CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 EMERGENCE OF JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN (J.P.)

The entire world is now passing through a time of universal unrest, political turmoil, and international terrorism. In the past millennium, we saw two deadly world wars and the possibility of a Third World War can not be ignored altogether. On the other hand, the most painful aspect of human life today is the degradation of human and moral values and the consequent growth of injustice, exploitation and destruction. There has been a moral vacuum, an erosion of traditional values and a loosening of the grasp of the meaning and purpose of life. The word ‘Society’ has also lost its true meaning. The old intimacy of love and hate is replaced by superficial friendship. Another painful aspect of today’s life is that the social structures do not serve the true purpose as these are rather have been built by narrow minded and selfish people. And these have been at the same time nurtured by those people for their selfish interests. As a matter of fact these social structures have been destroying the individual gradually all through the centuries. Now we are living in a state of chaos, where there is material prosperity, greater control over nature, greater justice, love and charity on one hand, but greater social disorganisation, greater dehumanization, increasing distrust, injustice, antipathy, cruelty and hatred etc. on the other. The world is becoming sick, but we can not see this fact due to material prosperity. This fact is realized by the great minds of the world. There is a crisis of the spirit. As S. Radhakrishnan says, “whereas in the case of earlier civilization the challenges were of a material and external nature, the problems of the latter ones
are mainly inward and spiritual.\textsuperscript{1} Lewis Mumford says "Modern man is the victim of the very instrument he values most. Every gain in power, every mastery of natural forces, every scientific addition to knowledge, has proved potentially dangerous because it has not been accompanied by equal gains in self-understanding and self-discipline."\textsuperscript{2} Vishwanath Tandon writes "The greatest pity of the present day world is that though it is itself a product of the life of the mind, it is getting out of tune with it, for mechanization and industrialization are reducing man to a robot, destroying the life of the mind. According to Erich Fromm, we are not in danger of becoming slaves any more, but of becoming robots."\textsuperscript{3} So, it can be seen that man has become his most dangerous enemy.

At this stage of our civilization, a new attitude, a new bunch of opinion or technology is needed to save the world. It has been observed that, when humanity is faced with a major crisis, there always emerge great thinkers, who propound ideals of supreme significance and the means to realize them. There have been a number of religious teachers, moral preachers, political and social philosophers who have preached, propagated and even practised in their own lives the message of love, friendship, brotherhood, peace, co-operation, happiness and freedom. Several Indian leaders have given sustainable solutions to some eternal problems. Jay Prakash Narayan was one among them. He was one among those luminaries in India who tried to enumerate a socio-political philosophy, for freedom and justice and stepped into relentless struggle for the cause of humanity.

Jay Prakash Narayan, popularly known as J.P. (and will be mentioned sometimes as JP) was one of the great political thinkers of India, who was widely known among the contemporary philosophers for his dynamic and revolutionary out
look. His life can be seen as a quest for freedom and justice. He was one among the few leaders of Indian Independence Movement, who along with the attempt to achieve independence in India wanted to establish a society where there would be equality, justice and economic rights. Born in a middle class family of Bihar, JP received his education both in India and USA. In the United States of America he was a student from 1922 to 1929. There he came in contact with East European intellectuals and was influenced by Marxism and converted to Marxism. While under the spell of Marxism JP was much impressed by the Marxian philosophy of revolution. While still a young boy, he became a devoted nationalist.

J.P. felt that the most important problem facing mankind was that of inequality. He said, "The first thing that strikes us is the strong and painful fact of inequalities – inequality of rank, of culture, of opportunity, a most disconcertingly unequal distribution of the good things of life. Poverty, hunger, filth, disease, ignorance – for the over-whelming many, comfort, luxury, culture, position, power for the select few... This fact of inequalities with all its brood of social consequences is the central problem of our society." Consequently, his philosophy centred round this central problem of our society. As a matter of fact, the philosophy of J.P. touches every aspect of human life. Behind his philosophical ideas lies his concept of man which is the very basis of his philosophical thinking. It can be noticed that throughout his whole life one single factor guided his thought process, i.e., his concern for the ‘human person and his growth’ and he tried to place man in the centre of the society.
1.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN

Every socio-political philosophy is partly a product of the prevailing social, economic and political conditions. Any study of any philosopher should be an expression of his times; and hence, socio-political philosophy of Jay Prakash Narayan naturally demands a study of his socio-economic and political background. Hence an attempt is made to study the emergence of Jay Prakash Narayan with reference to his socio-economic and political background.

Formative Years:

Jay Prakash Narayan was born in a lower middle class Kayastha family of Bihar on October 11, 1902 in a Bihar village, Sitabdiara, situated on the border between Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the former Shahabad district. He was the fourth child of Phul Rani Debi and Harshu Babu. As his father Harshu Dayal was a govt. servant in the Revenue department, he used to move about regularly and JP was left with his step grand mother, who took over the responsibility of his education along with his childhood. Since JP’s elder brother Hari Prakash died of cholera and one of his elder sisters Chandra Bhanu died of plague, he was the eldest surviving son. The main source of income of his family was his father’s salary.

