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Research Paper

Urbanization in Developing Societies: A Political Challenge in the Age of Globalization

Political Science

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Pratick Mallick GUEST-LECTURER, DEPT. OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, POLBA MAHAVIDYALAYA, POLBA, HOOGHLY (W.B.), INDIA

ABSTRACT

The erstwhile colonies of the Europe are now most vulnerable to the effects of globalization mainly because of the preferential gaps between the rural and the urban. Urbanization is a continuous process to justify not only the capitalist trends of flourishment but also compulsion in an age when economies are inter-linked with one another in a framework of the global supranational bodies. Urbanization is a necessity, indeed, in case of developments but it may be holistically wholesome if it is treated with the purpose of ensuring sustainable development. To this effect, politics faces various types of challenges that are to be overcome with efficient government policies.

Introduction

The Third World States (countries) achieved their independence after a long period of continuous and relentless struggle. Statistically even so speaking, it was not a matter of near three to four hundred years that industrial revolution prompted the European sailors sail through to the backward world for the purpose of getting markets for the merchandises in excess of demands in their own countries. Gradually they established their preponderance over those lands in terms of *colonies* or the *spheres of influences*. Slowly the common people in those countries witnessed steady economic developments. Therefore, they are not to experience the features of urbanization only now although, in a preordained style, urbanization is said to be the direct effect of globalization. Globalization has unearthed an uncommon type of universality among the various units of civilization. But, the problem area is that there are still physical differences among these units across the State. In other words, whereas there are so many remote villages still outside the amenities of urbanity, they are still very much influenced with globalization at least economically. Socially, they are yet to match up with that economic boom. Therefore, the considerations of *socio-economic* perspectives have lost their grounds as society has got detached from economics in the practical sense. Is it therefore that the orientation is just the opposite both to *economic determinism* as well as the concept of *relative autonomy*?

What Is Urbanization!

There is no universal or unanimous definition of urbanization as such. In fact, in case of urbanization, there are found to be existent some features which, when compared to those of the villages, differ from the latter in a mode of *meticulousness* so much so that this feature is not available to any village either. This is theoretically what is called 'urban'. Now, practically speaking, the common features of urbanization are as follows: *first*, the preliminary difference between an urban area and a rural area seems to be in terms of money-transaction inlets/outlets of considerable volume. Unless there is huge money transaction option in terms of markets where take place physically the exchange-merchandises as well as the nearby units where the exchange money is deposited only to continue the transaction everyday in a cyclic manner of operation, it is not an urban area at all. Therefore, there must be the chances of why the common people should come over to that particular area everyday for their livelihood. *However*, it is sometimes claimed by many that urbanization is promoted by means of population. But urbanization seems to be a transitional process that is oriented to urbanizing the rural or the yet-to-be-urbanized. But so far as cities like the metropolis are concerned, it is to somewhat partially agree to the point of population because urbanization—a continuous process—always tries to extend in volume of areas of residence as well as business. In fact, the concept of 'Central Place Theory' in Economics or Commerce is justified in terms of this particular feature of urbanization. In many cases, it is found that there are several hubs or pockets strewn across the cities meant only for the business purposes where there is a very limited percentage of residential settlements and indeed everyday countless people come over to these centres in the cities to earn their livelihood. It is well observed particularly on the holidays—the cities go almost empty. Therefore, the common people throng into the cities from the rural areas by considerable numbers. Thus, a difference can be made out of this explanation: an area which is now turned into a city or metropolis, was once upon a time urbanized, that is, it came under the project of transforming it into an urban area from a rural one. So, a common mistake of confusing between cities and urban area should be kept off cautiously. So, if an urbanized area is overcrowded but once its transaction units get overburdened and, therefore, there seems to be an essential necessity to decentralize it, the volume of the urban area automatically starts increasing towards the villages all over again. In fact, it seems to be like a *circle of sequences*: a rural area first gradually turns into a town, thereby, urbanized and thereafter flourishes to become a city or metropolis which centrifugalizes outside its various wings of operation. As per the 'Central Place Theory', the hinterland continues to be reduced in terms of its edge along the outskirts of the cities because of continuous merger with the central points of business but further extended outward so that a greater area comes under the socio-economic values of the city concerned. Thus, it is now proved why urbanization was primarily claimed to be a continuous process. So, an established city in its outermost edges or borders continues to be urbanized.

