Panchayats would be to ensure that no one in the village is without food, clothing, and shelter. No child is without primary education, primary medical care. They should see that the village is self-sufficient in the matter of food, and clothing, there is no unemployment and every family has reached a minimum standard of living. Social and political workers must go to the villages, to preach self-reliance and to help them to practise it. The next level of the political structure would be the regional communities. The Gram Panchayats should be integrated into the Panchayat
Samiti, as recommended by Balvantray Mehta Committee, But JP says that the nature and functions of the Samiti should be those of an autonomous self-governing community. The Samiti would play a key role in the political and economic life of the country, i.e., in planning and development. In regard to the formation of the Panchayat Samiti, JP emphasized that they should be elected by the Gram Panchayats and not by their members. According to him though it may appear to be distinction between six and half-a-dozen, but there is major principle of communal life involved. It is not the members but the Gram Panchayat as a body that represents the village community and not its members. Therefore, the Panchayat Samity is a representative of the Gram Panchayats.

Like the social structure, the political structure would also arise storey by storey from the foundation. Above the Panchayat Samiti, there would be the District Council, which will be formed by the integration of the Panchayat Samitis of the district. The principle for method of election would be the same. Again, in a similar way, all the district councils of a state should come together to create the State Assembly. The State Assemblies would in the same way form the Lok Sabha. This way the political institution at each level is an integration of all the institutions at the lower level. To sum up, the Executive at different levels:

(i) Primary Community Level – The Panchayat,
(ii) Regional Community Level – The Panchayat Samiti.
(iii) District Community Level – The District Council.
(iv) Provincial Community Level – The Pranta Sabha.
(v) National Community Level – The Rashtra Sabha.

Every executive body will function through committees at different levels.
According to JP, each community would have powers to make rules and laws to manage its internal affairs, provided they do not conflict with the interests of other communities at the same level and with the rules and laws laid down by the communities at higher levels. The higher communal bodies will legislate in their allotted spheres. Other communal bodies such as educational and economic association also may pass rules and laws. Each committee would have a chairman and Secretary but they would enjoy no special powers or privileges. The committees would be very small, workable bodies with powers to co-opt experts who would participate fully but without the right of vote. Each committee would be directly accountable to the general body who appoints it.

There would be a coordinating committee to co-ordinate the work of the different committees. The coordinating committee would consists one representative from each committee. He may be the chairman, secretary or any member as decided by the committee concerned.

Every Committee would be guided by the principle of collective responsibility. The representative communal bodies would meet periodically. But the committees would meet in continuous permanent session. Matters of policy would be decided upon on the motion of a committee or an individual member, by the representative bodies concerned. It is the duty of the committees to execute the policies.

Therefore it is clear from the above that there would be no Ministers, chief Ministers or Prime Minister at the Provincial and National levels. Govt. would be conducted by committees of the representative bodies. According to JP, the
institution of Prime Minister and Chief Minister, which concentrates too much power in the hands of single individuals is undemocratic and leads to totalitarianism.

The president of different representative communal bodies will have no administrative functions, but he would see that the representative body functions according to the rules laid down. However, he would have extra-ordinary emergency powers in case there is the break down of the democratic apparatus of the community concerned.

The President of the Rastra Sabha, in addition to his other powers would be the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and responsible to the Sabha for the defence of the nation. There would be a committee for Defence to assist him, with his chairmanship.

Then comes the question of civil servants. The committees would be assisted by paid civil servants “At each level the Civil Servants would be appointed by the corresponding Authority created for that purpose by the representative body concerned and on terms laid down by the latter.” In matters of appointment and removal of the civil servants the committees have sovereign rights. At the primary level community, the civil servants may be a honorary, part-time or full time volunteer. At the higher levels also there may be honorary civil servants.

JP, carefully considered the problem of bureaucracy and corruption. Even though, some people consider dictatorship to be the solution of corruption, JP did not agree with it. He says that, dictatorship breeds bureaucracy faster than any other system of govt. And regarding corruption JP says that, the form of corruption is changed in dictatorship. Instead of bribery and the like, there is corruption in the
form of lying, deceit, intrigue, terror, enslavement of the human mind, crucifixion of the dignity of man. According to JP, these corrupt human life more than bribery and other similar things.