When JP was six years old he was sent to the village primary school. There was no govt. school in his village. But, at the age of nine JP left his village school and was admitted to the 7th class of the collegiate school at Patna. He was a studious boy at his childhood and by 1918 he reached the final class. In the State Public
Matriculation Examination he was awarded a district merit scholarship to Patna College. He enrolled his name in the science college at Patna. Like Jagadish Chandra Bose or Acharya Prafulla Chandra Rai, his intention was to serve his motherland as a scientist.

However, it should be mentioned here that the early life and education of JP was not in a straight line. His poor family background compelled him to complete his studies through a zigzag way. Since JP was the eldest son of his parents, naturally his parents wanted him to be a govt. officer. But JP was influenced by the forces of nationalism, socialism and mass movement prevalent at the time when he was in his youth.

He was associated with the 'Saraswati Bhawan,' a centre for nationalist discussion of Bihar which attracted him towards the national movement. He became an ardent nationalist from his very childhood and was attracted towards the revolutionary cult of Bengal. Moreover, the story of the South Asian Satyagraha also attracted him. Gandhi’s call for non-co-operation movement influenced him so much that he gave up his ISC studies in the Patna University. He was convinced that government-owned institutions produced only slaves. From that time onward ‘Freedom’ became one of the beacon lights of his life and it has remained so till his death. Later on he completed his ISC studies from Bihar Vidyapeeth : an institution for non-co-operating students not recognised by the Govt. with merit. This way the political atmosphere prevailing at that time and the ideologies of the prominent Indian leaders influenced him in formation of his political ideas. The condition of Bihar in which he grew up also had some impact on his young mind. Under the influence of Bengal revolutionaries, some terrorist activities were going on in Bihar.
On the other hand, the principle of Satyagraha and non-violence, non-co-operation, undertaken by Gandhi, also influenced him along with some other youths of Bihar.

Scarfe & Scarfe writes—“However the political situation prevailing in the nine provinces of British India had a far more profound influence upon him than his school studies, so that by the age of fourteen he had cast himself in the role of an extreme nationalist.” At that time he began to read regularly the Bhagavad Gita for getting inspiration from the great battle of Mahabharata. He was inspired by the concept that man is immortal and can never be destroyed. His reading was not for the purpose of gaining for himself religious merit of any kind; but to strengthen himself internally. Moreover he was attracted towards the philosophy of ‘Karmayoga,’ the philosophy of action and the idea of work without seeking the result or gain. The concept of ‘Niskama Karma’ influenced his later life and thought.

From that time onward, JP became very much Swadeshi in his attitudes. He began to use handmade village shoes instead of British manufactured shows. He cleaned his shoes with Indian mustard oil instead of British shoe polish.

Scarfe and Scarfe writes, “he dressed in a Kurta of hand-spun and hand-woven material and an ascetically short dhoti instead of wearing British-owned textile mill products. He took cold baths even in winter to toughen himself against all forms of sensual self indulgence.” As a matter of fact, he was much influenced by the self-dedication of Gandhi. He started reading articles written by Gandhi in Young India.

Another nationalist leader, Sri Brajakishore Prasad (Babu Brijkishore Prasad), who was a lawyer and the President and father figure of Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, has a profound influence on JP’s nationalist thinking. Braja
Kishore Prasad was attracted towards the budding personality of JP and arranged his daughter Prabhabati's marriage with him and this new relation brought JP into close contact with the influential nationalist circle in Bihar. JP, therefore could not remain unaffected by the atmosphere created by the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movement started by Gandhi. At this stage he came in contact with many influential personalities of modern India such as Babu Rajendra Prasad (who was close to his father in law). He got the opportunity in 1920 to listen to both Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru in Patna, which developed in him an inner urge to join the freedom movement.

Desire for higher education was always strong in JP's mind. At that time JP used to read books on the United States of America by Swami Satyadeo Parivrajak and also attended some of his lectures. Suddenly he had a strong feeling to go to America and pursue his studies. He came to know that it was possible for a student in the United States to pay for education through part time work. Meanwhile, in 1922, he was awarded a scholarship by an association in Calcutta and with the help of this scholarship he sailed for USA on 16th August 1922 without adequate resources, as the financial condition of his family was very bad. He also had to go to America leaving behind his beautiful wife in the Sabarmati Ashram of Gandhi. He lived in that country for seven years, studying by turn at the Universities of California (Berkeley), IOWA, Wisconsin and Ohio. From Ohio, he graduated with a scholarship and took his Master's Degree in Sociology.
1.3 EDUCATION ABROAD

JP arrived at San Francisco on 8th October 1922, when he reached University of California situated at Berkeley, he had to wait for the next term to enroll himself. The Indian students on the campus advised him to work during this period of waiting to earn his tuition fees. He began to work in restaurants, waiting at tables or washing dishes.

