



FROM DEMOCRACY TO COSMOPOLITANISM

The Changing Global Order

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ABSTRACT

In the word of H.V. Shringla former Indian foreign Secretary, "India values a multipolar international order, underpinned by international law, premised upon respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all country, resolution of international disputes through peaceful negotiations, and free and open access for all to the global commons. But In the view of Happyman Jacob for India, the rise of Asian century might turn to be too steeped in harsh realpolitik for its comfort. Multilateralism is therefore can be a solution to a present oriented solution but not long term. But we need refined Multilateralism which leads us to another reality of Cosmopolitan world. In this G20 Presidency our strategic interests should also be given priority. By strategic interest I meant it is not necessary that multipolar order or multipolar Asia will invariably take away relative stability of the current order where the power of U.S is in decline and that of China is still on rise. None of has thought about the success of Neo Liberalism but with the efforts of Woodrow Wilson it is reality today. USA has ensured its hegemony through the ideology and institutions. To have a world dominated India we need to think in that manner and in my views that interest can be fulfilled by Cosmopolitanism.

INTRODUCTION

Karl Marx the father of socialism said, "History repeats itself, first as a tragedy, second as farce". We have seen from American Revolution to Communism the world witnessed various trends of order and these phenomena continue. We have witnessed the era of Slavism, Authoritarianism, Communism, Fascism, Democracy and today's emerging concept of Cosmopolitanism. The prevalent order of Liberal Democracy seems to be failing. In some parts of the world like Nordic Countries, there is parity between people but countries in third-world countries are still suffering from an accumulation of wealth in a few hands and poverty. Due to this in the world, a lot of places are suffering through violence and instability, there is conflict in the middle east, the emergence of the New Cold War-like situation between China & USA and the rivalry between Russia & Ukraine. This situation has forced me to find out such an order where there can be a peaceful existence. This article will trace the development of democracy and see the possibilities of an emerging Cosmopolitan World and its sustainability.

When we speak about democracy, we remember the famous definition by Abraham Lincoln "Government of the people for the people and by the people". This is not wrong, but democracy means much more. The imprints of Democracy could be traced back to Athens in the 4th BCE. From Plato to Marx various Political Philosophers contributed to the concept of Democracy. Plato was in the first instance not a practitioner of Democracy but Aristotelian logics of Mixed Rule and thinking that "law is the reason without passion" made Plato admit that the rule of law is above everything" and he presented the rule of law in his 'The Laws' as second-best state after his Ideal state, which was ruled by Philosopher Ruler. Later in the 15th CE European Society was in Flux, there was war everywhere and rulers were found to be incompetent in ruling. Philosophers like Machiavelli rejected the rule of democracy for corrupt societies and advised in his book "The Prince, 1532" for the Iron Hand rule. But the journey did not stop there, Social Contract theorists emerged and contributed to the revival of Democracy. Hobbs however rejected Democracy, but Philosophers like Locke, Rousseau and Mill contributed to it a lot. It is highly important to know their views and contributions to know what Democracy is today.

Locke, the father of Liberalism was the first to suggest the ‘non-interventionist state’ (negative liberty) and considered Life, Liberty and Property as inalienable rights. In his view life and liberty and property are interrelated. Liberty is a fence (protection) of one’s life. If one is poor, then one has to be dependent on the other and the poor cannot take decisions independently announcing the preservation of property is one of the main limits on the power of Government. Rousseau was of the view that “Men can be forced to be free” [The Social Contract, 1762]. His conception of General Will is still matchless. He was a supporter of Participatory Democracy. JS Mill was the first Philosopher to talk about the welfare state (positive liberty) and positive intervention. In his view, every person is allowed to speak until it intervenes in harm principle. He believed that “if all mankind minus one, were one opinion, and only one person was of a contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind” [On Liberty, 1859].

Many More Philosophers have contributed to the concept of Democracy like Montesquieu, but this article only highlighted a few of them for a specific reason which you will realise in further reading.

DEFINING DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITIQUE

Plato and Aristotle contributed to the concept of Law. John Locke gave the limitations on the government and contributed to the liberal democracy; JS Mill contributed to the concept of the welfare state. Later Philosophers of Contemporary times talk about Minority Rights. So, in this way, Democracy is the rule of constitutional government (law) where every person has liberty and the state’s role is to preserve liberty. This is Liberal Democracy.

