

CHAPTER - VI :

PROGRAMME AND POLICIES OF JANATA PARTY

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In the Fifth General election Mrs. Gandhi's party was elected with thumping majority and she established her dominance over the party. The masses supported her radical programme of 'Garibi Hatao'. But her Government could not execute the programme because of several factors. In 1972-73 the country faced several problems such as drought, energy, inflation and smuggling that made the masses restive, Mrs. Gandhi's most of the schemes were sabotaged, courts gave difficult judgement. It was - considered as the conflict between fundamental rights and directive principles of state policy. Rising prices and agitational approach of the organised classes created lot

problems. The slow growth of economy, unemployment widening disparity resulted in strike, morchas. " One remarkable of it was the Railway strike coupled with other strikes of working classes in difficult parts of country."¹ "J.P's movement added another dimension by alienating middle classes from the Government which was the major ally of Indira Gandhi,"² in 1971. It had popular support in Gujrat and Bihar.

When all these events were happening on political scene of India the Allahabad High Court declared the election of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to Lok Sabha as null and void. It was very difficult to control the issuing situation. Hence internal emergency was declared in order to check the internal forces. M. Weiner rightly pointed said " on June 76 Mrs. Gandhi struck against her critics within the congress party, the opposition parties and the press with her proclamation of the national emergency."³

Mrs. Gandhi justified that emergency was imposed to improve the economic condition of the country and to check the disruptive forces. She declared 20 points program. "It seems that she wanted to achieve three goals through emergency. "First she wanted to establish credibility of the system, secondly, she wanted to implement land reforms legislation and abolish banded labour and rural indebtedness to improve the living standard of the poor, thirdly she wanted to achieve industrial development

by giving concessions to capitalists."4

The 42nd and constitution amendment made several changes in the political system. The main of those amendments was to make Prime Minister Office supreme - restrict. The rights of citizen and judiciary. It also included a list of duties of citizens. Elections to Lok Sabha were twice declared. The amendments gave wide ranging power to Government which were against the basic principles of Parliamentary democracy. Even there was move to establish presidential form of Government in the country. One more element was added to emergency regime i.e. establishment of extra-constitutional centre power that tried to influence the functioning of Government. They did not have any legal authority but they pursued orders to Government Officers.

The emergency system did not bring about desired results. In fact, it was alienating different sections of society from the Congress. Detention under MISA brought top leaders together. Discussion on merger of parties to were held on Jan, 18, Mrs. Gandhi announcement Lok Sabha elections. The process of the opposition unity started in 1974 when four rightist parties, Bharatiya Krantidal, Utkal Congress, the Swatantra party and the Samyukta Socialist Party led by Raj Narain decided to merge together to form the Bharatiya Lokdal under the leadership of Charan Singh. Announcement of election revived the efforts

for merger parties. January 20, 1977 the four non-communist parties i.e. Congress(O), The Jan Sangh, Bharatiya Lok Dal and the Socialist Party, ~~agg~~ agreed to work as one party for the election. "The new party was called the Janata party and it decided to ~~gi~~ fight election under one flag and one programme."⁵ Moraraji Desai became its first president.

The Janata party placed its programme and policies before the electorate . The main features of the programme and policies can be brought out as under.

The Janata Party Manifesto, 1977 declared that the party would provide both bread and liberty - a Gandhian Alternative of development that relies on development of Small Scale Industries.

a) POLITICAL :

As a party wedded to the ideals of freedom and democracy, it believes that fearlessness is of the essence of life. It wanted to restore democracy and independence of judiciary. It would lift emergency, repeal MISA, ~~now~~ no political or social organisation would be banned.

It stated that Art. 356 regarding imposing president's rule would be amended so that it should not be misused . It wanted re-establish the rule of law. All unjust laws would be reviewed. It would safeguard the freedom of press and would abolish censorship of press. It would repeal the amendment to representation of the people Act. The 42nd

amendment would also be reviewed. News agencies would be completely independent of the Government. It wanted to delete the right to property from fundamental rights and wanted to include the right to work.

b) ECONOMIC :

The manifesto stated that " social justice is not an abstract concept indicating good intentions, but is a basic philosophy which must be translated into action and lead to the welfare of the masses on the principle of equality and prosperity for all." ⁶ It wanted to give priority to agriculture and rural reconstruction in the economic sphere. Moreover cottage and small industries would also be given priority in economy. Apart from it manifesto declared that the right property would be deleted and right to work would be included. It would emphasis Gandhin values of austerity 'Antyodayas' and decentralised economy. It would adopt new planning, priorities and suitable technology for self-reliance . It wanted to narrow down the disparity between rural and urban areas.

c) SOCIAL :

The manifesto declared that the party is conscious of the crucial role that social policy and social services have to play in raising living standard. The manifesto dealt with the problem of illiteracy, languages. Health, social security, women's rights, minorities and weaker -

sections of society, corruption and land reforms. It - gave the social charter. It is of the ^{view} new that education must be functional and related to the lives of the people. It would provide opportunities for earning while learning at all levels. Illiteracy would be eradicated within five to ten years. The party would develop people's language and utilise them progressively in higher education, administration in Courts. It would provide adequate - facilities for health. It would undertake the programme of public housing .

Apart from it the manifesto stated that the party "wanted to preserve the secular and richly character of our state."⁷ It would safeguard the rights and legitimate needs of the minorities. It would prevent any discrimination against the minorities religions, cultural or linguistic. Moreover, it would establish Civil Rights Commission to ensure the minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other Backward classes that ~~may~~ they would not suffer from any sort of discrimination.

d) FOREIGN POLICY :

The manifesto stated that the "the party will oppose all forms of colonialism, neo-colonialism and racialism."⁸ It would attempt for peaceful settlement of all international disputes and co-operate with Third World Countries in order to establish new and just international economic order. It

wanted to promote a good neighbour policy. It also stand for regional co-operation, for the common good, and for the global detente. It would pursue the policy of genuine non-alignment.

Finally, it appealed to the voters to fight the tyranny and join together for building a free and just society.

2) COMPARATIVE STUDY :

If we make a comparative study of the Janata Party manifesto and the manifestoes of 4 parties that joined the grand alliance of 1971, we can see certain similarities as well as differences. Firstly, the Janata manifesto is a remarkably cohesive and liberal document that had paid stress on Gandhian Socialism. Secondly, it has laid emphasis on decentralisation of power and resources to check the growth of authoritarianism. It emphasised importance of agriculture due to the influence of Charan Singh and advocated the concept of a genuine non-alignment in the field of foreign policy.

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FOOTNOTES :

- 1) Chousalkar Ashok, Sixth Lok Sabha - A Political Analysis.
unpublished Article .
- 2) Ibid P. 9
- 3) Weiner M., India at the Polls, The Parliamentary
Election of 1977 P. 1
- 4) Chousalkar Ashok, Op. Cit. PP. 10
- 5) Bhambhari C.P., The Janata Party A Profile
P.
- 6) Shakhdar S.L., The Sixth Lok Sabha Election
P. 38.
- 7) Ibid P. 41.
- 8) Ibid P. 44.

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