SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT AND ERADICATION OF COMMUNALISM

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The notion of empowerment necessitates concept of choice, gender, equality, liberty, self sufficiency and increased resources which are common to almost all definitions. Most of the social scientists agree the idea of empowerment is to improve quality of life and expand basis of human well being. On one side social change is visualized as a consequence of the development of individuals through education access to material resources etc. On the other human being is seen as a part of society and change is considered impossible unless social structures related to power are changed primarily. Individual and collective empowerment can be considered as the extension of vision and choice necessary for people to act as agents of human well being and influence.

The proponents of social change suggest that there are three elements critically important such as the individual, community and the institution. Accordingly empowerment is described as the act assisting individuals to manifest constructive capacities in creative and disciplined ways institutions to exercise authority in a manner that leads to the progress and upliftment of the people and communities. Careful thought need to be given in which empowerment can be approached as a universal and shared pursuit. Thus, the marginalized are not without capacity and the privileged are not all strong rather all of them have the capacity to develop and prosper. They must actively involve in decision making processes. At last, the ability to recognize the root causes of inequality will be decisive to the empowerment of populations to become agents of social transformations.

As far as communalism is concern, it is practiced since time immemorial and it is part of human life, in India it is like one has to have faithfulness to one's own holy group which is defined as a mechanism to vitalize people for and against by raising an appeal on communal lines and it is related with religious fundamentalism. Studies have demonstrated that communalization was first begun in nineteenth century. Without going into the details of history and adhering to the primary objective. Communalism is social mechanism characterized by the religions of two communities often leading to animosity, tension and even riots. Communalism, religious and cultural differences are often used as tools to achieve political ends.

Insofar as the Indian polity, factors such as casteism, communalism and religious fundamentalism pose serious challenges and are major threat to secular fabric of the nation. The challenges decline the working and strength of democratic secular federal state, destroying the cultural diversity. In the garb of nationalism, political objectives are surreptitiously achieved by the leaders under the cover of religion, ritual and culture. The extreme manifestation of communalism has a concept of fear and disgust which causes ferocity and tension among different groups.

Ironically, most of the Indian Muslims didn't embrace the scientific and technological education hence, they lagged behind almost on all fronts. Due to poor education they didn't have

proportionately desirable representation in public service, industry or trade and this has led them to suffer from Stockholm syndrome and living in a state of hopelessness. Psychological factors are vital in flaring up tensions. The mainstream media is equally responsible in flaring up communal temperatures in any part of the country.

Undeniably, communalism is the extremely contagious disease and a severe threat to national unity and integrity. In our country for protection of the constitutional values, secular character and to follow the traditional ethos of nation, it is incumbent upon the ruling class and every citizen to work together to curb this menace. Following are few measures suggested in this direction:

- ✓ Election commission of India should take notice of the communal and partisan manifesto of a party and in the event hate campaigns strict action should be initiated against even debarring to contest.
- ✓ No social or cultural organization in the name of humanitarian service should be allowed to promote or propagate any kind of divisive agenda.
- ✓ Free and fair media vindicates a liberal democracy, hence the authority to keep an eye on the merits of news content and reporting.
- ✓ On social media, the fastest means of communication, the quality and reliability of substantial stuff is questionable. Need for setting up of an autonomous regulatory body is imminent.

About the Author: Najmuddin Farooqi is retired from a senior management position from New Indi Assurance Company (Goverment of India) and currently rendering his services for various social causes. He has also published more than fifty articles mainly on social issues in newspapers and magazines both in Urdu and English.

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