After two months waiting he was admitted as a science student. During his stay in USA he also worked in farms and factories and this experience began a revolution in his thinking. Up to this time, he was accustomed to a feudal economic relationships in his village and an inflexible caste system, characterized by hereditary specialization of occupation and hierarchical social organisation. He now had to adjust himself to a democratic and capitalist way of life with its greed for accumulating possessions JP began to find himself more interested in sociology than in science and to view his career in a different light.

As Jay Prakash Narayan’s life and education was not in a straight line, his studies also did not follow a straight line. He changed the course of his studies from science and switched over to Biology, Economics and Sociology. He had always in his mind the dream of a nationalist revolution in India. Hence he did not think that a study of science would help him very much in his work as a revolutionary. Further he thought that a study of the social sciences might help in his work. Thus he ultimately in future completed his studies for the cause of nationalist movement rather than for his personal career which in later years helped him in formulating his political and social ideas.
It is mentioned earlier that JP's family condition was such that he hardly received any help from his family during his education at America and for which he had to work as an ordinary labourer in farms and factories to earn his living there and the expenses of his education. All these experiences of 'earning while learning' brought JP in close contact with farm labourers in a 'rich country.' His character was moulded by these invaluable experiences. He became aware of the lot of those who had no other means of livelihood, no commodity to sell except their own 'brawn power, their own physical labour.' This way, the experience of working life and his close connection with labourer in America, attracted JP towards Marxism.

JP had to go from place to place in search of suitable work and had to leave one university to join another. He left IOWA and went to Chicago where he stayed for two and a half years. Then he went to WISCONSIN and also to OHIO. During his stay in IOWA University he came to be called and known as 'JP' a nickname formed from his initials.

At the various universities JP came into contact with American, Russian, Polish, German and French students with some of whom he had deep friendship. He had close relationship with some professors also. Abraham Landy, a Communist Jew, who was both a post graduate student and lecturer at the WISCONSIN University exercised a strong influence upon JP. He started to attend meetings at the secret cell of Landy. By day and night, he used to study the writings of the 'bourgeois' social scientists and the radicals 'Marx', 'Engels,' Lenin, Trotsky, Plekhanov and Rosa Luxemburg. He read the three volumes of 'Das Capital' and everything that had written in English. From Landy he borrowed pamphlets written by M.N. Roy, the well known Indian members of the communist International and
the two books, 'Aftermath of Non-co-operation' and 'India in Transition.' He also used to read a periodical 'New Masses' edited and published by M.N. Roy, who was then in Russia. Gradually by 1924, JP had come to believe in the correctness of Marx's analysis of the capitalist process of production. Scarf and Scarf writes, "He came to regard Marx then, as he still does, as one of the greatest minds of the human race for his path finding works in sociology." JP also came in contact with one Mr. Manuel Gomez, a Mexican Marxist, who was an active leader of the communist party of America. In course of time Abraham and Manul advised and persuaded JP to undertake "a pilgrimage to the USSR to see for himself the work of communist reconstruction and radical transformation of society in the land of revolution."

Though JP always suffered from financial trouble, he wanted to go to Russia and requested his wife to accompany him telling her that he had received an invitation to study in the Soviet Union. But Probhabati Debi refused to go and suddenly JP fell ill. However, he received some monetary help from his father in India, but also received a letter from Dr. Rajendra Prasad which was disappointing for him. Dr. Rajendra Prasad asked him not to go to Russia directly from USA but to return to India first and then arrange for the Soviet journey. As a matter of fact, Dr. Rajendra Prasad appealed to Jay Prakash's intelligence and his national spirit and he tried to make Jay Prakash understand that the fight against injustice was in Jay Prakash's own country, not in the Soviet Union. Therefore he had to give up his desire to visit Soviet Union. He continued his studies at the OHIO University and took a B.A. degree in Sociology. He was granted a postgraduate scholarship also and while continuing as a postgraduate student of sociology he started teaching some
lower classes. This way his financial difficulties were over. Jay Prakash got his Master of Arts degree on 13th August 1929. The subject of his thesis for the degree was 'Societal variation' and it was declared the best paper of the year. He wanted to continue his studies until he had completed his Ph.D. But unfortunately a letter from home informed him that his mother was seriously ill and he returned home on September 1929.

1.4 RETURN HOME

Jay Prakash Narayan returned to India convinced with the fact that the central problem of human society was inequality of wealth, property, rank, culture and opportunity. To him, this inequality was strange, disconcerting, and painful. He considered private ownership of the gifts of nature to be the root cause of this inequality. According to him Private Ownership of the means of production lead to economic exploitation. He had observed in both countries that the majority people led lives of poverty, hunger, filth, disease and ignorance, while a few had comfort, luxury, culture, position and power.

