



People's Philosophy People's Movement

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the Adivasi and local environmental movements in India correspond with Carvaka or Lokayata philosophy's outlook and receives condescending treatment from the political hegemony like them. Both Lokayata and the environmental movements hold a bottom-up materialist policy outlook against the state's top-down approach in the question of resource distribution and development. The challenge this argument faces is that Lokayata school does not exist in its name at present and it is not a single school of thought either. Several Indian philosophical schools as Tantra, Buddhism, Sangkhya philosophy, Ajivikas. shows links to Carvaka philosophy. Also, documents written by the Carvaka philosophers are rare and we barely know names of such philosophers. We come to know about them mostly from the scholars who criticized them. Secondly, the word "Carvaka" is not used anymore to coin someone as a follower of that tradition. But the word Lokayata is still used in languages as Bengali. Curiously in Bengali, it means popular, traditional, secular or materialist. Harshly criticized them for their materialistic philosophy, accused them of being utterly immoral and hedonistic who only pursue pleasure and avoid pain.

The word Lokayata is derive from two Sanskrit terms "Loka" and "Ayata" meaning "people" and "extended among". Together, Lokayata means the philosophy extended among people. Chattyopadhyay argued that Lokayata was a philosophy that mostly prevailed among the working class and indigenous people of ancient India which is related to the primitive form of tantra. He posited Lokayata to be the philosophy of proletariat, rather than a sect of erudite. He argued that the Lokayata philosophy was materialistic and thus challenged prevailing theistic philosophies in the post-vedic era. His discussion suggests that adivasis and the working class of that era were the followers of this philosophy. As a result, spokesmen of the hegemony, as the scholar madhavacharya criticized the followers of lokayata doctrine. Theistic recrimination of the Lokayata mostly based on three aspects. Firstly, Lokayata were reprimanded to be Nastikas. Lokayata epistemology argues that anything that cannot be experience physically does not exist. This argument posits them as materialist and by implication, atheists. Secondly, they were travestied as the hedonists. Scholars of theistic philosophy argued that those who do not believe anything beyond matter cannot liberate themselves from the moha or illusion of the matter. Thus, they pursue only for matter and material pleasure. To the theistic scholars, the materialists do not have any accountability to the divine and thus are immoral in their conduct. This recrimination of the Lokayata materialists became most popular. Thirdly, they were the assailants of any of the established theistic philosophies or hegemonic doctrines. In the analysis of this paper, I will show that the people's environmental movement in India assails top down policy approach of the state, challenge transcendent symbolism of

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environmental elements and are perceived by the hegemony to pursue local economic gains rather than contributing to the development of the nation.

Keywords: People's philosophy; Hegemonic doctrines; Hinduism; Government

INTRODUCTION

Lokayata was the "philosophy of people" who is not a part of the hegemony. So, it was the philosophy of the ethnic and economic minorities. Adivasi people are the perfect representative of such ethnic minority while working class is the representative of the economic minority. And through Lokayata philosophy they posed a challenge to the hegemonic institutions. They set themselves as the "alternative" or the "other" from hegemony. This is an "otherness" that poses the minorities in conflict with the hegemony of state apparatus and its stakeholders. It also differentiates between the metaphysical concepts perceived by the Adivasis and marginal people and transcendental concepts of the religion of Hinduism, the dominant religion in India. It posits the marginal other in contrast to the political ethics of modern state [1].

Hinduism, politics and environmental pollution shows the presence of these three attributes of Lokayata concepts among Hindu devotees and clergy of the Ganges river regarding the environmental activists. The pandas or the Hindu clergymen who are faithful to the transcendental attributes of Ganges as the purifier argued that the river cannot be polluted. This argument by implication means that the activists who claim that Ganges is being severely polluted and needs material purification are questioning the transcendental purity of the river. Such an implication shows the trace of two Lokayata attributes, being atheistic/non-believer in transcendence and assailant to the religious doctrine. On the other hand, a couple of devotees argued that the leader of the movement is appropriating his personal material gain. Such an argument relates to the hedonistic image of the movement, the most popular recrimination of the Lokayata philosophy. In the examples of the Adivasi movements as chick or applica, we observe the materialistic outlook of the activists. Economic and political issues were more of a concern for the activists than protecting the transcendental image of the forest. They wanted the right [2].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Make economic and political decisions about the forest. It put them in a conflict of power with the modern Indian state. There are movements that concern the ritualistic value of natural symbols, such as vision movement. But such movements fundamentally were for the right of people over their land. By establishing their ritualistic rights, they established their economic and political right over the land. vision movement stopped the royal authority from cutting down the local forest, which championed people's decision over the government.