The evolution of Democracy seems to be very impressive but still, economies are not doing well. The benefits of growth are being sucked up to 1% on the top, and the ‘trickle down’ to those below has diminished.

According to Pogge some small appropriate the huge cooperative surplus produced by modern social organizations by reducing the poor’s share below zero per cent and increasing their share to more than 100% for example according to the Oxfam Report “Inequality Kill: India Supplement 2022, 98 Indian owns same wealth as the bottom 52.2 crore people”. The citizens and governments of the rich states are violating the negative duty by coercively excluding the global poor from resource share in this way.

We have seen three trends of Liberalism that are Classical Liberalism, Modern Liberalism and Neo-Liberalism. Classical Liberalism was rejected because of the economic depression of the 1930s and the concept of an interventionist state emerged from the Keynesian theory (the state has to intervene in managing economic conditions). But this however also not able to sustain itself with the emergence of Thatcherism and Reaganism (which demanded the rollback of the state, as the market knows its benefits). Today this also looks to be failing as rampant consumerism is at its peak and this has divided the world into haves and have-nots (Marx).

The concept of Negative and Positive Liberty are interrelated. If we take an example of 2 people running in a race, one is handicapped then there is an absolute chance that the other person will win. Pogge highlighted that without positive liberty, negative liberty cannot be ensured, and he introduced the concept of Global Resource Divided by highlighting the critique of Lock’s Negative Liberty (Non-Interventionist State).

Elitest theorists like Pareto, Anthony Downs, and Joseph Schumpeter also highlight the point that power only communicates in the hands of elite groups.

We have failed to generate popular support as highlighted by Rousseau. We have so far not seen the people obeying traffic rules instead traffic police standing there.

As B.R. Ambedkar remarked in 1949 that “Political democracy cannot last unless it lies at the base of its social democracy. In Politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality... We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment.”

Resultant of this today we are witnessing instability in the Middle East and as well as there is not any positive contribution to the development of peace in today’s war between Ukraine and Russia. With not enough in the present and reaching the hopes of better in the future people lose faith in their government. There is the instinct to search for better options in society and Marx’s predictions are today looking at its evolution.

In the views of Athena Roberts, Henrique Choern Morases, and Victor Ferguson the international economic order today is moving away from the post-cold War neoliberal order, arguably, economic security interests are relatively independent track.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Francis Fukuyama Celebrated the triumph of liberalism over communism and the end of history. But history so far has not ended. With the rise of hope for the better, there is one concept that is evolving which is cosmopolitanism.

COSMOPOLITANISM

In the war-trodden society and failing democracy, there is still hope for peace which is reflected by cosmopolitanism. David Held recognises the 8 basic principles for the success of Cosmopolitanism. “These are principles which can be universally shared and can form the basis for the protection and nurturing of each person’s equal significance in the moral realm of all humanity. They are the principles of (1) equal worth and dignity (2) active agency (3) personal responsibility and accountability (4) consent (5) collective decision-making about public matters through voting procedures (6) inclusiveness and subsidiarity (7) avoidance of serious harm and (8) sustainability” [The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism, 2005]. This involves the Metaprinciple of Autonomy (MPA) which means a person as a citizen who is ‘free and equal in a manner ‘comprehensible to everyone and the Metaprinciple of Impartialist Reasoning (MPIR) which means a moral frame of reference for specifying rules and principles that can be universally shared. In this way as per the Marxist phase, the geographical boundaries will reduce, and the state will “wither away”.

Critical Marxists like Andrew Linklater and Habermas also considered Emancipation in terms of the expansion of the moral boundaries of the Political Community. Habermas equates emancipation with a process in which the borders of the sovereign state lose their ethical and moral significance.

John Rawls however highlighted the critique of Cosmopolitanism but not rejected it. He is of the view that the state will not completely wither away and disagrees regarding the duties of Assistance that Poge talked about.