When the national movement for self govt. was about to take a revolutionary turn, JP arrived India. Already, Gandhi had moved a resolution at the Congress Session in favour of Independence; if dominion status was not granted by the end of 1929. Within a few days of JP’s arrival from America, a meeting of the Bihar Provincial Congress was held at Monghur, under the Presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. The issue before this meeting was the highly controversial question of whether the Indian people should remain satisfied with only Dominion status or whether they should start another non-violent struggle this time for complete
independence. Ultimately a resolution endorsing the demand for complete independence was passed by the majority and JP was delighted and excited with this resolution.

In 1922, after the violence at Chauri Chaura in UP, Gandhi withdrew the national movement and this action of Gandhi was criticized by M.N. Roy. While in America JP was under Roy's influence and hence, had formed not a very favourable opinion about Gandhi and his non-violent struggle. He considered Marxian Science of revolution to be a surer and quicker way to freedom than the technique followed by Gandhi. Besides, Marxism provided him with another goal, namely, equality and he became convinced that political freedom was not enough and that it must be accompanied by freedom from exploitation and poverty. Bimal Prasad writes that, at that time he was not aware of the fact that Gandhi too was concerned with the problem of poverty and had his own concept of a social revolution.

JP had a deep relationship with Jawaharlal Nehru. Both of them were attracted towards each other because of their Marxist leanings. With Nehru's encouragement JP gave up the idea of joining the Banaras Hindu University as lecturer in Sociology and began to work as a Secretary of the Labour Department in the office of the All India Congress Committee. In the mean time, Gandhi was authorized by the AICC to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement. Domestic difficulties had made it impossible for JP to participate fully in the Satyagraha Campaign. His mother died early in 1930 and he had to go back to Bihar and left the work at labour Department of AICC at Allahabad. He was now again in financial difficulties. At Gandhi's request Shri Ghana Shyam Das Birla (a capitalist) immediately appointed him as his Secretary. In the meantime JP was again invited to
rejoin the work at Allahabad. But, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed in March 1931 and Gandhi had gone to the Second Round Table Conference in London as the sole delegate of Congress. As the British Govt.'s proposals were not acceptable to the Congress, Gandhi returned to India in December 1931 and was arrested within a week of his arrival. Later Nehru along with many other leaders were also imprisoned and JP had to take charge of General Secretary of the Congress. However, he himself was arrested while at Madras and sent to Nasik Jail in Maharashtra.

I.5 J.P. THE NATIONALIST AND SOCIALIST

The non-violent struggle led by Gandhi could not satisfy those youths who were Marxist’s by inclination and brought a feeling of frustration and disappointment among them. JP was one among them. In 1933, in Nasik jail he met Shri Ashok Mehta, Minoo Masani, Prof. Dantwalla, Achyut Patwardhan and S.M. Joshi. N.G. Gore, Yusuf Meherally, Acharya Narendra Dev, Dr. Ram Monohar Lohia, Purushattamdas, Trikam Das, Gangasharan Sinha, Kamala Devi, Chattopadhyaya, K.K. Menon, Surendranath Dwivedi or Dr. Sampurnananda were then in other jails in India. Vasant Nargolkar writes that these youthful socialists might have come to the conclusion that so long as the national movement in India was not based on Marxist principles of class struggle and so long as the individual labour peasants and land less labourers, students and youths in the vast country were not properly organized, Indians would not be able to throw out the British, attain independence and bring out a radical transformation in the feudal and bourgeois social structure. Though these youths and leaders had great faith in democratic socialism, but at the same time they knew that the Indian National Congress was an
organisation of different classes which were drawn to it because of its militant nationalism. They therefore thought it proper to remain in it and work through it for the realization of the socialistic ideals.

JP noticed that the communists did not take part in the nationalist struggle. Many of them were in prison. Even those who were out of prison had under the instructions of the Comintern (the International Communist Organisation, functioning under the guidance of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union). They were kept out of that struggle, because they thought that this struggle was carried on in the interest of the bourgeoisie (middle class). JP concluded that the socialist movement in India could not be carried on under the leadership of Comintern. Because he thought that though the socialist's wanted to establish. Socialism and preparation for establishing a socialist society must begin instantly, achievement of national freedom must be given top priority in the agenda of the socialists. This led to the birth of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP). Many others along with JP fully accepted Marxism as their ideology and shared with the ideas of JP. But it should be mentioned here that all the leaders of the CSP did not accept Marxism totally. Some of the leaders were inspired by Fabian Socialism and others by Gandhi's teachings and still others by Vedantic Socialism.