In conclusion, we can observe that secular motives prevail in these movements over transcendental motives. In the modern secular state of India, the materialist tradition of the proletariat

of India could work as a key to bargain with the system. In the successful environmental movements as chick we see that the materialist tradition played an important role for the movement. The demand for right over their land poses them against the state hegemony and the religious leadership that the state favors. But their materialistic demands create the chance to negotiate with the state.

Conceptual framework

So, who were the carvakas? The term is derived from the conjugation of two words "Care" or "aesthetic", "beautiful", "efficient" and "Vasa" or "words", "speech". These two words lead us to the identity of the Carvakas. Rhys-David's argued that Carvakas originated from folk-lore, cultural components of Indigenous and proletariat. Folk-lore is related to the cultural aesthetics, art, songs and lore, verbal and social traditions. When we consider "vaka" or verbal tradition with it, we find the meaning of Carvaka as one who speaks of aesthetics, rather than ethics. Secondly, we also find the meaning of the term as efficient speaker. The first meaning that we have derived, clearly shows that Carvakas were the people who talked about folk-lore or popular rural culture. The second meaning points the Carvakas as efficient debaters. The other name that was discussed in the introduction, Lokayata refers clearly and directly to the relation to this ancient school of thought with the popular culture, one which was spread among the people.

Such identification of this school of thought posits a question. In the caste-defined society of ancient India, how did a school of thought emerge from the proletariat to debate with the brahminical hierarchy? The answer lies in the timeline of the rise of the school. The lokayatas emerged and challenged the Vedic institutions in the post-vedic era. That era did not face challenges only from the Lokayatas, rather there were challenges from Buddhists, Jains, ajivikas and many more school of thoughts. The three schools of them that I have mentioned were all considered as Nastikas or atheistic schools. Pointed six scholars, founder of different philosophical schools of that era and considered as atheists, and argued that at least the first three of them were Lokayatas. Such an argument shows the vastness of anti-vedic doctrines that prevailed in the era. It was also an era of expansion and cultural exchange, that exposed the Vedic city states to indigenous and proletariat culture and found empires. Plausibly, that is how the Lokayata philosophy reached the courts of erudite. In the Mahabharata, Book 12: Santi Parva: Rajadharmanusasana Parva: Section 29 we see and expression of these phenomena a Carvaka Raksasa, disguised himself as a Brahmin to question the legitimacy of Yudhisthira as the emperor. The Carvaka there criticized him as a kin-slayer. Chattyopadhyay recognized that kin-slaying was worst crime one could commit in an indigenous society [3].

A term that relates to the out-caste indigenous people

This mythological story indicates, the Carvaka scholars were considered as pseudo-Brahmins. Also, the end of the story indicates the consequence that followed upon the Carvakas, burnt by the teja or righteous fire of the true Brahmins. Described another meaning of Carvaka, according to them, the term derived from Carv-to chew, eat or consume. It refers to the schools hedonistic and immoral image. They also referred to the traditional belief, that the sage brhaspati was the founder of Carvaka materialism and he, opposing to the gods, taught the demons in materialism.

Also described Carvaka as synonymous to Materialism. It is, according to them, Lokayata-mata or the view of the people. Chattyopadhyay elaborated on this point to claim that in Indian philosophy, materialism and peoples view are not different. Lokayata means people's philosophy and it is none other than materialism. He indicated the point of view of the Puranas and Upanishadas that Lokayata meant the working and out-caste classes of India.