Therefore JP was convinced that only true solution of bureaucracy and corruption is direct self-govt. of the people along with direct and immediate supervision and control over the civil servants by the people and their elected organs. As self-govt. develops, the civil servants becomes either unnecessary or subject to the immediate elected authority.

JP was also careful in pointing out the danger in this provision. He says that, if the communal representative bodies and their members themselves become corrupt, there would be little check on corruption. But he again says that at the beginning this might happen, but if the responsibility were really thrown upon the people, so that they could see clearly that their suffering was due to the fact that they had chosen the wrong type of people to manage their affairs, it would not take long time to remedy the situation. According to him, "...it is the good sense of the people themselves that can guarantee that their representatives and servants would be of the right sort."42

JP was hopeful of his plan of decentralization. Therefore he suggested that police, justice, taxation, collection, social services, planning should all be decentralized to the maximum possible extent. People would learn and acquire self-confidence, through decentralization and the system would begin to operate from below and become normal.
In his paper, 'A Plea for Reconstruction of the Indian Polity,' he made clear that,

(1) His aim was not to write a new constitution for India. He only tried to discuss some underlying principles and indicate the general pattern of the social and political organisation.

(2) He also made it clear that a new political structure as he proposed will not be built in a day. He said, the foundation will have to be laid first, and the structure built from below, storey by storey.

(3) If his scheme of decentralized pattern of the social, political and economic organisation is accepted, the administration would not be top-heavy and far removed from the people.

(4) What have been suggested in this paper were merely proposed. Any other method might be followed keeping in view, the picture of the new polity regarding Partyless Democracy at grass root.

(5) The picture of future social organisation and polity of India drawn by JP, might appear to be idealistic. But he says that, "this is not a disqualification. An ideal cannot but be idealistic." What is more important is that, whether the ideal is impractical, unscientific or ill-conceived. He considered all the provisions practically.

(6) Further he admits that the achievement of this ideal would be a huge task. For this, hundreds of thousands, of voluntary workers would be needed. It will not be built in a day or two. It will take number of years.
As a matter of fact to overcome all the above difficulties JP wanted to create a new society (a truly democratic society) from a different angle, with the help of Lok Sakti in which the greatest good of all is attempted to be achieved. As, we have found that JP emphasized the importance of Lokniti instead of Rajniti, Lok Sakti – instead of Rajya Sakti. Lok Shakti does not completely eliminate power of the state (Rajya Sakti). In other words, it does not say that the state has no role to play in the creation of a new kind of society. But the fact is that the state is assigned a minor role to play. In this context, we may again refer to the Sarvodaya Movement started by Gandhi and later on advocated by JP. Sarvodaya Movement is interested to build democracy from below. It believes and hopes that if a powerful ...movement is launched below, this will be reflected in the legislatures and this movement may lead to the building of Lok Sakti. A question is often raised as to why the Sarvodaya movement does not become a political party and enter legislative bodies or try to establish the Sarvodaya Society of its concept through legislative action? But the Sarvodaya view is that, Sarvodaya worker himself remaining out of polities should work for the creation of a mass movement. "It is implicit that a major part in the process is to be played by the masses themselves." In this process, the role of the state is minor one and even that role to be influenced by a mass movement based on Lok Sakti. The concept of Lok sakti may be explained in the following way.

**Lok Sakti Means**

1. A Collective Endeavour: It refers to the reconstruction of small neighbourhood and communities. It may also be described as the voluntary
collective endeavour of groups and masses. If the people are able to identify their problems and do their utmost to solve their own problems, or even if they are able to make others help them, or in other words can compel the community development organization to give them the help that they require. Thus, it is expected that a kind of Lok Sakti will be developed. The objective of community development and some constructive work agencies like Sarvodaya is the same, i.e., to create Lok Sakti, how can the people be made to do something either on their own or if they do not have the resources, to demand the resources from others – from the Govt. or the money lending agencies, banks etc.