JP's book named 'Why Socialism' was Published in 1935. He tried to explain the fundamentals of socialism and the objectives and programmes of the CSP in the first two chapters of the book. In the Third Chapter, he criticized Gandhi and his ideas of class collaboration, trusteeship and non-violence. This book gives the background of JP's Socialistic thought. In its first chapter 'The Foundation of Socialism,' JP asserts that there is only one type, one theory of socialism - Marxism.
Though he criticized Gandhi in 'why socialism,' but he joined, Gandhi's Sarvodaya Movement in 1954. "It must be remembered that, 'Why Socialism' was written by an inexperienced bright young man of 33 years old, who spent the best part of the formative period of his life in foreign country working like an ordinary labourer."

...He decided to go back to Gandhi, because he was attracted towards Satyagraha, Socio-economic and many items of the Gandhian ideology and programmes.

J.P. and other leaders of the CSP worked incessantly and laboriously and established Trade Union and Kisan organisation in many parts of the country. Although JP had taken the lead in the foundation of the CSP he thought that the communists in India were following a wrong path by keeping themselves out of the nationalist struggle. But he hoped that someday the socialists and the communists would join hands together to form a United Marxist Party in India. It was in March 1940, when all hopes of turning the communists into sincere members of the CSP had vanished, the communists were expelled from the CSP. The experience of working with the communists created in him a deep aversion to them and their methods. And this led JP to question some of the generally accepted tenets of Marxism itself. He, of course still had faith in the fundamentals of Marxism, but there was no doubt that he was being increasingly drawn towards Gandhism. He realized the need for commitment to certain ethical values in politics and for decentralization in administration. "Almost in the tone of the Republic of Plato, he pleaded for the acceptance of 'absolute good.'" At the same time he was also becoming conscious of the need to nurture some of the values of Western Democracy, in order to avoid the danger of Soviet Communism.
he began to describe his political philosophy as Democratic Socialism and not as Marxism.

In the meantime Second World War broke out and the struggle for Indian Freedom had entered its final phase. JP was in forefront of that struggle. As soon as the war broke out in 1939, he saw in it a great opportunity to work for the fulfilment of the national objective. He toured the country making speeches in favour of total non-co-operation and was arrested. He was sent to Deoli Camp Jail in Rajasthan.

1.6 TOWARDS GANDHISM

By the time India achieved independence, JP accepted democratic socialism as his goal. As a matter of fact after his imprisonment in special camp jail at Deoli in Rajasthan, he realized the necessity of a democratic polity with moral values. He noticed that in Soviet Union, in the name of dictatorship of the proletariat a single party was exercising (monopolizing) power denying freedom to the people. Therefore he was drawn towards Gandhism for his emphasis on decentralization in administration and commitment to certain ethical values in politics. "His conception was also changed after reading Erich Fromm's book, 'The Fear of Freedom' in which Fromm was able to place the individual at the centre of things without denouncing Marxism and prescribing for democratic socialism."

Therefore JP who was at one time the bitterest critic of Gandhi, later on joined Sarvodaya movement started by Gandhi. He was slowly moving away from party politics from 1947 upto 1952, the year of first General Election held in independent India. He was very much shocked by the assassination of Gandhi. V.P.
Varma writes, “After Gandhi's death there was a profound transformation in the political and moral personality of Narayan.” He began to see the relevance of Gandhi's insistence on the purity of means. In the Socialist Party conference at Nasik in March 1948, he said “Communalism has been let loose in the country... Humanity has been uprooted. There have been mass murders. Women have been raped... Corruption is rampant. Black marketing has not stopped. Is everything due to economic inequalities? Is capitalism, the only evil? Can we entirely depend upon class struggle? I do not think so. Economic approach can not be the only approach... It has a limited appeal... Therefore, I had made an appeal to Shri Aurobindo and Ramana Maharshi to come out of their seclusion and lead the people.... I do not believe in 'adhyatma'. My philosophy is worldly and human.... Why must we talk of materialism... We will not practice bribery and corruption.”

In 1948, after Gandhi's death JP participated in the first important joint conference of national leaders and constructive workers in Sewagram. In this conference Sarvodaya Samaj and Sarva Seva Sangha, as instrument of carrying on Gandhian work in the country were founded. Along with Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave also emphasized the importance of the question of ends and means. Gandhi did not distinguish between ends and means. He regarded the two as a continuous process. He rejected the maxim that the end justifies the means. Every act, he said, is a pursuance of an end. The end is merely the result of a series of acts that are undertaken as means. If each action has its appropriate result, than a good action creates a good result and a bad action a bad result. Moral means must, therefore be adopted to achieve desirable results. He likened means, to a seed, the end to a tree, and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as
there is between the seed and the tree. Means are to him, everything. He believes that, "if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself." Therefore dealing with the technique of struggle JP argues that, for the establishment of democratic and socialistic society, the means adopted to bring such a society into existence should also be democratic, provided of course, such means are available. By democratic methods, he does not mean only parliamentary or constitutional methods. It also includes non-violent mass movement and other measures of a non-violent character, which may be unconstitutional yet peaceful. By these he wanted to mean the Gandhian technique of struggle.

