



International Journal of Economic Research

ISSN : 0972-9380

available at <http://www.serialsjournals.com>

© Serials Publications Pvt. Ltd.

Volume 14 • Number 20 • 2017

Paradigm Shift: Transient or Real?

Manvendra Singh¹

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, School of Arts and Languages, Lovely Professional University, Email: manvendra.21755@lpu.co.in

ABSTRACT

Change is the law of nature. Nothing remains permanently static in society. Every society is dynamic and keeps experiencing changes from time to time. This is because a polity or society does not operate in a vacuum. It works according to the whims and fancies of the people involved who serve as instruments of change. In the Indian polity, the first paradigm shift was witnessed in the year 1947 when the country was partitioned into two. The earlier vision of federalism in India was to have a federal centre with only few subjects such as defense, foreign affairs, communication and perhaps banking. For the rest, every Indian state was to be given complete autonomy so that it could rule the way it liked best. This was done to obviate the fears of the Muslims who wanted a separate homeland because they feared Hindu domination after independence. It is to meet their demand that the states were given complete internal autonomy so that those states which had a Muslim majority will rule their states according to their own desires and there will be no Hindu domination over them. But the moment India got partitioned, we fell back on the postulate that in the new federation, the Centre will be strong and the states will have to be content with only remaining the ward boys of an omnipotent centre. This was necessary to prevent further balkanization of the nation. Since India is a land of diversity with a multi polarity of languages, plurality of religions and great differential among people in respect of food habits and the dress code, it was feared that there may develop secessionist feelings and on the analogy of Pakistan, people may demand further division of the country. Thence in order to keep the polity free from alienating tendencies, it was decided to have a very strong centre. A new paradigm shift is being witnessed now with the emergence of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which shows that in a country known for overwhelming corruption, ethics driven politics is also possible.

Keywords: Analogy, Balkanization, Omnipotent, Paradigm Shift, Secessionist.

India is a country on the march to development. The contemporary India, in its political aspects, is a product of multi polar influences spread over a prolonged period of time. There are three historical strings which

stood out distinctly as significant influences on India. The first is Hinduism, often considered as the oldest religion in the world, the concrete bedrock and unifying framework and structure of the Indian society (*Iravati karve 1961*). The second is the British impact on India. The legal authority wielded by a Central British power that managed to consolidate the whole subcontinent under it also affected its fundamental political beliefs and relationships. The rule of British East India Company over India for more than two hundred years had left a substantial impact on this country. One of the most beneficial effects of the British Raj over India was introducing the provisions of law and order in the country. Apart from that, they had brought in the concept of the Indian Civil Service (ICS), which were initially manned wholly by the British officers, to which later on Indians were also added in increasing numbers, but always containing men of learning, ability and wisdom, of educated background and picked with great care. Following Lord Macaulay's celebrated *Minute* of 1835; there came the most momentous decision of the British Empire: the decision to introduce English as a medium of instruction in Indian colleges and high schools. It is worth mentioning that this decision came not as a forceful imposition by the East India Company but rather as a result of agitation made by the Indian leaders and social reformers, foremost among them being Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

Thus, there was an emergence of a wholly new class which was English educated, taught in liberal ideas, full of approbation for the West and Western culture. Many of them took to law and practised it. Some became teachers. Some took commerce, business and industry. A few of them managed to go abroad – mostly to England – took advanced education and very often aspired to become member of the Indian Civil Service (ICS), while few others opted for journalism, accounting, medicine and politics (*B B Mishra 1961*). However, it has its flipside as well. It has created one of the most acute problems of India, which is creation of the huge gap between the Elite class and the general masses and thus accounting for the ascending inequalities among these two classes.

