

ROLE OF ETHICS IN INDIAN POLITICS

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Abstract

Life without ethics is useless and meaningless. In every field of life it has an important role, whether it is business, education, profession or politics. Besides other qualities, *Raja Rama, King Harischandra & Danveer Karn* were known for their ethics also. If we talk about the modern world, *Swami Vivekanand, Chandrashekhar Azad, Bapu & many more* were also well known for their ethics. These all never ignored their ethics even in great difficulties.

Ethics are those rules which deal with the values of life. It concentrates on those principles which affect man's conduct so as to determine the standard of right and wrong. This determination of right or wrong leads our way to perform our duties sincerely or carelessly. Unfortunately it is now missing from all the fields of life, mainly from the politics. Politicians are now totally unethical, though they have a very good code of ethics in the form of our Constitution. Their involvements in criminal activities, corrupt behaviour, nonsense dialogues are some of the examples of their unethical life. In this paper the author has tried to explain ethics for politicians, the ethical provisions for them and the ground reality. The author has presented in this paper that how ethics are being disappeared not only from the lives of politicians but also from the lives of the common men. Solutions of this problem have also been suggested.

Key Words: Ethics, Politics, Constitution, Corruption India

INTRODUCTION

India is a land of diverse culture. Its rich heritage, high values & traditions are well known and the basis of many civilizations. Above of all these qualities; ethics is one of the most important and valuable feature of Indian civilization. It is the basic of Indian culture and backbone of Indian Society. It was taught to us -

“Yahi pashu pravati h jo aap he chare,

Vahe manushye he jo manushye k lie mare.”

But today in every sphere of life; whether it is judiciary, executive or politics, ethics are at their lowest level of degradation and self- interest is prevailing. Ethics and morality are considered myth today and a person with ethics is only a supposition in present life. Today it is and presumed that there is only one ethic or morality, i.e. how to make more and more profit whether by legal or illegal means. This world is considered to be made for corrupt and unethical people and success is the puppet of these people.

Unethical practice is the mother of corruption. It is an inevitable evil which has increased its scope in politics. To be armed with money power and muscle power they do all things which are not only

illegal but also immoral and unethical. By this, these people acquire respect, status and other things and thus promote crime and corruption. It is said about the money power –

“bap bada na bhaiya, sabse bada rupaiya”.

It is very rightly quoted in our Dhramshastras:

“Taka dharam taka karam, taka he param tapa,

ashye grahe taka naasti, jahhan taka takrayete”.

i.e., Money is religion, money is one's act, and for this money only one does all hard work, and when money arrives in a house; it brings never ending clashes too.

Due to these unethical practices India's image on tackling corruption has not improved with Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) placing it at 94th rank out of 176 nations in 2012, which was 95th in 2011. It includes both political and bureaucratic corruptions. Transparency International has estimated the annual worth of great Indian corruption market as US\$5 billion. And 75% of them are by the corruptions of politicians. Due to this reason we are poor though we live in a rich country.

ETHICS: MEANING

Ethics are the science of morals as well as the rules of conduct. Ethics not only lay down the rules of duty and ideal conduct but also examine the human conduct. It deals with the value of life. Ethics concentrates on those principles which affect man's conduct so as to determine the standard of right and wrong. They have their source from traditions and are in existence since the origin of human civilization to regulate behaviour of people. Ethics are not punishable and enforceable by law because these are nothing but a bundle of habits and are the guidelines for society to be followed voluntarily. In short we can say that ethics are the products of moral Behaviour of man in society.

Ethics can be defined as that branch of philosophy dealing with the values relating to human conduct, with respect to rightness and wrongness and badness of the motives and ends of such actions. Valdemar W. Setzer, has said that ethics are not definable and these are not implementable also these involve not only our thinking, but also our feeling.

Thus it can be very safe to say that ethics are those invisible rules which are not written anywhere and at the same time their violation is not punishable. The important thing is that that if a person does something unethical his inner consciousness always reminds that person of such behaviour and makes him guilty forever.

In India ethic are known as sanskars which teaches us *vasudhev kutumbkam* and *jiyo aur jeene do*. But now a day's these preaching are limited in books only. Greed and self-interests have made man unethical and these unethical practices leads to corruption. Though corruption is everywhere but in politics it is in high degree.