From the above discussion, it can be noticed that JP wanted to solve some of the basic problems of socialism with the help of Gandhism. In a speech published as an article in ‘Janata’ under the title, ‘A Plea For Gandhism,’ JP expressed the need to use Gandhism to achieve socialism. According to him, Gandhism should be fully utilized to develop a sound ideology for socialism in India. As both the methods of violence (in Soviet Russia) and of parliamentary action (in some western countries) had failed, Gandhism is the third alternative. He felt, goals of socialism could be achieved only by adopting the methods advocated by Gandhi. In 1951, Bhoodan Movement (land gift) was started by Vinoba Bhave who was the spiritual successor to Gandhi and JP saw in Bhave’s effort, the beginning of a great social revolution and after the election in 1952, he wholeheartedly joined the movement and soon discovered that it is a revolution by non-violent mass action. In May 1952, All India Conference of Socialist Party held at Panchmarhi in Madhya Pradesh, both Dr. Lohia and J.P. advised party workers to participate in Vinoba Bhave’s Bhoodan Movement, J.P. himself donated 25 bighas of land at Sitabdiara. After that socialist
party merged with Acharya Kripalani's new Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, the new party came to be known as Praja Socialist Party (PSP). He decided to devote all his time and energy to the Sarvodaya movement and in the All India Sarvodaya conference held at Bodh Gaya in 1954, he announced his decision of commitment to it. Sharma & Sharma writes, “By 1954, when he was the most important socialist figure in India, Narayan decided that the country’s problem could not be solved through active politics and parliamentary legislation. His conversion to Bhoodan came about because he saw that politics could not deliver the goods — the goods being the same old goals of equality, freedom, brotherhood and peace. Thus he became a Jeevandani, who dedicated his life fully to the work of Bhoodan and the reconstruction of society on Gandhian lines.”

It should be mentioned here that, Bhoodan advocates a dispossession of those who have property, but dispossession free of violence and based on love and persuasion. As such, it leaves no room for the bitterness between the giver and receiver. Bhoodan aims at the equitable distribution of land in a peaceful manner and by voluntary donation, without the payment of compensation. Jeevandani (gift of life) is a person who dedicate himself for a cause.

1.7 IN INDIAN POLITICAL SCENARIO

So, from 1954, JP withdrew himself from power and party politics and joined Sarvodaya movement. In the Indian political scenario then JP was next to Nehru. He had been invited to join the Union Cabinet. But inspite of his refusal to do so, there was the possibility of inviting him again. Because he was considered the next and best successor of Nehru. Therefore, the decision to withdraw from party politics was very serious and in his article ‘From Socialism to Sarvodaya,’ which
was in fact a letter to his comrades in Praja Socialist Party, he gave reasons for the final decision. He said, "I decided to withdraw from party and power politics, not because of disgust or sense of any personal frustration, but because it became clear to me that (such) politics could not deliver the goods, the goods being the same old goals of equality, freedom, brotherhood, peace." But he made it clear that he was not leaving all politics, but politics of a particular type. He said, Sarvodaya also had its politics and it is a higher form of Socialism. At that time JP was criticized by his earlier colleagues for running away from his historic task of building Socialist movement in India. He was even criticized by Nehru for his constant criticism of government policies and actions. Side by side Gramdan was also achieved. A village Mangroth by name in Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh had been declared Gramdan the land owners in that village had collectively taken a decision to donate lands to the landless. J.P. himself went to the village to see the whole thing. He said that, if Mangroth were repeated in every village there will be great moral economic political and social revolution in all over the country. In the meantime, he wrote two tracts inspite of his busy schedule, viz., 'A Plea For Reconstruction of Indian Polity' (1959) and 'Swaraj For the People' (1961), where he expressed his views on an ideal political system for India, based on a synthesis of Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy.

Realising the evils of Party System, JP pleaded for a new kind of Parliamentary democracy which will be more fit to India's traditions, man and community. This he termed as communitarian or party less democracy. According to JP, the problem of present day civilization is to put man in touch with men, to recreate the human community. In his 'Swaraj for the people' he stressed the need to
take 'Swaraj' to the people, i.e., the people to participate directly in the management of their affairs as far as possible. By introducing "Panchayati Raj" or democratic decentralization, he wanted to achieve this. As a matter of fact, he had taken this idea from Gandhi. As Gandhi, "was convinced that decentralization of power is the key to just and equitable society, Gandhi developed the concept of Satyagraha, which involved a search for truth, non-violence and self sufficing. With his Satyagraha he not only challenged the conventional notion of power, but showed that the weaker section of society was as powerful in crucial respects as the strong. Gandhi had a concrete agenda for implementing decentralization of power. On a political level, it meant taking power from the centre and bringing it to the village. On the economic level decentralization of power meant discouraging big industries and encouraging village cottage industry. 'Small is beautiful,' thus would become the economic slogan. On a social level, the Harijans, tribals, and members of the lower castes would be given all the rights of equality."11

Though in several states of India, Panchayati Raj had been introduced, JP said that certain conditions had to be fulfilled before this could become the base of a truly participatory democracy.

