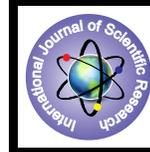


Territorial Disputes ; a Case of Identity Politics



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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to take the first step towards the basis of a framework for analyzing the state response towards territorial disputes, impact on society, economy, polity. An examination of territorial conflict literature is insightful, omits lingua-franca in its analysis. Nevertheless these two areas of research yield certain criteria that a frame work on border disputes must address. When seen in the context of major theoretical paradigms, the analysis where each paradigm has something to offer in the analysis of each criteria. Consequently a complete explanation of state behavior regarding territorial disputes can be based on "theory of identity Politics."

The Arguments of this paper can be pointed out thus-

- Prominently all over the world identity politics has become an important feature of politics and political activities. Identity politics means individuals are governed by their identity based on caste, race, ethnicity, language, religion, or gender.
- The capitalist state under imperialist globalization finds it convenient to deal with people fragmented on the basis of multiple identities.
- Post modernism theory provides the basis for identity politics post modernism only recognizes mosaic of identities, differences, and conflicts. The Belgaum border dispute is a case of identity politics based on language, ethnicity.

All over the world identity politics is an important feature of politics and political activities. It is the late 1980's that identity politics came into prominence.

The aggressive liberalization privatization and globalization and the weakening of socialism set the background for the rise of identity politics.

The setbacks to socialism saw the revival and the resurgence of identity and fratricidal conflicts. This enacted in dramatic fashion in the Balkans. In Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In India many parts exhibited this phenomenon.

It is the emergence of ethnic identity politics and fratricidal conflicts which led to the breakup of Yugoslavia and conflicts based on ethnic nationalism. The creation of Slovenia, Croatia, and the wars in Bosnia, and the disintegration of Yugoslavia presaged global spread of identity politics. There were conflicts between different nationality groups in the Soviet Union also. The creation of a number of new states were accompanied by the establishment of market economies with neo liberal regimes.

Globalised finance capital finds it convenient to deal with the people fragmented on the basis of multiple identities. It makes it easier to penetrate the market and take control. consumerism and the market caters to all the disparate groups, but their fragmentation into innumerable identities prevents their coming together.

The capitalist state under imperialist globalization is dealing with competing groups – who make claims for access to the social surplus and economic goods. Multiple but discrete (separate groups) is better for the ruling classes than a universal solidarity forged across communities and groups who resort to radical politics and demand an equality in distribution of the economic goods and surplus.

The phase of global finance driven capitalism and the technological changes brought about by information technology had its resultant impact on society. It is this period of late capitalism that gave rise to post modernism. Post modernism poses as a Post Marxist theory and provides the basis of identity politics.

Post Modernism questioned all the enlightenment values and rejected any philosophy or politics, which was 'universal' and 'totalizing'. All grand narratives i.e. Meta narratives- liberalism, socialism or any universal theory – is rejected. All such movements based on universal goal of emancipation, according to post modernism can only lead to new forms of repression and oppression. It sees knowledge and power as mediated by language and there are different ways of seeing it. History therefore can be seen only in a context and relatively

Post modernism only recognizes a mosaic of identities, differences and conflicts. Hence what is possible is recognizing the fragments of a particular identity. What is possible are particular struggles or autonomous social movements which are based on a fragmented "politics of difference and identity". It is out of the post modern, post Marxist philosophy that identity politics has emerged.

What is identity Politics?

Identity politics means individuals are defined by their identity based on race, ethnicity, caste, language or whatever that the person perceives to be his identity. According to the theory of identity politics a person may have multiple identities but it is the identity which the person perceives to be the defining one that determines that person's identity. So a person may be a Marathi language speaker or Kannada. If he perceives a certain language as the main identity. Then that would be the identity by which he should be recognized. He is to be mobilized as a "Marathi Manush" (Rajthakrey) or as Kannadiga on the basis of language.

Identity politics promotes differences and separateness to stress one's distinct identity. People getting together and mobilizing on the basis of a common identity. Whether language (Marathi identity or Kannada identity) ethnicity, caste or religion to forge demands or assert their rights on the state and society. The movements based on these features were a major feature of politics. It is true that the people who were mobilized by such movements and politics was on the basis of identity of language by MES, Kannada Rakshana Vedike,

These groups keep alive border issue by setting out a theory of fragmented identities. Theorists of identity politics say that a particular oppression can be understood and experienced only the people of that identity. Hence 'others' are excluded from joining the fight against that oppression. This helps to fragment the peo-

ple to fight against all forms of oppression.

Division of people as Marathi's and Kannadiga is done by linguistic – nationality and ethnic origins. Fragmentations of identity are harnessed by these divisive forces.

By its nature, identity politics excludes and demarcates those of one identity from other. In fact the identity is established by its being different from the “other” based on linguistic difference, the ‘other’ has to be excluded and often pitted against.

Impact of Identity Politics on Border Dispute

Wherever identity politics takes hold it divides the people into separate and disparate groups often in conflicting and competing terms. In a capitalist democracy it is true that the various sections of people suffer from different types of social, economic, and political oppression. Identity politics seeks to mobilize such people on the basis of their perceived oppression. However it does so in a manner of excluding others and by inculcating the consciousness that the common basis for exploitation or oppression does not exist and their own identity and perceived oppression is the only reality.

Identity politics is typically carried out by political groups like MES (Marathi language) kannada parties, NGO's voluntary organizations. Beyond that autonomous social movements are encouraged. Such Ngo's and voluntary organizations which are themselves operating as separate and fragmented units the ideal vehicles to take up the idea of separate identities.

Conclusion:-

1. India is more than sum of parts. We should accept and celebrate multifarious identities that we simultaneously possess and the unique thread of being Indian running through those seemingly conflicting identities

2. Both Karnataka and Maharashtra being the larger states are duty borne to protect the unity and integrity of the groups. Dialogues and discussions with a free mind can result in amicable settlements .

It is apt to conclude with Jawaharlal Nehru:

“The unity of India is the basic fact which should count today. This makes all of us who live in the great great land the citizens of India, not of Coorg or Mysore or any particular state or part of the country..... If we are going to progress it is the whole of India which will progress and not any one part of India, if India goes down all of us go down”.

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