ETHICS IN POLITICS

Today the people of India are rapidly losing confidence in democracy and the reason is the attitude of politicians to make fool of the people, habit of yielding benefit out of tragic incidence, self-centred approach, egoistic, unethical and greedy nature. In their views ethics do look good only in books not in reality it is a period of materialistic life where norms, values, ethics of our great Indian culture are irrelevant and impractical. But politician must remember this fact that **ethics never get obsolete**, the practitioner get modernized and westernized.

In ancient India and even in pre independence period, politics was regarded as a branch of ethics. Peace, justice and liberty for all were the prime purposes of politics. But post independence the scene at once changed. List of political corruptions or scandals after the independence is huge in number. Nagarwala scandal, Bitumen scam, Churhat lottery scam, Tansi land deal, Urea scam, Bofors Scandal, Telecom scam, JMM Bribery Scandal, Fodder scam, St Kitts case and Hawala scandal are some of them.

Rajiv Gandhi's "Mr. Clean" Image got tarnished in the Bofors scam and he lost 1989 elections. Though, P.V Narasingh Rao is considered as the father of liberalized Indian economy, he had to lose 1996 election due to scams only. In 1996, Lalu Prasad Yadav was forced to leave the chief minister post of Bihar after the insurgence of fodder scam. The major political scams of this decade are Taj corridor case, Oil-for-food program scam, and Cash-for-votes scandal, money laundering above Rs. 4000 crores by Madhu Koda, Ex-chief Minister of Jharkhand and 3G scam. At present even "The Honest Man" Mr. Man Mohan Singh is under suspicion in coal scam.

Why these scams happened? It was all due to unethical conduct of these so called great personalities. In short we can say that mother of all corruptions or scams is unethical attitude.

DISCUSSION

India got freedom after a long struggle of 200 years. On this precious day the whole sky was open for her and there was hope that India would make unprecedented progress in every field with the feeling-

Apni azadi ko hum hargij mita sakte nahi,

Sir kata sakte hain lekin sir jhuka sakte nah.

Slowly and gradually India made progress and Jawaharlal Nehru satisfied with the on-going democratic system once he said that-

“Democracy... is the hallmark of India at present. But democracy does not consist of 210 million people voting. Democracy, ultimately, is a way of life, a way of reacting to circumstances, a way of thinking and a way of putting with the things we dislike even. And I think we have done fairly well... and considering the state of the world today when every other day we read about clashes in various countries, it is surprising how we have carried on in our normal way.”

This progress was continued only for few years because suddenly the feeling, approach, intention etc of Indians begin to be changed and only after few years of independence the feeling was this-

Apni azadi ko hum hargij mita sakte nahi,

Sir jhuka sakte hain lekin sir kata sakte nahi.

This change was seen most in politicians. Parliament which was once called as a galaxy of stars is now bunch of crooks, as cheaters, murderers, rapists are the part of this great Institution. They have forgotten their ethics, their duties, their patriotism and even their good character. They have only one thing in their mind that how to make money more and more whether by illegal means or legal. Ethics are the vanishing point of politics. Nobody estimated that India's democracy would degrade to the level it has today that good people avoid politics as if it were worse than leprosy. The politicians now are the villain of our country and its life as they are unethical. These are the reasons that today the people of India are rapidly losing confidence in the democracy of India. Here it is remarkable that politician must remember the fact that ethics never get obsolete it is the very base of civilized society. But the present truth is that that ethics has lost its place in Indian politics and which is proved by the conduct of politicians at many instances. There are data available regarding the non-ethical attitude of politicians and their approach towards ethics.

In this present paper the author has tried to explain the ethical duties to be followed by the politicians, their unethical practices causing corruption and suggestive measures for abolishing unethical practices. It is notable here that politicians are depicted in the form of government also.

1. Ethics On Spiritual Line & The Reality

“ Sarveh bavvantu sukhani, sarveh santu niramaya

sarveh badhrani pashyantur ma kashichad dukh bhagvateh”

This Sanskrit sloke means-

“That all human being should be happy, all should be healthy, all should be intelligent and should live on this earth with the feeling of brotherhood and should not cause

harm to anybody.” The constituent assembly i.e. the citizens of India have enshrined the government with this duty to provide its citizens with these facilities and these are not just their mere responsibility nevertheless ethical value too.