2. An Action of Resistance: In Sarvodaya, it is used in the Sense of People’s Power as an action of resistance. According to Gandhi, this meant building up the capacity of the people to resist any wrong, or to resist authority when it is abused. “Real Lok Sakti will come not only when the people are able to solve their own problem or work for their own development, but also when they can demonstrate that they can regulate and control their own affairs.”

3. A Force: As a concept Lok Sakti means a force, which can bring about changes in institutions or changes in the situation on which people find themselves. It can even overthrow Govt. to bring in its own concept of Govt. This implies non-violent resistance, non-co-operation, and other means through which a wrong is resisted, or the existing state of things is changed.
4. **Combination of the above concepts:** Lok Sakti is a combination of all the three above concepts. This means that people should not only do something for themselves, but so long as they do not become a force strong enough, to be self-governing, and so long as they cannot manage their own affairs, real Lok Sakti will not be achieved. Lok Sakti should take the form of a political institution a structure of society, which makes it possible for all people to participate in their own political life. The reason why so much emphasis is being put on community self-govt., is that it is only at this level that the people can really participate in the management of their affairs. At the state level, there have to be a sort of representative system.

The concept of Lok Sakti was there in Gandhi’s time and Vinoba Bhave further developed it. Along with Lok Sakti, he developed the concept of Lokniti. As a matter of fact Lokniti is the fourth concept, i.e., the combination of the above three concepts, i.e., the people should manage their own affairs. It implies the idea of a party less democracy / govt.

According to JP, if Panchayat Raj is to succeed, contests at elections to village Panchayats must be avoided. The village today is a much-divided house. There are caste and class differences, there are family and other factors, there is no collective will in the village. On the other hand, the tasks that the villages face can never be tackled unless there is united and collective effort. A community spirit must be created before there could be proper community development. He said, "Let the people understand that the condition of their enjoying self-rule is that they agree to work together for the common good, not because any dictator wishes to
impose his will upon them, but because that is the naked imperative condition on which they can at all rule over themselves and advance both their personal and common interests. Self-govt. through faction-fighting will not be self-govt., but self-ruination. Let it be remembered that village is a primary, face-to-face community, where the people are physically thrown together and have to share their joys and sorrows. The electoral contests have already produced such tensions that there is a virtual stalemate in the affairs of the Panchayats. “If this state of affairs continues, there is danger that in a few years everyone would become so sick of the very word ‘Panchayats’ and ‘Panchayati Raj’, that govt. from above through bureaucratic civil servants would come to be welcomed with open arms and people’s democracy would have been declared to be a total failure and a chimera.” JP, says that, that would be a terrific blow to the cause of democracy in this country.

According to JP, to become the base of a true participatory democracy, Panchayati Raj must fulfil certain conditions. Those are –

1) Education of the people is an essential condition for the success of Panchayati Raj. This education must be given by disinterested, non-partisan agencies, engaged in social service or tasks of rural development. Political parties are to make a great contribution in the respect by working in a non-partisan spirit. Along with Political Parties, govt. officers and agencies must also do useful work in this sphere. Schools, libraries, co-operative societies have an important role to play here.
2) Political parties should refrain from interfering with Panchayati Raj and they should not use it for climbing up to power. The parties should carry on educative work among the people.

3) There should be real devolution of power. Otherwise Panchayati Raj would be a body without a soul (a still born child). Sincerity, imagination and courage are need of the hour. It is impossible to talk of devolution of power, without surrendering power in reality. "No one can learn to discharge responsibility unless responsibility is really given to one." For democracy to be success, it is necessary that the people are prepared and given full opportunity to shoulder responsibility.

4) Local authority should be given its own minimum resources. "If control of resources remain in the hands of the state-govt., the devolution is bound to be rather nominal."

