

“DR.BABU JAGAJIVAN RAM ROLE IN THE MAKING OF MODERN INDIA”

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ABSTRACT

Jagajivanram popularly known as babuji, was freedom fighter, a national leader a crusader of social justice ,and a champion of depressed classes , a true democrat and a distinguished union minister .he was instrumental in the foundation of all India depressed classes league an organization dedicated to attending equality for untouchables and active involvement in freedom movement on India. Babu jagajivanram played a most vital role in the long drawn political struggle for freedom in our country .his entire life had been spent for the cause of nation .during the period between 1928-1986 he emerged as front ranking freedom fighter and acquired significant position in the galaxy of national leaders .his role in making of modern India is a memorable one .

Key words:

EQUALITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE ,NATION BUILDING ,TRANFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

Babu Jagjivan Ram affectionately called Babuji, was a freedom fighter, a crusader for social justice and a messiah of downtrodden. His meteoric rise in public life saw him emerge as an eminent and popular political leader who devoted his entire life working for the welfare of the country. He belonged to the vintage era of modern Indian politics. As a national leader, a great parliamentarian, Union Minister for more than three decades and champion of depressed classes, he had a towering presence and played a long inning spanning over half a century in Indian Politics. His enduring and quintessentially twentieth century political legacy reminds us of the fervor, idealism and indomitable spirit of India's political leadership that not only fought and won freedom for the country, but also laid the firm foundation for a modern democratic polity.

Gifted with a flair of political leadership and moved by the ideals and goals of the socio-political events that enveloped the country, Babu Jagjivan Ram played a significant role in scripting our country's political and constitutional development and social changes. A passionate leader, dedicated to public life, he enjoyed immense respect from all quarters. Widely admired for his leadership qualities and organizational abilities, he always remained a force to be reckoned with in Indian politics. He was a great patriot, a scholar statesman, a versatile & genius personality, a brilliant orator, a distinguished parliamentarian, a true democrat and a great administrator of the country. Imbued with a deep spirit of patriotism, he contributed a lot towards building an egalitarian society.

Babu Jagjivan Ram has done a lot for the amelioration of the conditions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the country. He had grown by himself, without any support from outside and excelled not only as a Minister in a variety of posts he had held in the Union Ministry but also as AICC president, a valiant leader of the oppressed and the depressed. He enthused the country for Defense preparedness as a Defense Minister, brought in the Green Revolution as a Minister of Agriculture, expanded the Railways as a Railway Minister, inducted sophisticated fighter aircraft and improved the service conditions of armed forces personnel as Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister and thereby distinguished himself in every field that was entrusted to him.

NATION BUILDING PROCESS IN INDIA

At the hour of midnight on 14-15 August 1947, India attained independence. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of free India, addressed a special session of the Constituent Assembly that night. This was the famous 'tryst with destiny' speech that we are familiar with. This was the moment Indians had been waiting for. There were many voices in our national movement. But there were two goals almost everyone agreed upon: one, that after Independence, we shall run our country through democratic government; and two, that the government will be run for the good of all, particularly the poor and the socially disadvantaged groups. Now that the country was independent, the time had come to realize the promise of freedom. This was not going to be easy. India was born in very difficult circumstances. Perhaps no other country by then was born in a situation more difficult than that of India in 1947. Freedom came with the partition of the country. The year 1947 was a year of unprecedented violence and trauma of displacement. It was in this situation that independent India started on its journey to achieve several objectives. Yet the turmoil that accompanied independence did not make our leaders lose sight of the multiple challenges that faced the new nation.

Broadly independent India faced three kinds of major challenges .the first and immediate challenge was to shape a nation that was united. Yet accommodative of the diversity in our society .India was land of continental size and diversity. Its people spoke different languages .and followed different culture and religion. At that time it widely believed that a country full of such kinds of diversity could not remain together for long .the partition of the country appeared to prove everyone's worst fears. There were serious questions about the feature of India.