Harprasad Shastri based his argument in relating Tantra with Lokayata. His argument is that Tantra prevailed as a popular religion among the Eastern Indian population rather than Vedic Hinduism. Tantra, that discusses human body and relation between male and female as the central concept for understanding creation and the world, is the root of Lokayata philosophy. Chattyopadhyay took Shastri's argument to posit that the Lokayatas rejected the idea of transcendental beings as gods, soul and afterlife, based on indigenous Tantric philosophy. Chatterjee-Datta discussed Lokayata epistemology to be based on the matter, that can be perceived and proven physically. The philosophy rejected anything that cannot be perceived physically. He argued that Lokayata. This works as a mythological metaphor for the rise and demise of Carvaka school rather historical evidence. Philosophy still exist evidently among popular traditions as Baul, Sahajiya, Vaishnava as these philosophical traditions focus on human body and reproductive relation of male and female. These traditions reject transcendental status of god. They rather propose that by understanding the nature of human, one could find god. So, for them god is human, not something more than human. For the Lokayata and these traditions, material human is the Supreme Being, not the divine beings that cannot be proven physically. Chattyopadhyay continued to say that Lokayata faced rejection for being the philosophy of the people. Brahmin scholars believed this philosophy of people as least meritorious, least intellectual, because they pursue matter over spirituality. For the Brahmins, Sruṭi-sasana, dictations of the scriptures with transcendental legitimacy was the highest truth. Lokayata materialism was rejecting and challenging the hegemony of the scriptures. Thus, the Brahmin scholars claimed that the Lokayatas argue in vein and have no legitimacy. To them, Lokayatas are utterly immoral and hedonistic who pursue material gain and pleasure than the higher causes as moksha or spiritual liberation, since they reject the transcendence. Lokayatas, according to Astika Brahmins are immoral because

they have no belief in transcendent dictation to control their behavior.

For Chattyopadhyay, Lokayata challenge to scriptures and religious hegemony denotes the challenge to political hierarchy led by upper castes. He advocated that the conflict between the Brahminic philosophies and Lokayata was a class struggle. It was rather a movement of proletariat of ancient India to retain rights over their land and resources from Vedic political hegemony. Those who believed in the transcendence and political hierarchy of the scriptures. Two important social characters of the Lokayatas were matriarchy and rejection of caste system. As they rejected the scriptures, they rejected caste system and patriarchy all the same. They advocated against resource concentration in the hands of the upper caste or class. Chattyopadhyay identified Lokayata tradition as indigenous tradition that predates the patriarchal tradition, because they started in the early agricultural society. According to early agricultural indigenous traditions were matrilineal, where husbands go to the wife's home after marriage. These traditions had equilibrium in decision making between the males and females. So, with the lineage from early agricultural society, Lokayata tradition was supposedly matrilineal [4].

Modern Indian state and lokayata in modernity

Chattayopadhyay cite Jawaharlal Nehru's point of view on Lokayata, the first prime minister and one of the founding fathers of India. He pointed out the Nehru described the Lokayata as the philosophy of "small thinking people". Chattyopadhyay continues that Nehru here resonates the Brahmin critiques of Lokayata. In this statement, Nehru questions the merit and intellect of the common and lower-class people. Lower class of the society in India is perceived as uneducated thus incapable of responsible decision making. Such a point of view is modern version of Brahminical observation on Lokayatas that they are materialists because they do not have enough merit accepting divine truth observed that Nehru's political slogan was "unity in diversity". This lineage of thought cements class difference and allow the upper class to decide policy for the state. So, in modern secular state of India, another class-struggle emerges. This class struggle takes place between the political and economic hegemony in modern India and the indigenous people and proletariat. In the environmental sector, this struggle revolves around the management of environmental resources. The modern state now has taken the position of Brahminic hierarchy and the people are still Lokayatas [5].

Analysis of environmentalist doctrines and movements

We can divide Environmentalist doctrines in India into two major groups. First, the doctrines that advocates conservation through transcendental symbolism of natural elements. This doctrine proposes to follow Hindu morality and ethics in environmental conservation. It is based on the scriptural symbolism of land, river, forest and other environmental elements relating them to the transcendent. It appeals to the Hindu morality of honoring the gods related to environment (such as Agni) conserving the purity of such gods and goddesses.

It takes a top-down approach where the Raja or king (head of the government or the government itself) is responsible for conserving such elements and holds the authority of decision making regarding resource management.