Gradually, the attitude towards the British government underwent a drastic change and the British began to be looked upon as the alien rulers who ruled autocratically, without taking the interests of the people of India into account. Thirdly, the reconstructive nationalism of the pre-independence era, which was generated in response to the impact of a new world order as transmitted through the colonial power and later developed as a means to political independence and social reform in the context of a slowly expanding framework of democratic institutions. Indian nationalism had turned radical and became more assertive in tone. It was followed by the *Swadeshi* movement to prevent people from buying foreign goods and to encourage them to buy indigenous goods instead. Several factors were responsible for the initial steps in the development towards parliamentary form of government in India during this time. For example, firstly, the Congress grew more critical of the failure of the government to reciprocate to the friendly gestures that its leaders had been making. There also emerged within the Congress party, alongside the moderate leadership led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a powerful group of militants spearheaded by leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal etc. (*Gopal Krishna 1966*). This new group emphasized political struggle and the building of a strong nation wide movement. Tilak made *Swaraj* i.e. the self-government, the main goal of political agitation. He even thundered by saying that “Swaraj is my birthright and I will have it.” This new rebellious group put pressure on the moderates to ask for more and immediate reforms in the country. Secondly, the partition of Bengal by the British colonial power in 1905 gave rise to a fury of demonstrations against the Imperial government. Thirdly, the Morley-Minto Reforms introduced by the British in 1909, by which for the first time some elected members were taken in the Viceroy's and the

Governor's Councils, led to a demand for more representation and greater power. Fourth and the most important factor is that World War I forced the British Empire to seek the active cooperation of Indians in the war effort, and, in return, to assure them of greater share of self-government. The result was the creation of Montague-Chelmsford Reforms in 1919 which established a moderate form of parliamentary government under the foreign tutelage.

Then came the Government of India Act of 1935 which abolished the diarchy in the provinces of the country and introduced 'provincial autonomy' in its place. It led to the creation of the apex financial regulator of this country, the Reserve Bank of India in order to regulate and financial system of this nation. The act helped multifariously in the foundation of Public Service Commission both at Provincial and Joint level. Additionally, it also helped in the establishment of a Federal Court in 1937. Later, on February 20, 1947, the British Prime Minister *Clement Atlee* declared that the British rule in India would end by June 30, 1948; after which the power would be transferred to responsible Indian hands. However, this announcement was followed by the agitation by the Muslim League demanding partition of the country. Lord Mountbatten, the viceroy of India, put forth the partition plan, known as the Mountbatten plan. The plan was accepted by the Muslim League. Immediate effect was given to the plan by enacting the Indian Independence Act, 1947 (*Indian Independence bill*). It ended the British rule in India and declared India as an independent and sovereign state from August 15, 1947. Ever since 1947, when it became free, it has been trying to change itself and create a new image of itself, different from the colonial visage. While it was a dependent country, the question of development was unthinkable because its development was held hostage to the British interests. Whatever development the British did in the country such as building roads, railway lines, creating communication and transportation facilities and other modernizing steps, they all suited their interests. India, therefore, took a correct decision to create an image makeover from dependency and slavery to independence, planning, scientific and technological development and innovation.

The first paradigm shift was in respect of the major change to be affected in the constitution itself. The critics charged that the Constituent Assembly was dominated by the Congress party. Granville Austin, a British Constitutional expert, remarked: "The Constituent Assembly was a one party body in an essentially one party country. The Assembly was the Congress and the Congress was India" (*Granville Austin 1966*) When the Constituent Assembly had first met in 1946, it had before it the blueprint of a country with a weak centre and strong autonomous states (*M. Laxmikanth 2011*). This was done to meet the Muslim susceptibilities of Hindu domination after the British quit. The plan was to ensure the Muslims that in the states where they were in majority, they alone shall call the shots unhindered by the Central intervention. The vision of future changed immediately on June 3, 1947, when partition was agreed to. India now decided to change the entire constitutional scheme and setup, to create a new paradigm resting on a strong Centre and a string of weak states serving almost as the ward boys of an omnipotent Centre. This was not meant to be a transient change. It still holds in India and Centre is strong if one party dominant system persists. Only the coalition constraints make it weak.