While JP was thinking over an ideal socio-political set up for New India, he continued to take interest in various problems arising in the country Vinoba Bhave and JP tried to find out the root cause of failure of the developmental programme of the government. Sharma & Sharma writes, "In the speeches and writings of Vinoba and Narayan, India's Five Year Plans and Community Development and Panchayati Raj Programmes are often referred to as examples of the inadequacy of attempting to legislate motivation for change. Development programmes in India failed
miserably, they say due to lack of motivation on the part of her villagers, rural society cannot be changed from above, you can not change the village without first changing the minds of the villagers.”

After the death of Nehru in 1964, JP began to be regarded as the conscience of the nation. D.K. Mohanty writes, “Thus if Nehru was the political successor to Gandhi, Jay Prakash Narayan was his social and moral successor. He became as Minoo Masani declares, ‘India’s conscience keeper’”

JP made significant contribution in peace making in Nagaland.... as a member of the Nagaland Peace Mission in 1964-65. He succeeded in, organizing a National Convention on Unity and Democracy in 1969. In the context of which he had written a paper in 1968 on ‘The concept of Indian Nationhood.’

During the Gandhi centenary year in 1969-70. JP came to the conclusion that the method so far followed in Bhoodan-Gramdan movement, based on persuasion was not effective for a social revolution. He thought that persuasion must be supplemented by struggle. He believed that “a violent revolution would never result in power going to the people. As a matter of fact he did not support Vinoba’s technique of persuasion only.” In ‘Face to Face’ a pamphlet written by him, he “stressed that Gandhi had championed not only persuasion and constructive work, but also struggle in the shape of non-violent non-cooperation or resistance.”

1.8 THE MORAL PHILOSOPHER AND HIS END

JP was very much worried to see the fall in the moral standards of India’s public life. In a series of three articles published in “Everyman’s Weekly under the title, ‘First Things First’ he drew attention to this fact. In JP’s opinion, if there is dishonesty, corruption, manipulation of the masses, naked struggle for personal
power and personal gain, there can be no socialism, no welfarism, no government, no public order, no justice, no freedom, no national unity – in short no nation.

“As a national leader perpetually in opposition to the Congress Government throughout the 1950’s, JP remained primarily concerned with the abuse of political power in India. In February 1957, on the eve of the second general election, JP issued 'an appeal to the voters' warning them that “The most important issue this time is that of the absoluteness of Congress power, He cited Lord Acton’s dictum on power. (Power corruptions and absolute power corrupts absolutely) as one of the most profound political truths and declared that concentration of every form of power must be destroyed.

Eighteen years later, a month before Indira Gandhi declared the emergency and imprisoned JP, he was still citing Lord Action and still convinced that, 'the present all-pervading corruption has its roots in politics and power.'”

Therefore the chief task before the Indian people would be to discover a way to prevent power from being corrupted in the future.

In the election time to the state Assemblies which was due in 1974, in UP, Orissa and Tripura, J.P. issued an appeal to the youth of the country under the title ‘Youth For Democracy.’ He appealed to the youth to fight against the use of money, corruption and physical force in elections and tried to make them cautious about their role in shaping the political destinies of their countries. In his ‘Total Revolution’ he writes, “In many parts of the world the students have played a decisive role in changing the destinies of their countries. The time has come for youth power to take its place in the national scene with the determination to establish supremacy of people’s power over the powers of money, falsehood and
brute-force and to make the people victorious. The youth have got dynamism, they have fire in their hearts, youthful enthusiasm and the readiness to lay down their lives for a cause. Besides, they do not have too many responsibilities. I have come to the conclusion that the coming social revolution will be a party-less and peaceful one and the students and youth will be in its vanguard. Students and youth power will be backed by people's power and this alliance will become invincible when moral power is also added to it. I am convinced that nothing will be able to stand against them when these three powers – which are like the three aspects of God. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh became synthesized into one."