Diwedi in his "Human Responsibility and Environment: A Hindu Perspective" argues for conservation under this doctrine. Diwedi argued for the Hindu ethical propositions of resource extraction in against Western Anthropocentric propositions imposed through Muslim and Christian colonial rule in India. He singled out the anthropocentrism in Western religions as Islam and Christianity to signify hierarchy of human over other creations. As modern secularism derives from Christian tradition in the West, Diwedi argues, it keeps the anthropocentrism. On the other hand, Diwedi highlights, Hindu scriptures as Rig Veda, Sankhya Philosophy and puranas announces equilibrium among Human and other creatures since they are believed to be created from different parts of the grand creator. He points out the denotation of gods with different natural components, Charka's discussion on purity and pollution and Hindu ecological sanctity movements as bisnoi and ecological Satyagraha movements to pronounce Human responsibilities to nature. He advocates strengthening the ethical sense of human responsibility based on religious belief. But as the dominant religious traditions Hinduism, Buddhism or Jainism played political role that is allowing similarity of modes of resource extraction from nature. Such similarity makes allowance for individualism in contrast to egalitarian indigenous traditions. Moreover, in the modern world, secular nation state politics and capitalist economy poses significant difficulty to practice such religiously motivated ethos. On the other hand, the second doctrine is based on materialistic environmental challenges. For this doctrine, conservation is needed for the survival of the population and culture of the people who are mostly dependent and affected by environmental elements and change. These people are the indigenous people and proletariat. They take a bottom up approach in policy making where people are held capable of decision making on conservation and environmental resource management [6].

As argument explores the conflict between adivasi traditions with the dominant traditions. He explores the ethnophilic ecological movements in Jharkhand to argue that these movements have gone beyond ecological and ethnic motifs and commonly used Marxist class analysis. Rather, these ecological movements point out that it is a conflict between the totality of cultures. The develop mentalist ethos fall short to imagine the totality of Adivasi cultures. The modern nation states ignore or are oblivious to the Adivasi cultures thus failing to accommodate ethnicities and ecological practices. This conflict between the develop mentalist culture and indigenous cultures is impeding and redefining each other.

The case of development ethos is like the Brahminic scriptural ethos in ancient India, when transcendent goals held the hierarchal position and challenging such goals was considered as heresy. In the modern secular India, the heresy is to challenge the hierarchal development ethos. Here, from Parajuli's discussion, we observe the ethnophilic ecological movements are

acting as the modern Lokayata, heretic to the scriptural hegemony of secular state [7].

Chandi Prashad Bhatt's article, "Chipko Angolan: Forest conservation based on people's power" is a historical recapitulation of the people's resistance movement against environmental exploitation in Uttarkhand, India. The recapitulation of the events in the 1970's and 1980's regarding the Chipko Andolan (The movement to embrace) elaborated Bhatt's argument that "society must become partner in forestry". He started the article with statistics of ecological degradation and deforestation in India and their catastrophic outcomes as landslide, flood etc. Secondly, he brought in the human perspective of these phenomena, which affects the local indigenous people of Uttarkhand the most. The rapid urbanization and industrialization throughout India put immense pressure on the forestry. Corporations and contractors from the plain are allotted tenders and agreements by different government departments and move to operate in the mountain regions of Uttarkhand. They bring their own trained workforce from the plain, collect forest resources and distribute them in the plains. In the total process, the local indigenous people are not invited by the government or the contractors as a negotiator. Indigenous people are not viewed as the "owner" of the resources they are dependent on and are managing historically. As a result, they are deprived of the gains from these contracts and they also suffer from the catastrophes caused by the deforestation. Mentioned the devastating flood of 1970 in Alakananda river region as one of the shocking catastrophe. A massive wave of "development" and change hit Uttarkhand following the Indo-China war in 1962 when the Indian government became concerned with the regions bordering with China. Uttarkhand is one of them. Military garrison and bases started to be built in the region followed by other developments of urban facilities. Bhatt argued that Chipko movement presses for the right use of forest more than just saving them as an ecological movement. The right use of forest would be implemented if the people around the forest are involved in the forest management. This involvement of the local people includes that they would have the right to participate in the forest policy making, forest resource collection and distribution [8].