There is another paradigm shift which we are witnessing today. As I had stated earlier, the Indian Constitution which emerged on November 26, 1949 and came into force two months later on January 26, 1950, had created a polity with a strong Centre and weak states. Under the coalitional setup, we find a mark-shift in the old paradigm. Now, the Centre is weak and many of its schemes are held hostage to powerful satraps in the states. The Union government could not sign the Teesta river agreement with the government

of Bangladesh because of the strong opposition by the eighth Chief Minister of Bengal, Mamata Banerjee, commonly referred as Didi. The Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, could not participate in the 23rd CHOGM (The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, between November 15, 2013 to November 17, 2013, largely because of the opposition of Muthuvel Karunanidhi (Head of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party) and Jayalalithaa Jayaram (Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu) (www.abc.net.au/news - 2013). In both cases, India has lost irretrievably in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. This shows a different paradigm shift of power in favour of states. Whether it is transient or permanent, only future will tell.

We are having an election shortly in 2019 and if any single party succeeds in touching the magic figure of 273 in a House of 545, we may come back to the days of one party dominant system and this will change the power equation in favour of Centre again. If it doesn't happen then the present situation continues.

A third reason which conclusively proves the paradigm shift in this country is, in respect of amendment to the constitution (www.indiacode.nic.in). What the United States of America could not do in four hundred years of the making of its constitution, we could outstrip them in just twenty years of freedom. By now, we have changed the Indian Constitution 120 times, which shows that the constitutional paradigm is continuously changing and is in a state of flux. The more the amendments, the more is the shift in the paradigm. Amending the constitution in this country has become a routinized affair. We respect our founding fathers and look upon them as the architects of this parchment of paper which is also our deed of destiny.

But, we don't look upon the makers of the constitution as unchangeable oracles. We don't associate papal infallibility with them. We don't associate any religiosity with them and have been changing the constitution with impunity, only to prove that change, if it is necessary, must be brought about, no matter even if it runs counter to the projections made by the architects of the constitution.

Another sphere which indicates the changing nature of our Indian polity is in respect of electoral reforms. Not only we have reduced the franchise age to 18 years, we have also brought about some striking changes in respect of spending money. The Election Commission has tightened its noose over the aspiring candidates and it is trying its best to cut down the electoral expenditures. We are also toying with the idea of giving a new image makeover to the legislature by reserving 33% seats for the women. By now, the 33% reservation would have been a reality but unfortunately, if it has not seen the light of the day, it is primarily because of the weakness and disunity among the women folk themselves. The women in India continue to be a dependent lot and are disinclined to take any revolutionary step. Time and again the women raised the chant of 33% reservation when the election is in the offing but refused to take direct action. They constitute half of the population of this country. If they have the guts and really wants better representation, let them declare today and now that they will not cast their votes in the election unless equal representation is guaranteed to them as per their population percentage. I am one hundred percent sure that no country can afford to see absenteeism on such a vast scale. With fifty percent of the people refusing to vote in the election and a high percentage of absenteeism in the election in the normal course, Indian election would be reduced to a farce. But, unfortunately, I am equally confident that the women of India, despite their grand standing, will never take such a step and this is the prima facie reason why paradigm is not shifting in their favour.

Change, in any system, is inevitable. No polity lives in a vacuum. It is rooted on mother earth and cannot be separated from it. It has the necessity to remain tied to the apron strings of this earth. And planet earth changes every season. So does human nature. New ideas always spring forth, changing the entire environment. No country can live on the strength of its history alone. It has to create history every time by introducing new changes.