The second challenge was to establish democracy. To provide constitutional granted fundamental rights and extended the right to vote to every citizen .India adopted representative democracy based on the parliamentary form of government. These features ensured that the political competition would take place in a democratic framework. A democratic constitution is necessary but not sufficient for establishing a democracy. The challenge was to develop democratic practices in accordance with the constitution.

The third challenge was to ensure the development and well being of the entire society and not only some sections .here again the constitution clearly laid down the principle of equality and special protection to socially disadvantages groups and religious and cultural communities The contributions of Babu Jagjivan Ram breaks all attempts to classify his leadership in any homogenous framework. No doubt, he belonged to the section of society oppressed by caste discriminations. It prompts scholars to situate leadership of Babuji in a framework serving the marginalized sections or to describe him as a leader of the Dalits. But, any deeper analysis of his contributions and methods to address challenges opens a new dimension of leadership from Below. The range of classification for leadership of Babuji is very wide and it includes diverse aspect which has been largely ignored by mainstream media and knowledge production system.

BABU JAGAJIVAN RAM ROLE IN THE MAKING OF MODERN INDIA

In post-Independent India, his contribution to nation-building has left an indelible mark. As one of the founding fathers of the Constitution and as an important leader of the Constituent Assembly, he ensured the importance of social justice as one of the ideals enshrined in the Constitution. After Independence, when India embarked upon the task of nation building and fulfilling the dreams of the people, there were formidable developmental challenges before the nation which required the formulation of sound policy and new initiatives.

Jagjivan Ram proved an ever-dependable parliamentarian who assumed the charge of various key Ministries to handle the challenging tasks when the country was passing through sensitive and delicate times and people looked towards governmental assistance and schemes to face the crises and overcome the struggling phase. As Labor Minister, he introduced time-tested policies and laws for labor welfare. He was instrumental in enacting some of the important legislations for labor, viz. the Minimum Wages Act, 1946; the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947; the Indian Trade Union (Amendment) Act; the Payment of Bonus Act, etc. He actually laid down the foundation of social security by way of enacting the two important Acts, namely the Employees State Insurance Act, 1948 and the Provident Fund Act, 1952

. In 1952 Lok Sabha elections, Jagjivan Ram chose Sasaram as his parliamentary constituency since his earlier constituency was a part of it. The people elected him as their representative to parliament and he was given a Ministerial berth. As Minister of Communication (1952-1956), he nationalized the private airlines and spread the postal facilities to the remote villages. In 1957, Babuji was returned unopposed for the second time from his constituency of Sasaram. During 1956-62, as the Railways Minister, he modernized Railways and gave a new momentum to the expansion of Railways in the country. He took innumerable welfare measures for Railway employees and set a record by not allowing any increase in passenger fares for five years.

In 1962, the people of Sasaram elected Jagjivan Ram once again and during 1962-63, he was Minister of Transport and Communications. In 1963 he resigned under the Kamaraj Plan and worked to strengthen the Congress organization. During 1966-67, he shouldered the responsibility of the Labour and Rehabilitation Ministry. As Food and Agriculture Minister during 1967-70, he pulled the country out of the clutches of a severe drought, heralded the Green Revolution and for the first time made India self-sufficient in food. In March 1971 the stage was set for mid-term election. Babuji returned victorious once again to the Lok Sabha. As the Defence Minister during 1970-74, he changed the political map of the world and made history by liberating Bangladesh and made the Pakistan Army surrender unconditionally. The way the war was fought was unprecedented and he kept the promise he had made to the people of India that the war would not be fought on a single inch of Indian soil.

In 1974, Jagjivan Ram took charge of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. He organized the Public Distribution System to ensure that food was available to the masses at a reasonable price. As Minister, he had unparalleled ability to look after the affairs under his Ministry and he had his priorities well defined to take on the challenges ahead. In all the Ministries and Departments at the Centre, where Babu Jagjivan Ram had held charge, he left his mark of qualitatively high performance. In

political power, he saw the opportunity to transform people's lives and promote their welfare by bold and well thought-out plans

. He played a dominant role in the Indian National Congress right from 1937. During the pre-Independence period Babuji held important offices at the State level in the Congress. After Independence, he became the axis of the Party and indispensable for party affairs as well as governance of the country. He was a member of All India Congress Committee from 1940 to 1977 and was in the All India Congress working Committee from 1948 to 1977. He was in the Central Parliamentary Board and All India Congress Committee from 1950 to 1977. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Smt. Indira Gandhi could not afford to spare him due to his astute political acumen. He was the mind of the Government and the Party.