Reality is that that happiness and prosperity at the expanses of nation and its people is their birth right. Sorrow and poverty is the destiny of the common people.

2. Ethic Under Legal System & The Reality

There Latin maxim “**Rex non protest peccare**” means that king can do no wrong has outdated as the time of monarchy has gone and being the welfare state, the government too is like ordinary person and liable for all wrong. And the politicians being in the form of government should bear their responsibility without making blame game.

Reality is that, when a riots broke out, any bomb blast takes place, stampede happens, natural or any manmade disaster comes these politicians tries to take benefit out if the situation. They don't miss even a single chance and do politics their too. In the recent stampede happened on a bridge connecting a temple in Madhya Pradesh or in Kumbh Mela in UP, state government blamed central government and vice versa. But no government in this blame game thought of those victims and their family who lost their lives and everything.

3. Ethic Under Constitution of India & The Reality

There are certain constitutional ethical provisions to be followed by politicians, forming government, under Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties. These can be summarised as follows-

- a. Ethics to do justice with all** – As per constitution, Justices of every kind (social, economic and political justices) should be given to all without any favour or discrimination. Truth is that opportunities in every field are only for near and dear ones of the politicians. On becoming the part of government jobs and positions are given to the near and dear ones.
- b. Ethics to do equality and securing the feeling of brotherhood**-Under Indian Constitution, discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, religion, place of birth is declared unconstitutional and thus unethical but it is the very ethic which actually gets violated most by the politicians. Every time at the time of elections vote are claimed in the name of caste, religion, faith etc. peoples are discriminated in the name of region, they are thrown out of the city, fired from the jobs and even harassed and beaten badly. Maharashtra and Assam are its best examples. These unethical practices are done and supported by the politicians like Thackeray family. Feeling of *vasudhev kutumbakam* has been deleted from their hearts. It is not only unethical but unconstitutional also. It violates our rights available under articles 14, 15, 16, 19 & 21.

- c. Ethics to Provide Personal Liberty** – The right to life & personal liberty enshrined under article 21 of India constitution includes the right to live with dignity and this right to live is not restricted to mere animal existence. It means something more than just physical survival and it is the responsibility of politicians to allow people to live with dignity. But the reality is that these politicians themselves hurt the dignity of other. In an incident the ex- chief minister of Uttar Pradesh was captured in the video in which her P.A cleaned her shoes in public with his handkerchief. Many time politicians are captured beating their party men or the common people.
- d. Ethics to Provide Medical, Educational & Other Assistance** – Public welfare by providing medical, educational & other assistance was ethical and constitutional duty of politicians under Directive Principles of State Policy. How much work was done in reality and how much in papers is not hidden from anyone. Where the work has done, is full from irregularity. Schools are there but not the teachers, there are hospitals but not the doctors and medicines. Story of *Mid Day Meal* and deaths caused are also not hidden.
- e. Ethics to Facilitate Public** – It is ethical for a politician to serve people not to rule them so that social welfare can be done. But the fact is that when any politician is on visit of a city, route is diverted which caused students reaching late in their schools and colleges, death of patient in reaching late in hospitals.
- f. Ethic to Respect Women** – This is not only constitutional mandate but also religious as well as spiritual mandate. But the truth is that, in most cases of rape there was a politician involved. Their political influence make them unreported, still the story is long. Few examples are – case of N D Tiwari, Suryanelli, Madhumita, Bhanwari Devi’s case etc.

4. Other Ethical Mandates & The Reality

- a.** Every time in elections promises are made to the people, that should be respected. But truth is far away from this.
- b.** Community as well as national interests should be protected but politicians protects their own interests. Ban on Viswarupam movie, ban on a muslim girl’s band ‘Palash’, arresting of two girls on a facebook comment are some of its examples.
- c.** Giving ticket to clean character candidate is ethical demand but survey done by Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) and National Election Watch (NEW) is sufficient to expose the criminality of politicians. Afzal Ansari, Arun Gawli, Phoolan Devi, Raghuraj Pratap Singh, Shibu Soren are the reality.