Demerits of Continuous Flourishment

In the way as explained above, the volume of rural areas gets reduced gradually. The rural people start being covered by the new urbanized economy while they still for various reasons cannot whither away their own occupations. So, in case of the dearth of alternative faculty of occupations, the common rural people who inadvertently become influenced by the urbanized economy lose their *status quo* even in order to acclimatize themselves to the new features of life-style of the people settling as part of urbanization. For example, a man having own cows in a village enjoys the same level of citizenship until there are people who till lands with the manual blades or make earthen pots but once that area gets covered with new commercialized professional education institutes, ancillary residential apartments, new markets with urban features only to match with the standard of taste of living of the immigrants, that very first man may now have to assume the occupation of a milkman every morning.

Political Challenges

Now, the challenges politics faces are mainly in terms of ***factionalism***. Unlike the pressure groups which are ***'formal associations'*** within a party, ***by factionalism is meant the creation of various 'informal associations' within the party around separate leaders and competition among those 'informal associations'.*** These challenges are of **four** types: *first*, if opposite political parties rule locally in the village and the city concerned for the sake of argument. *Second,* if the same political party ruling in both places and there may have been hierarchical understanding within that party so far as to promote urbanization; *third*, if the same political party ruling both places but they belonging to the opposite factions protest against the opposite fac-

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tion; and *finally*, if the same political party ruling both places but they despite belonging to the same faction get open to their own social insecurity and therefore coming up to the stage of protest.

Now, if a party that rules in panchayat is in competition with the party in power in the city for the sake of a promotion to the state power, there are often found political protests. It is basically triggered by the cause of the genuine crisis of urbanization which is feared by the aborigines in the rural areas. In this case, two results may happen; *either* the party in power immediately comes to the rescue of the victims and the potential victims, thereby, diminishing the potentials of the opposition in the upcoming election, *or* the government does not pay heed to the call of the villagers. Now, these two types of responses yield two opposite outcome(s). If the government takes to the former response, it is possible that in the next election the party already in power is to remain in power because they still command the citizens' spontaneous allegiance for their positive responses. However, if the second type of response does take place, it is almost certain that the party in power would lose the upcoming election by a gross loss of popular confidence.

However, in both the rural and the city, the same political party is often found ruling in the local self-government(s). And the project of urbanization being the party decision, there seems to be a covert hierarchical understanding between the rural and the urban factions without going into confrontation between themselves. In this case, a huge amount of compensation is paid to the victims. Even the package may include monthly salaried jobs to the victims on a rationing basis. So, it is supposed much better than the previous one. At least, it promotes a unanimous conclusion among themselves. As a result, there is no possibility of protests. Thirdly, sometimes it is found that though the same political party rules in both the areas, the factions are different. In other words, the faction in rural power is opposite to that in power in the city. Therefore, there are found protests, hartals, picketing, and rallying against the opposite faction. Now, the future of these factional conflicts depends on the temporal immediacy of election—mainly the rural election as well as the general one except to the urban local self-government(s). Finally, the party ethics fails utterly because the people targeted for urbanization prefer their social security issues to the party decisions. So, they openly protests. It seems to be very much similar to the previous one but not exactly so. If asked why, the answer would be that in this particular case there is a high possibility of reduction in the number of the members in a political party concerned whereas in the previous one the protesting faction never gives up hope to rectify the highest decision and to that effect the latter always prefer staying in the party in a more active way.