The students and youths did not do anything notable in these elections, but they showed that they had understood the real meaning of JP's appeal. They rose above their immediate minor grievances and raised their voice against the ills pervading the whole society. In Bihar the students persuaded JP to act as their leader. He took upon himself the responsibility of leading a student's movement, mainly because he saw in it an opportunity to turn the students' protest movement into a socio-political revolution for which he had been working for so many years. The Bihar movement became a people's movement and achieved success in terms of mass-mobilization for non-violent action. The student movement was not to be confined to the students but it had to be grown as an All India Movement. JP had deep belief in the endless strength of the people. He therefore, suggested the formation of people's committees at the grass roots. These committees were considered as organs of peoples power. They were supposed to do two kinds of functions, firstly, to mobilize the energies of the people in constructive ways i.e., he visualized a healthy interaction between the power of the people and the state.
People’s power (Jan Shakti) and State Power (Rajya Shakti) are supposed to supplement each other. Secondly, the people’s committees are to resist injustices and tyrannies of the state, individuals, or a group of individuals.

Thus JP turned the Bihar movement into an experiment of total revolution: JP’s condition for accepting the invitation to guide and direct the student movement was that it should be non-partisan. It was a non-political people’s movement; and JP’s programme for building up the Jan Sangharsh Samitis (people’s struggle committees) demand that all office holders should be non-political.

This way JP was endowed with a much higher objective i.e., the total revolution. J.P. coined this term for a comprehensive social revolution including all aspects of life i.e., social, economic, political, cultural, ideological, educational and moral. After stressing the need for a thorough overhauling of Indian Society, JP observed, “It will not easy to put these ideas into practice. It will demand sacrifice and suffering. Lathis and Bullets will have to be faced, the jails will have to be filled. The people will have to brave themselves to face confiscation and attachment of their lands and other, belongings. Many other hardships will have to be faced, because this is after all a revolution.”

To materialize his plan of total revolution he planned for two organizations namely the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsha Vahini and Yanata Sarkar. The first was to be an organization of students and youths, and the other an organisation of people’s govt. from the village upwards. But before the students and peoples struggles committees could be properly organized, Indira Gandhi declared an internal national emergency on 26th June, 1975, and arrested not only most of the opposition leaders but also JP and almost all the active workers engaged in organizing these
committees. JP was kept in isolation. During emergency, fundamental rights of the people were suspended. JP had requested Indira Gandhi from the jail not to destroy the foundation that Gandhi and Nehru had laid down. While in solitary confinement, he began to note down his daily reflections in an ordinary exercise book, published later on under the title *Prison Diary*. During this period, he was terribly ill and his condition was diagnosed as being very serious. Both of his kidneys had failed and it was expected that he would not live long. He managed to live only with the help of dialysis three times a week. On receiving this report, the Govt. decided to release him. When he was partially recovered, he became concerned with the future of the movement he had launched. In July 1976 in a letter to his follower he stated, "*Total revolution is a permanent revolution. It will always go on and keep on changing both our personal and social lives. This revolution knows no respite, no halt, certainly not a complete halt. Of course, according to the needs of the situation its form will change, its programme will change, its process will change. At an opportune moment there may be an upsurge of new forces, which will push forward the wheels of change. The soldiers of total revolution must keep constantly busy with their programmes of work and wait for such an opportune moment.*"²⁵

In 1977, election was declared and JP played a prominent role in uniting the opposition parties and forming a new party with new ideals called the ‘Janata Party’. But unfortunately the Janata Party could not come up to the expectation of Jay Prakash Narayan.” He thought Janata Party would serve the poor and bring radical social change. When Janata Party came to power and Congress Party was defeated, authoritarian rule came to an end, but Janata Party failed to carry the message of total revolution. His untiring effort to bring total revolution no doubt failed as
viewed by some people, but he was always hopeful, which can be noticed from his poem originally composed by him while he was lying in the bed at Jaslok Hospital (Bombay), on 9th August 1975, as a prisoner at Chandigarh. A few lines of the poem is quoted here which sum up his political life and which primarily was a quest for a revolution capable of ushering in a new socio-political order leading to freedom, equality, brotherhood and peace.

"Different are my definitions,
Of success and failure.
What the world calls failures,
Were stages in the Quest (for a revolution).
Those stages are innumerable,
The destination too is far off,
I do not have to stop any where,
Whatever the road-blocks on the way.
I have no ambition for myself
Every thing is dedicated to God,
So am satisfied with any failure.
And this unsuccessful life.
Will be blessed a hundred times
If for the dear young fellow-seekers
It makes the thorny path a bit easy."
Bimal Prasad observes, "In the history of mankind, there has hardly been a great leader or thinker whose ideas have been implemented by society." According to him, even Gandhi's ideas have not been implemented properly. But he said, "This does not make Gandhi's ideas any less relevant or inspiring. Indeed, they will continue to be both relevant and inspiring as long as there are injustices and violence in our society. ...The same is true of JP's ideas." Since violence, conflict, disruption are the tragic results of man's failure to create moral societies, JP's search for a new society, through the media of a total revolution seems to be the need of the present socio economic and political scenario. Therefore, in order to understand the ideological legacy left by JP, the subsequent chapters of this thesis would seek to review and analyse critically his socio-political philosophy.
References


21. Ibid, p.39