JP was convinced fully that the heart of the problem was to create the 'spirit of community.' He emphasized the importance of creating the community spirit, without which the whole body politic would be without life and soul. According to him, this is a task of moral regeneration, which is to be brought about by example, services sacrifice and love. People who occupy the high places in society, so as to say in politics, business, and professions should bear the responsibility of leading the people by personal example. The state, the scientists, experts, educationists, businessmen, experimenters, men and women, young and old, all should help in this task of social engineering. He said, "It is a task of... dedication, of creation of self discovery."
Finally, it can be said that JP looked to the problem of reconstruction of Indian polity, from the moral point of view, the foundation on which his philosophy stands.

The importance of Partyless democracy has been recognised by Gandhi and Jay Prakash Narayan. They agreed to recommend party less democracy as an innovative idea. Though in different context, Amlan Dutta, a noted economist and former Vice Chancellor of Viswa Bharati has very well observed in his article, ‘Threat to Democracy,’ (Statesman 16th February, 2006), “Gandhi Vichar Parishad and other likeminded organizations are actively engaged in propounding and practicing that innovative idea.... The spirit of party less democracy must precede and dictate its form. The question is not about the right to freedom of association, which should stay, but its assigned role in the political organisation of society and the moral life of the citizen. The citizen must feel that his dignity as an individual demands that his allegiance to any party should only take second place to his loyalty to truth and the spirit of democracy. Ignorance of this moral imperative has frightful consequences. There are signs that a crisis is building up and may explode in the near future. It is time to wake up, for it is already getting late. The debate on partyless democracy should not distract attention from the immediate goal, which is free and fair elections. It does not matter which party wins, democracy must win or the country will perish.”

We can conclude with JP’s words, “The least that is expected from a nation that calls Gandhi its ‘Father’ is that it will refuse to build for power and will build for peace and happiness.”
CONCLUSION

While going through JP’s plan for a communitarian society, we have noticed that elections to Panchayats and other local bodies should not be contested by parties. As a matter of fact, the aim of Sarvodaya is to shape and develop the body-politic on a pattern in which the existence of parties would be ruled out. The whole system of political parties seems to be inconsistent with the fundamental approach of Sarvodaya. A party stands only for a part of society. A party is a sort of conspiracy against the rest of the people. Allegiance to a party is inconsistent with loyalty to society, with the good of all, which is the fundamental aim of Sarvodaya. But it can be seen that the party serves some purpose. Political parties are essential for the successful working of representative democracy. It can be regarded as a means to solve the problem of how to bring the ‘people’ into the political community. Parties are essential to educate the voters. Parties also serve as a machinery for building up the kind of desired society. Opposition parties act as a watchdog of democracy. They frame political issues for the public, selects candidates, establishes a collective and continuing political responsibility, serves as agencies of civic education, and keep the interest of the people alive. Without parties, individual would be atomized. Without parties individuals would find difficult to make choice among the various candidates and those who are elected to the legislature would have no bindings among its members and as a result any legislation would become impossible.

JP advocated partyless democracy remembering the evils of party system. But it is not possible to abolish party all of a sudden. Political parties are bound to stay so long there is freedom of thought, so long there exist selfish human beings.
Parties may be reformed and reorganized. Parties are linked with class differences. So long there is class division in the society parties bound to exist. Since Sarvodaya ignores the reality of class divisions in the society, it is unrealistic.

JP eradicated the idea of 'class war' in a society of the communitarian mode. But we find that in the global arena, there is surely and certainly war of the dominating and dominated classes, war of oil and power in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

JP's solution by using the village community model is perhaps not capable to make the global phase of 21st century sustainable.

JP's reconstruction of the Indian polity part is not detail and true to the factual evidences of progress. Therefore, the concept of partyless democracy may sound utopian, but, "If partyless democracy seems utopian, can anything different be said about the stateless society which was the ideal of both Marx and Gandhi? As Gandhi once said, there is no harm but every good in an ideal being idealistic. For in trying to reach the ideal, humanity is likely to come nearer and nearer to it without ever completing the journey." It seems that JP's ideal society may never come to reality, but by proposing partyless democracy and a communitarian society, he examines the past and present and also offers hope and vision for the future.
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