The organization that triggered the Chipko movement is Dasoli Gram Swarajja Mandal or Dasoli Society for Village Self-rule. This organization started to ensure the economic participation of the local people in forest resource collection. Their economic movements faced bureaucratic impediments and slowly came to an end. They started the Chipko movement in the morning of March 23, 1973 resisting a sports contractor who was allotted the right to extract ash trees of Gopeshwar. From the beginning, the movement has been successful in most of their cases and the Planning commission of India accepted their participation in forest management Not only in stopping deforestation, DGSM organizes awareness programs, sustainable fuel management, afforestation and crop protection programs where many villages participate voluntarily. They provide the villagers with technical and economic support to the villagers and their success encouraged the government to provide financial and technical support to the organization. Bhatt's discussion points out the

similarity of these environmental movements with Lokayata policy approaches of bottom-up policy making, where the root level people hold the power to decide about the resource management in their area. It also shows that how they have faced violent reprisal from the state apparatus when they denied complying with the hegemony of the state decisions. Women leadership in such movements is another similarity with Lokayata tradition [9].

Alf provides detailed discussion on the State- Adivasi relation in India in his article "Adivasis in and Against the State". While Bhatt's article described non-violent Chipko movement bearing economic and conservation motives Nielsen analyzed three politically motivated Adivasi movements. In the case of Chipko movement less severely violent resistance from the state and corporations are observed, moreover, Chipko succeeded to draw attention and support from the government itself. On the other hand, the three politically motivated movements in Western Madhya Pradesh faced severe violent resistance from the political hegemony [10].

The conceptual framework of Nielsen's article works on three hypothetical modes of advance for subaltern movements. The first hypothesis denotes that subaltern movements in India could advance only by challenging and moving beyond the state. Second hypothesis denotes that rather harnessing the state and its democratic power dynamics can further the cause of such movements. Thirdly, Nilsen argued, that the subaltern movements advance by appropriating democratic vocabularies of the constitution while negotiating with the repression from the hegemony of the state. Nilsen discussed in detail the three states of relation between state and Adivasis, confrontation, conformation and negotiation. The confrontation between the elites and the subaltern is a historic reality in India, where the subalterns participated in the independence movement of India under the modern democratic goals for the new born state. But post-colonial politics in India concentrated to the elites and continued colonial treatment of the subalterns. As a result, the traditional right of the Adivasis on forests are still denied, forcing them to face "everyday tyranny" as termed it from the forest department, police and other state apparatus. In the colonial fashion, forests are still considered as a state property rather than allowing rights of the Adivasis on them. Nilsen discussed the cases of movements by three subaltern organization KMCS and AMS (Adivasi Morcha Sangathan. The first movement succeeded in resisting everyday Tyranny while the latter faced reprisal and had to compromise political goals and existence of the movement [11].

In the case of KMCS, attempts to reprise the movement came from the local officials of forest Department who are directly involved in imposing everyday tyranny on the Adivasis. These officials as rangers and police appropriated bribery, conducted tortures and other types of extortions on the local people. It became a part of their everyday life and they did not know that the officials do not have any constitutional right to these. KMCS built the awareness among the locals and when faced reprisal from the officials went to the higher authority of the Chief Minister. KMCS's popularity and movement did not alarm the political hegemony rather succeeded to draw its attention

towards the abuse of government authority. As a result, the officials were sanctioned and KMCS continued its movement. But in the case of AMSs, their growing popularity and power among the Adivasis alarmed the political hegemony and their Adivasi allies. Moreover, these organizations had political ambition that was contradictory to the hegemonic authority of the state. As a result, they faced severe violent reprisal and forced to cease existence or continue the movement negotiating the terms with the state. They were forced to conform. Nilsen concludes his article pointing to crucial attribute of the state-subaltern relation. While appropriating the constitutional vocabularies ideologically empowers the subalterns, in practical it can fail to be fruitful [12].