These unethical practices will better be called ‘political corruption’

Factors leading increased unethical politics

Following factors are responsible for the increasing unethical politics.

1. The never ending greed of politicians for money leads them to the unethical path and by this way corruption increases.
2. By the political influence of money and muscle power, politicians escaped from their guilt, they escape from arresting and even if they get caught in any scam they are released very soon.
3. Indian legal system is known as 'Lawyer's Heaven' due to its loopholes. Politician takes the benefit of these loopholes of present Indian legal system and thus remains fearless against any punishment.
4. Cost of contesting election is very high. Generally it takes 2.5 crore to 3.0 crore, which is generated by the scams and corruption. Robbery, ransoms etc. are very common charges on politicians.
5. Illiteracy of Indians is the basic of this problem. They even do not know the meaning of Democracy. For them this means only casting votes. They do not know what is RTI or Anti Defection Law.
6. The ignorant attitude of public also promotes political corruption. When they came to know about any corrupt activity they don't inform the police, they don't came forward to give evidence against these politicians. The fear of political power prevent them to raise their voice.
7. Some people got employment in many legal and illegal businesses, run by these politician by the corruption. Drug trafficking, prostitution, gambling spots are some of its examples. These employed never oppose those politicians.
8. Due to present system of coalition government, the government lacks will power to take strict actions against these politicians in the fear that if action is taken they may withdraw the support or will not support in making coalition government in future
9. Supreme Court of India has named CBI a 'parrot' because all the investigating agencies and bureaus which look into the matter of corruption are also under the direct control of government. Thus under pressure the investigation agency get forced to with draw the charges and evidences.
10. The delay and leaches in Indian court is also responsible for this. And till date right to reject is not given.

Remedies to Stop Unethical Politics

Creating problem is easy rather than finding its solutions. It doesn't mean that the problem of unethical attitude of politicians has no remedies. Yes "*politics is a sewer*", but someone has to jump into this gutter and to clean it. The responsibility of it lies not solely on the government to implement

and bring changes. It is our moral and ethical responsibility too, because it is we who have chosen them, made them our representatives. Thus if they are wrong we too are wrong somewhere. Thus to be ethical and promote ethical practices is our responsibility. Here the author is providing some suggestive measures to be followed to remove unethical practices and corruption.

1. Ethics must be taught to student in schools from the early stage. The normslessness, non-ethical behaviour is the result of almost all crimes of world.
2. Benefits of right to information must be taught to the public. They must before casting their vote in favour of any candidate know about his/her criminal political background.
3. Right to reject which was gifted by the Supreme Court of India must be advertised at a giant level so that people became aware of their precious right. And when they are dissatisfied with all the contesting politicians, they can reject all the candidates.
4. People must cast their vote for the best candidate and know importance of a single vote.
5. Voting should be made compulsory so that participation of all must be ensured.
6. While casting vote people should understand its responsibility to select only those contestant who don't have a criminal background, and has image of honest politician.
7. Public should keep faith in institution of law and order, but if politicians do some wrong act it should be immediately informed to the authorities fearlessly.
8. Jan Lokpall bill should be passed for curbing corruption.
9. Ticked should not be granted to those politicians, against whom any criminal charge is framed.
10. At regular interval property, assets of the politicians must be evaluated by an effective check and balance system.
11. From time to time sting operations are conducted by the government or by media so that the fear of getting caught doesn't allow them to cheat nation.
12. Easy, fast and effective mechanism should be developed for people' redressal.
13. An independent vigilant institution must be established to keep an eye on politicians, their activities and it also must not be made under the direct control of government. Fast track courts must be recognized to resolve criminal and corruption cases against politicians.

Conclusion

Conclusively we can say that India is a nation which is richest in its diversified culture, heritage, ethical values norms and distinguished attitude towards problem solving. We Indian never lose hope in problem solving till the last breathe. It will be abolished from Indian politics by strong will power and by the application of remedial measures with never ending habit of keeping hope and then in real terms India will become "The Great India."

List of key words

Ethics, Politics, Law, Corruption, Unethical

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