In 1966, following the death of the then Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, the Congress Party witnessed some inner power struggle and the age-old party deteriorated due to groupism. On one side were the old guards like Morarji Desai, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy and K. Kamaraj who were called the Syndicate and on the other side were the Progressives such as Smt. Indira Gandhi, Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. In 1969 the conflict between the two groups came to its head and the party split into two, the Congress (O) and the Congress led by Babu Jagjivan Ram. In the Bombay Session of the Congress in December 1969, Babuji was elected unanimously as the party president and thereafter worked hard to strengthen the party which had weakened its hold in many States. His hard work paid off. His diligence, organizational skills and leadership ensured that the Congress came back to power with a thumping majority in March 1971.

In a turn of events, Emergency was declared on 26 June 1975. The fundamental rights as enshrined in the Constitution stood suspended. However, Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi recommended the dissolution of the Lok Sabha on 18 January 1977 and to hold fresh General Elections. As the impact of emergency was felt by everyone, Babu Jagjivan Ram resigned from the Cabinet and the Congress Party on 2 February 1977. He formed his own party, 'Congress for Democracy' (CFD) on 5 February 1977. He returned victorious once again to Lok Sabha in General Elections from Sasaram Constituency in Bihar. On 25 March 1977 he joined the Janata Government and became Defence Minister. He merged CFD with Janata Party on 1 May 1977. Babu Jagjivan Ram became the Deputy Prime Minister of the country on 24 January 1979 and continued to handle the charge of Defence Ministry till 28 July 1979.

The internal conflicts of the Janata Party resulted in losing its majority in Parliament and the Government led by Shri Morarji Desai fell in July 1979. Thereafter, Chaudhary

Charan Singh was sworn in as Prime Minister on 28 July 1979 and Babuji close to remain as leader of the opposition. But, Chaudhary Charan Singh could not prove his majority in the House. After the fall of his Government, many members of Lok Sabha rallied around Babu Jagjivan Ram and asked him to stake his claim. The President, however, dissolved the Lok Sabha on 22 August 1979 and ordered fresh Elections. In January 1980, the people of Sasaram re-elected Babuji to the Lok Sabha and for the first time he sat in the Opposition. After the fall of the Janata Government, Babuji launched his own party the Congress (J) on 5 August 1981 and in the General Election of December 1984, he once again returned victorious to the Lok Sabha.

His long tenure is a reflection of a fearless and dedicated life. Since the inception of the Parliament, till his death, he represented the same constituency and fought and won every election. His uninterrupted legislative career from 1936-1986 spanning half a century is a world record. Leaving behind the message of equality, he breathed his last on 6 July, 1986.

CONCLUSION

Jagjivan Ram meteoric rise in public life saw him emerge as an eminent and popular political leader, who devoted his entire life working for the welfare of the country. He belonged to the vintage era of modern Indian politics. As national leader, parliamentarian, Union Minister and champion of depressed classes, he had a towering presence and played a long innings spanning half a century in Indian politics. His enduring and quintessentially twentieth century political legacy reminds us of the fervour, idealism and indomitable spirit of India's political leadership that not only fought and won freedom for the country, but also laid the firm foundation for a modern, democratic polity. Gifted with a flair for political leadership and moved by the ideals and goals of the socio-political events that enveloped the country, Babu Jagjivan Ram played a significant role in scripting our country's political and constitutional development and social change. A passionate leader dedicated to public life, he enjoyed immense respect from all quarters. Widely admired for his leadership qualities and organizational abilities, he always remained a force to be reckoned with in Indian politics.

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