

CHAPTER - IV :

THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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CHAPTER - IV :

THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

1) MAIN FEATURES OF ELECTION MANIFESTO  
OF SAMYUKTA SOCIALIST PARTY - 1967 :

The Socialist party got split in 1964 and the Samyukta Socialist Party under the leadership of Dr. Lohia emerged as the main Socialist Party as he expounded the concept of non-congression<sup>ism</sup> and advocated the cause of backward classes.

Samyukta Socialist Party placed its election manifesto in the fourth general elections before the electorate underlying its programme and policies . It had the undermentioned features.

a) ECONOMY :

The party would pursue a firm and concrete policy with regard to food and agriculture . So it would abolish land revenue on the land small holdings. It wanted to maintain balance between agricultural and industrial prices. The manifesto made it clear that 'socialism means equality and prosperity'. They are intimately related. Therefore, the party wanted to achieve these two values through one another. In spite of giving loan to the textile industry the party wanted to equip textile industries with modern machinery. A committee would be set up to decide whether textile industry would be nationalised. Interest of factory workers, consumers would be represented in all industries.

b) EDUCATION :

The party wanted complete equality in primary education. For that purpose, all the expensive primary schools would be closed. All the children would learn in the same type of school. The medium of instruction would be mother-tongue and English would be Optional Subject.

c) SOCIAL :

The 1967 manifesto of the Samyukta Socialist Party mentioned that, "It will be the task of the Samyukta Socialist Party to eliminate from the national life the gap

between people's culture and feudal culture."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the party wanted to make the country safe from disintegrating tendencies. It would adopt special measures for those who were suppressed economically and socially. 60% posts would be reserved in various sectors of life.

d) FOREIGN POLICY :

In regard to foreign policy, the manifesto brought to the notice of the electorate the failure of the Congress in the external affairs and defence. It pointed out that Indian foreign policy failed completely in terms of both national and international interests. The manifesto made it clear that, ~~the~~ "For the building of a new world, it will pursue a policy of non-preference between powerful countries like U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., and without prejudice will expect co-operation from their people and governments without any preference."<sup>3</sup> It ~~wanted~~ <sup>wanted</sup> to take effective steps in regard to racial discrimination.

2) SAMYUKTA SOCIALIST PARTY ELECTION MANIFESTO - 1971 :

The Samyukta Socialist Party did guide ~~w~~ill in 1967 elections as its strategy of anti-congressi~~sm~~ succeeded but the party lost its leader, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia in October, 1967. Because of anti-congressi~~sm~~ the party led by Raj Narain and Madhu Limaye slowly joined the camp of rightist parties. In 1971, the Samyukta Socialist Party became a

partner of grand alliance of the Congress (O), Jan Sangh, the Swatantra Party and the Samyukta Socialist Party. This was beginning of the Samyukta Socialist Party's co-operation with the rightist parties that reached its climax in 1977.

In the mid-term poll of 1971 Samyukta Socialist Party placed before the electorate its manifesto which had the following main features.

a) NEW CONSTITUTION :

The first notable feature of the manifesto was that the party wanted convene the new constituent assembly for framing the new constitution as the 1950 constitution was drafted by the constituent assembly that was elected on limited suffrage. Moreover, there are several provisions that put hindrances in achieving economic equality. The party is of the view that Panchayati Raj institutions should not be regulated by central and state governments. The office of Governor and Collector should be abolished. The right to property should be deleted from the list of fundamental rights as it impedes the attempts to establish equality. There would be basic changes in the centre-state relations. The manifesto declared that, "all the Directive Principles of State policy should be made justiceable as far as possible."<sup>4</sup>

b) ECONOMY :

The party is of the view that radical changes are

necessary in the field of agriculture if prosperity is to be achieved. Therefore, ceiling on family holding be fixed. Government and non-Government barren land would be distributed among landless peasants. All the heavy industries and all the foreign capital would be socialised.

c) EDUCATION :

The manifesto stated that, "The educational pattern should be so changed that the knowledge of the students is related to the conditions and the needs of the country." <sup>5</sup> The party wanted to follow the principle of equality in education. Therefore, English medium schools should be closed. Education would be made compulsory upto the secondary level.

d) SOCIAL :

The manifesto declared its policy regarding labour, minorities and youth power. The party wanted to re-establish the revolutionary character of working class. The working class would be given representation in the management. Freedom to organise and right to strike would be given to the Government servants. Moreover, the entire working class would be covered by a comprehensive schemes of social security.

The manifesto stated that the party wanted to keep 60% reservation for backward classes and religious minorities.

The party thinks that, "Youth power is the most powerful medium for change and reconstruction." Therefore, it wanted to reduce the voting age upto 18. Right to work should be included in the list of Fundamental Rights of the constitution. Moreover, it wanted to check communal riots among Hindus and Muslims. The party stood for secularism and elimination of caste system.

e) FOREIGN POLICY :

The manifesto stated that the party wanted that India should come out of commonwealth. It wanted to have close relations with neighbouring countries not only on governmental level but cultural level also.