Regionalism has become a pervasive feature of international affairs. According to the World Organization, 287 regional trade agreements were in force as of 1 May 2018 and in 2022 it has become 356. With time there will be an increase in this. India has also signed Free Trade Agreement with countries like UAE and Australia and talks with Britain going on and integration with neighbouring areas is on the rise. This rise in regionalism in world politics portrays that we are moving towards integration of the world. None of us had thought that European Nations who were rivals of each other will come so close to forming the economic market as European Union with a common currency, parliament and free movement. The world is now heading from Preferential Trade Agreements to Economic Market.

We have seen the rise of the United Nations playing the role of a global gathering on matters. But in this present global time, it looks like failing due to disruptions in World Trade Organisation’s Dispute Resolution Mechanism, haphazard use of veto also affected its work and there are voices for reforms in the security council’s permanent membership.

The International Court of Justice looks to play a good role in this era. Where the dispute among the nations is discussed but it too lacks enforcement rights. China always denied its judgements and fully claim its role in the South China Sea. However, its Collective Security function was a progressive step, but it also looks like a failure in the present context. Various countries have alleged it promotes puppet regime installations.

Conclusion

After all these developments there is still hope for the emerging peaceful global order. This article will highlight how we can achieve that global order.

David Held’s principle is worthy. Kantian Logic of equal moral worth and dignity can help to sustain a peaceful existence. Baucha killings in Ukraine could have been stopped, and Rwanda Massacre could also be tackled if people would have realised this principle. This principle removes the sceptics of higher superior or lower superior and if people realise this principle, then problems seem to be resolved as there will be a society where everyone would be treated equally and this will result in cessation of violence. His second principle of active agent is also quite impressive. We have seen in pre-phases the efficient functioning of the UN. Today either we need a reformed UN or any other such agency for consent-making and collective decision-making ground for public matters through voting procedures (4th and 5th Principal). Responsibility and Accountability can be ensured by analysing one’s actions. If everyone would be having equal moral worth, then people will think first before acting. The 6th principle talks about inclusiveness and subsidiarity. We need to develop a consensus among nations to come forward for the initiatives of peace by existence by virtue, however, violence will not support such efforts as it will not be sustainable.

We are in an era of Complex Interdependence. Everything now is interconnected. There is a love-and-hate relationship. Countries are obliged to love each other which otherwise hate. China and USA are good examples of this situation.

The world is always in flux. Earlier it was unipolar when there was the hegemony of Europe and later it became bipolar with the rise of the USA and the Soviet Union. But the collapse of the Soviet Union only left the Unipolar world. This Unipolarity of the USA is now challenged by rising countries such as BRICS. This is a reality that no one world order has been able to sustain itself. It is always under evolution. But we need such an evolution that sustains peace and prosperity in the world.

New world order is now a demand of time. It's now time to think proactively for world peace and unification for the above eight principals which David Held talked about.

We need proactive approaches like Global Resource Divided which Pogge talked about comfortably raising one per cent of the global social product specifically for poverty eradication and outlined how these funds could be spent to provide strong incentives toward better government in developing countries.

There is also a different option available to us switching to the Gandhian Model of Democracy. Gandhi's Democracy was like a Concentric Circle where a smaller unit that is village has the highest power and supported the Participatory Model of Democracy. He advocated for the bottom-up approach. His conception of Democracy is equivalent to Ram Rajya. He was an anarchist and in his ideal state, there is no political power because there is no state. His view was that if the nation's life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. In such a state everyone is his ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that it is never a hindrance to his neighbour.

India's G20 Presidency will work to promote this universal sense of oneness. The theme is "One Earth, One Family, One Future". India by defining the theme in such a way has portrayed its traditional philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", meaning "the world is one family". These movements have strengthened cosmopolitanism in recent times.

In the view of Catriona Mckinnon, a person stands at the edge of a crevasse and is committed to continuing forward. To be able to jump she needs to think of jumping and any other view contrary to jumping will alter her position to reach another end. To reach the other end she needs to believe in herself that she can jump. In this way, cosmopolitan hope can be achieved besides criticism and this hope can take us to a peaceful world where every citizen has equal moral worth and equal opportunity for resources [The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism, 2005].

We have two options either Cosmopolitanism or the Gandhian Model of Democracy. Choices are always in between the masses. But today masses need to choose wisely. Always remember that "The problems of the world cannot possibly be solved by sceptics or cynics whose horizons are limited by the obvious realities. We need men who can dream of things that never were and ask, why not?" (John F Kennedy).

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