Thus, urbanization heralds a great challenge to the politics *per se*. Actually, the main challenge is to come to an unpartisan decision on the questions of development issues; in other words, the rural and the urban committees in the same party often fail to unite with each other. And the new social movements of this sort take place due to this vulnerability between the rural and the urban factions. In fact, since the citizens living in villages never expect their interests go into non-existence, and again, on the other hand, there are the elements of globalization to continuously flourish towards the rural fringes obviously in search of new establishments, such kind of political turmoil in the open politics is a commonplace event particularly in the developing areas which are still highly agrarian in nature—physically and, therefore, economically by far.

Responsibilities of Globalization and Liabilities of Politics Itself

The immediate cause of modern urbanization due to uncontrollable effects of globalization cannot be, however, ruled out. While, on the one hand, a great flourishment indicates to prosperity in national income, on the other hand, it promotes gross polarization in the society itself, thereby, creating class-division in a more acute manner. In fact, globalization does have bipolar effects on society: first, it targets swift process of structural adjustment which leads to urbanization; secondly, so far as the borrowing from the global funds are concerned, the developing governments are saddled with various options of reduction in spending, thereby, creating financial liabilities upon the common people who are by default associated with the markets already interlinked with the acutely capitalist markets in the world. Therefore, in certain cases of development, there remains hardly any option for the developing States to evade the ill-effects of globalization. On the other hand, urbanization attempts at gnawing out the purchase capacity of the people; however, in this regard, not only the rural poor but the urban poor, too, face the same trouble or challenge. However, once an underdeveloped area gets urbanized, all the facilities so far in favour of lack of opportunity of spending start fading away. And that leads to ***deficit-fund consumerism***—a key reality in globalization. In fact, very often the governments, too, are made responsible, as already said, for all the negative results obviously since they are to deal with power of making policies in favour of the common people. But parallel to the institutional politics, the political parties should be more accountable to the common people. So, by unjustifying a common popular allegation of misinterpreting to the common people, if they make the latter well aware of all the pros and cons of each decision to be taken by the governments, it would help better democratize the society.

Conclusion: The Possible Way-Out

Now, the **conundrums** are: Is urbanization to be stopped due to its continuous flourishment towards the rural areas? Or, is it welcome to any good citizen to indulge in such dilemmas as trump-cards for electoral politics in an unending manner? It should be rather kept in mind that although this age of globalization promotes specialization in place of generalization of the past, yet specialization in more than one item of activity should be encouraged; even globalization being the maturest stage of capitalism always justifies the implementation of *cost-effective management*; therefore, specialization only in one item of activity is to face recession in the *'service markets'*. The government is to take all types of possible steps of development. In fact, this is the most necessary approach on the part of the government because of its diverse nature. The common people would have to be trained in various avenues to suit for the sake of livelihood. It should be undoubtedly an attempt at ensuring *sustainable development*. In India, there have already been taken so many policies to this effect and in most cases they have been successful by the considerable extent. However, it should be kept in mind that the common people must be made to understand the inert nature of development being a continuous process and unless all of them are mobilized, a truly prosperous State is not possible to make. Further, it is important that the governments, too, should be enough confident of ensuring agricultural facilities to become self-reliant but necessarily commercialized. That would also ensure the permanent and continuously increasing per capita income. Incidentally, the developing world is required to bargain effectively with the so-called developed one to ensure the favourable conditions of the rural people. And, once agricultural and other agrarian activities getting commercialized, the happening of *pseudo-employments* is supposed to be reduced; as a consequence, with better resources in hand, the 'so-far-rural-but-now-urbanized' families would be able to re-channelize their means to the cause of ***sustainable development investments*** of the family(ies) itself. The new generations would be, then, able to concentrate on building careers of their choices. It would also alienate the issues of alienation caused so far by the circumstantial compulsion to work on lands. However, whatever the theory and the related expectations therefrom, the proper democratization still depends upon how efficiently governments put efforts to make a balance between the rural and the issues of urbanization to get over all the related challenges.

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