3½ PRAJA SOCIALIST MANIFESTO : 1967 :-

The Praja Socialist Party was the successor of the Socialist party of Jay Prakash Narain and it was a main opposition party and had a good following in some parts. The party faced the first set back when its Chairman, Asoka Mehta resigned and joined the Congress along with a large number of followers. The second rank leadership of the party could not carry on with the Socialist Party, therefore, they got split leaving S. M. Joshi faction in the Samyukta Socialist Party.

Ideologically, the Praja Socialist Party's socialism was right of centre and Samyukta Socialist Party's socialism

was left of centre as Praja Socialist Party was known for its anti-communist stand. At the time of 1967 - elections, the Praja Socialist Party was considerably weakened because of two major splits.

The Praja Socialist Party manifesto of 1967 at the very beginning vividly described the failure of the Congress party in different fields and also noted the role played by Praja Socialist Party. The main features of the programme and policies can be brought out as under.

a) ECONOMY :

The manifesto clearly mentioned that the party believes in a planned economic development. The manifesto stated that "if economic planning is to be the instrument of ushering in democratic socialist society, the emphasis of planning must be primarily at the base and not the apex". The party is in favour of nationalization of all basic and key industries. In brief, the problem of development would be tackled so as to create self-generating economy. The party would encourage co-operation in the field of agriculture and judiciary. The public sector would be recognised to serve as an instrument of democratic socialist society. It would place greater emphasis on cottage industries, agro-industrial and labour intensive, techniques. It would introduce comprehensive and co-ordinated food policy. Moreover,



it would revise the land laws so as to bring equitable distribution of land revenue.

b) SOCIAL :

The Praja Socialist Party manifesto emphasised the importance equality and social justice. It considers these two principles as dominant values, of socialism. The manifesto stated x that "equality and social justice have always remained the most dominant values of - socialism and the Praja Socialist Party considers them as the sheet anchor of its policies and programmes."8 Therefore, it would bring equality not only in economic sphere but in social life also.

The manifesto noted that the weaker sections of society Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and landless labour should be supported. The party would fight against the social orthodoxy. In the programme of land - re-distribution priority would be given to Scheduled - Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

c) EDUCATION :

The Praja Socialist Party manifesto stated that right type of education is very important in - democratic society. The party would attempt to abolish differentiations in schools which create a privileged class. ~~The~~ Technical and vocational courses will be

provided to suit the growing needs of industry and agriculture.

d) FOREIGN POLICY :

The manifesto made it clear that the party stands for independent foreign policy. It would oppose military alliances. The party is of the view that India has to play the significant role in the Afro-Asian world. It wanted to strengthen India's defence.

e) ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS :

The party would bring fundamental structural changes to implement the programme and policy of the party. The manifesto clearly stated that " in - implementing any plan of economic development and social reconstruction the administrative arm assumes crucial importance. The Praja Socialist Party will create administrative cadres capable of responding effectively and loyally to the task undertaken." <sup>9</sup> Similarly, it would set up statutory Anti-corruption tribunal to eradicate corruption.

It wanted to make the provisions of right to recall. Moreover, in order to avoid the misuse of power, the party would favour the resignation of the ministers three months prior to the elections.

f) CONSTITUTIONAL :

f) CONSTITUTIONAL :

The party stands for the Parliamentary institution and would do nothing that may damage the dignity of these institutions.

4) MAIN FEATURES OF ELECTION MANIFESTO OF PRAJA SOCIALIST PARTY - 1971 :

The performance of the Praja Socialist Party in 1967 election was dismal. The Congress split of 1969 greatly affected the party because the Congress led by Indira Gandhi promised that leftist policies would be implemented. A large number of Praja Socialist Party workers in states like U.P. Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, Gujrat and Karnataka joined the Congress. The party wanted to establish a close relationship with the Congress and its Chairman N.G. Gore undertook meaningful dialogue but he failed to arrive at any understanding with Mrs. Gandhi. Thus at the time of 1971 elections the party contested elections on its own.

In the mid-term poll of 1971 the Praja Socialist party placed before the electorate its manifesto that had the following ~~xxx~~ main features.

a) SOCIALIST ECONOMY :

The manifesto clearly mentioned that the party stood for socialist economy. It stated that - -

"A Socialist-oriented economic plan necessarily implies a progressive increase in the scope and authority of the public sector, but neither nationalization nor the acquisition of a monopoly position in the field in which the state enters by itself can be called socialism."<sup>10</sup> The party would accept the worker as equal partner in public sector and private sector. Similarly it would accept the concept of unionship in every industry. It favoured the large scale entry of public sector. It wanted that national planning should promote balanced development by correcting regional imbalances.

b) SOCIAL :

The manifesto made it clear that equality and social justice are the guiding values of socialist politics and programme. It favoured ceiling on urban property. It would attempt to establish equality not only in economic field but social field also. It would fight against ~~evils~~ evil practices and social orthodoxy.

c) EDUCATION :

The party wanted to reorient the education system. The manifesto stated that " the system of education will be reoriented so that it is more responsive to the needs of and wages of the youth."<sup>11</sup> In order to develop the spirit of modernism education will have to be - science-oriented.

d) ELECTORAL REFORMS :