DISCUSSION

Lokayata tradition had to go through similar adversaries and changes also. As a result, they ceased to prevail. Rather, they left their mark on the traditions that Shastri mentioned. It signifies with Nilsen's point of negotiation between the state and the proletariat, through which both changes. Alley's contribution in Hinduism and Ecology raises a crucial question about the religious motives of environmental movements; why religious and political ideologies do not coopt on the environmental issues even on the case of the sacred river of Ganga? She cites one incident from the early 20th century (1914-1916) where political independence movement coopted with a religious movement to conserve the religious symbol of river Ganga. This was the only time of cooperation between political and religious leadership on an environmental issue. Though in later movements politics and religion overlapped narrating, motivating or challenging each other; regarding some environmental causes also; such cooperation did not occur. Alley seeks to find why. She argues that contemporary religious leadership is not concerned about the material pollution of river Ganga, thus their movements revolve around the political and transcendent value of Ganga and environmental challenges become less concerning [13].

Three important trends in this issue are observable. Firstly, Ganga is the center of a tripartite bargain. The three parties of this bargain are the political leadership, religious leadership and environmentalist leadership. Secondly, in movements regarding Ganga, political and religious issues prevail overlooking environmental issues. In this tripartite bargain, neither of the party collaborates with others. Political leadership took attempts to execute projects that could alter the course of the river or bring other geographical changes which were denied by both religious and environmental leadership. There is just one time that religious and political leadership collaborated on this issue. She starts are argument with the question that why religious and political leadership do not collaborate on environmental issues regarding Ganga. Then she brings in the environmental movements and shows that such movements find collaboration from neither political nor religious leadership. Here on the environmental issues regarding Ganga, environmental movement becomes marginalized because religious and political interests regarding Ganga prevails over it.

In the movement against the controlling of the flow of Ganga in early 1900's, political leaders started moving against the colonial policymakers, on the call of Malaya, who called for the conservation of the religious significance and use of Ganga. The pro-independence political leadership involved the pandas or religious leaders in the shrines of Ganga later. The argument from the British government was that the flow of Ganga needed to be controlled to resolve flooding and irrigation challenges. On the other hand, the movement bargained for water flow to be unimpeded for the ritual bathing of the pilgrims. The government's argument was more concerned about the economic implication of the flow control. But the challenges for Ganga as a river due to the control were overlooked. Through this bargain, Sri Ganga Sabha assumed exclusive control over the management of material affairs of Har Ki Pauri shrine of Ganga [14].

Religious movements regarding Ganga, focus on the political control over her more than ecological conservation of the river. The conflict becomes between religious and secular politics. Since, Ganga is a Hindu religious symbol, Varity Hindu Paris had promotes the cause to cleanse Muslim dominion over the river through pilgrimage movements as Ganga Mata, Bharat Mata and Go Mata. Ganga being a Transcendent symbol, her secular or scientific discussion as mere a river is rejected and exclusive religious use of her is emphasized.

For the religious symbolism of Ganga, religious leaders argue that it is not possible to impure her, only some small material contamination is occurring for the unclean activities around her. It also reinforces the claim that no earthly agency or project can purify her, as a result the Pandas become askance about any government policy or project that targets to do so. They also are askance about non-governmental movements for the purity of Ganga. Kelly D. Alley's discussion latently shows that for the Pandas, and Hindu believers, the environmental movements regarding Ganga are the materialist Nastikas, who do not believe in the transcendence of the river goddess. We find the Lokayata debate once again. In this case, the state system itself resembles with them as it is a secular apparatus. Moreover, the issue of immoral hedonism comes to the point, because in the devotional thought, state projects, Muslim industrialists and environmental movements are trying to gain their own material gain. Otherwise, they would not try to purify what is already and always pure, the transcendent body of Ganga [15].

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above we can conclude that the Lokayata debate is latently present in the environmental movement issue,

though the term itself is not uttered as to criticize the movements. The debate between transcendence, hegemony and right of the indigenous and proletariat boils down to the debate between political and economic dominant class and the proletariat. Lokayata or Carvaka gurus do not exist now, but their thought and tradition persists. Because it was originated and spread among the grass root people of India and in the modern environment-development struggle is a struggle of the grass root people. The political hegemony might have shifted from Brahminic and caste hegemony of constitutional secularism, but hegemony remains. So does remain class struggle and mutual negotiation and adaptation.

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