India was juggling through a relentless economic impasse in 1991 when the then Prime Minister P. V. Narsimha Rao appointed Dr. Manmohan Singh as the new Union Finance Minister. However, the newly inducted Finance Minister brought some serious economic reforms that has transformed and influenced not only the Indian economy but the entire globe as well (*Chanchal Kumar Sharma*). All these reforms have resulted in deflecting the financial deadlock and at the same time, it has also enhanced Singh's eminence in the arena of economics around the world. One can say that India made history by opening up its economy to the rest of the world. This was a great change affected by Dr. Manmohan Singh and P.V. Narasimha Rao, the two stalwarts who were forward looking and saw in the opening of its economy its only solution. When P.V. Narasimha Rao came into power, the country was living under the dead weight of an unproductive socialist economy conceived by the former Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru and his dynastic successors. This has completely crippled our economy and people freely use to talk of Hindu rate of growth in the most derisive terms to highlight the undergrowth of economy. If only P.V. Narasimha Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh had not changed the economic paradigm, we would not have seen a consumer revolution that we witnessed later on.

From shortage to plenty, we entered only when we change our economy and introduced wide ranging reforms. India's growth rate picked up only when the economy changed and if today it is not showing any signs of upward mobility, it is largely due to the inertia set in our reform scheme. The economy having peaked has started receding only because the second generation reforms have not been introduced.

Even so, one does see a large number of changes taking place in the political spectrum of the country for example, giving voting rights to NRIs from 2010 onwards, introducing the Right to Information Act from 2005 for curbing corruption and electoral reforms in the nation (*www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com*) etc., all have changed the total complex of Indian politics and we all are a witness to this new paradigm shift which has given more rights to the people. And they are no longer the passive recipients of government largesse as in the past. They are now active participants in political affairs and this slew of measures alluded to above have made them pro-active.

In respect of political selection of apex functionaries in this state, show a marked change taking place. India is a country with the majority of the young people. In the election which is taking place in a few months from now, one can look at the candidate selection. Young Narendra Modi has already replaced an old Advani. Youthful Rahul Gandhi has replaced Dr. Manmohan Singh and Arvind Kejriwal is another youth icon. Is this not a change worth reckoning? Similarly, in Uttar Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav has already replaced an ageing Mulayam Singh Yadav. So as Omar Abdullah done in the state of Jammu and Kashmir by replacing his own father Farooq Abdullah. Naveen Patnaik, in Odisha, is equally young and enthusiastic. Even lady Chief Ministers such as Jayalalithaa Jayaram, Vasundhara Raje and Mamata Banerjee, cannot be put in the bracket of our superannuated politicians. Seemandhra is likely to get a young Chief Minister Jagan Reddy and Telangana, in all probability, K. Chandrashekhara Rao. In Punjab, Prakash Singh Badal's

son is already the deputy Chief Minister and is calling the shots. His father at best can be described as an absentee landlord. The same is true of Prithviraj Chavan and a host of others. Even parties like Shiv Sena, are run by youthful aspirants to power. If this is not a paradigm shift, then what else?

Everywhere in the country, the youth is on the march and in its ascendance. This march is irreversible now. And that makes the paradigm shift in India, a reality. We cannot afford to live in the past and hold on to its beatitudes. Paradigm is changing, paradigm is shifting and we are no longer the prisoners of the past. We are the pilgrims of the future.

References

B.B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes: Their growth in Modern Times* (London, 1961)

Gopal Krishna, "The development of the Indian National Congress as a Mass Organization," *Journal of Asian Studies*, May 1966, 25, No. 3.

Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution – Cornerstone of a Nation*, Oxford, 1966, Page – 8.

<http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/coifiles/amendment.htm>

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/After-2-years-and-no-changes-Whistleblowers-Bill-cleared/articleshow/30815449.cms>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-11-11/india-prime-minister-boycott-chogm-sri-lanka-human-rights/5082022>

Irawati Karve, *Hindu Society – An Interpretation* (Poona, 1961)

M. Lakshmikanth, *Indian Polity for Civil Services Examinations*, 3rd edition, New Delhi: Tata McGraw Hill Education Private Limited, 2011, Page – 2.3

Sharma, Chanchal Kumar, *A Discursive Dominance Theory of Economic Reforms Sustainability*, India Review, Routledge, U.K, Page 126 – 184

The Indian Independence Bill was introduced in the British Parliament on July 4, 1947 and received the Royal Assent on July 18, 1947. The Act came into force on August 15, 1947.