The manifesto made it clear that the party would bring fundamental structural changes to implement its policies. It stated " for the effective implementation of the policy enunciated by the Praja Socialist Party fundamental structural changes are required." 12 Moreover, the party would make the office of Lokpal effective for eradicating corruption. It wanted that the defector must cease to be a legislator if he changes the party.

e) CONSTITUTIONAL :

The manifesto stated that the party is of the view that Parliament is sovereign to amend any part of the constitution. Nath Pai's constitution Bill wanted to restore the right of the Parliament to amend any part of the constitution which was challenged by supreme court in Golknath case. Therefore, " Praja Socialist Party favours the appointment of constitution reforms commission, which will would recommend suitable revision of the constitution so as to make it a fitting the instrument of socio-economic change progress." 13

f) FOREIGN POLICY :

The manifesto declared that Praja Socialist Party believes in a dynamic, independent foreign policy. It

clearly mentioned that "up-holds peace and freedom of all nations but remains deeply rooted in our national interests."<sup>14</sup> The party wanted to oppose all kinds of military alliances. It would judge every International issue on its merits though it adher to a policy of genuine of non-alignment. It wanted to forge relation with Asian countries against Chinese expansionism. The party welcomes the victory of secularist forces in the general elctions, in Pakistan and hopes for establishment of friendly relations between India and Pakistan.

5) COMPARATIVE STUDY :

Though the socialist parties believed in leftist ideology there were differences in ideologies of the S.S.P. and Praja Socialist Party as the former tried to be more radical.

a) POLITICAL ISSUE :

The Samyukta Socialist Party and the Praja Socialist Party believed in the principle of - Parliamentary supremacy and primary of directive principles of state policy. But to rectify these mistakes, the Samyukta Socialist Party advocated the framing of new constitution but Praja Socialist Party is satisfied with the assertion of Parliamentary sovereignty. Both of them wanted greater democratisation of both polity and Government services. But the Samyukta Socialist Party

advocated decentralisation of power by recognising importance of local bodies. It also demanded abolition of post of Governor. Both of them oppose right to property but the Samyukta Socialist Party demanded that it be deleted from fundamental rights. Both of them advocated electoral reforms, but the Praja Socialist Party demanded that the principle of right to recall should be accepted and ban to defections.

b) SOCIAL ISSUES :

The Samyukta Socialist Party manifesto of 1967 wanted to eliminate the gap between the people's culture and the feudal culture. Apart from it, it wanted to check the disintegrating forces. In the mid-term poll election of 1971 the manifesto declared that the party wanted to re-establish the revolutionary character of the working class. It also wanted to launch a comprehensive scheme of Social security both in 1967 and 1971 manifestos.

The Praja Socialist Party manifesto considered equality and social justice as dominant values of socialism. It wanted to establish equality in both economic and social life.

It seems that the Samyukta Socialist Party had more commitment for eradication of social evils as it advocated in both the manifestos that 60% jobs would be

reserved for backward classes including the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. The Praja Socialist Party did not advocate the job reservation. There does not seem to be any perceptible change in positions of both the parties.

c) ECONOMIC ISSUE :

According to manifesto of the Praja Socialist Party of 1967 socialism means basically equal - distribution of wealth. It wanted to maintain balance between agriculture and industrial prices. But the manifesto of 1971 of the party clearly mentioned that radical changes are necessary in the field of agriculture. The party wanted to distribute Government land, non-Government and barren and uncultivated land among - landless peasants. Moreover, all the heavy industries and all the foreign capital would be socialised.

Whereas the Praja Socialist Party manifesto 1967 declared that the party believes in a planned economic development. The process of planning must be started from the base to apex ~~of~~ if planning is the instrument of building democratic socialist society. In addition to it, the party would consider public sector as an instrument of democratic society. The party wanted to revise land laws in order to bring equal distribution of land revenue.



d) FOREIGN POLICY :

As far as foreign policy is concerned both the parties wanted India to play a leading role in world affairs. The Samyukta Socialist Party advocated closer ties with the neighbours and the Praja Socialist Party advocated closer ties with Afro-Asian countries. They believed in policy of non-alignment but wanted India to keep equal distance between U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Incidentally it is the Praja Socialist Party in 1971 manifesto coined the term 'genuine non-alignment' that became popular in 1977.

Thus as far as Socialist alternative is - concerned there does not seem to be any basic difference between their ideology and the ideology of the Congress party save radical rhetoric which became left of centre after 1969.

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FOOTNOTES :

- 1) Pattabhiram M, <sup>(Ed)</sup> General Election in India,- 1967  
P. 199.
- 2) Ibid P. 201.
- 3) IBid P. 202.
- 4) Shiv Lal, Election Archives (Quarter Ending June  
June-1971) P. 158.
- 5) Ibid P. 160.
- 6) Ibid P. 161.
- 7) Pattabhiram M, Op. Cit. P. 193.
- 8) Ibid P. 192.
- 9) Ibid P. 195.
- 10) Shiv Lal, Op. Cit. P. 174.
- 11) Ibid P. 176.
- 12) IBid P. 176
- 13) Ibid P. 176.
- 14) Ibid P. 176.

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