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Movement of Gandhiji and Gandhian Farmers' Movement of Bharatiya Kisan Union (B.K.U) from the Perspective of Populism

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Abstract:
From the 1980s, onwards, the beginning of new farmers' movement in which Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (K.R.R.S), Shetkari Sanghatana (S.S), Bharatiya Kisan Union(B.K.U) etc. adopted Gandhian ideology in various ways. In this paper I will try to find out and discuss the policy, ideology and activities of the B.K.U in U.P and how it effect on peasantry. They accept Gandhian developmental model (such as nationalism, opposed to urban bias, reconstitute village community through self-sufficiency) by moving away from the principles of Neheruvian socialism. Although B.K.U is ideologically guided by Gandhian ideology, is their populist way compatible with the ideology of Gandhiji? Where is the weakness of B.K.U movement? How compatible is this movement with Gandhiji's 'pro-poor' vision of building a unified movement through a constructive program at Bardoli satyagraha?

Keywords: populism, pro-poor, neo-populism, farmers' movement, Gandhian farmers' movement, non- class peasants.

From the 19th century nationalist movement in Europe to 20th century fascism, from the national movement of Gandhiji to Charan Singh's mobilization, from new farmers' movement in globalization's perspectives to RSS communalism, everywhere covers by populist ideology. In which the urban society is viewed from a negative perspective and the rural society is viewed from a sacred harmonious perspective. Comparative analysis between the movement of Gandhiji and present farmers' movements those are based on Gandhian ideology.

Gandhiji's popuplist perspectives in Bardoli Satyagraha:
In Indian politics since 1915, Gandhiji has reach the pinnacle of the national movement through movements for redress of regional problems through Champaran movement (1917), Kheda Satyagraha(1918), Ahmedabad mill workers movement(1918). Rural mass was brought to the main stream of national movement, mainly to those are poor lower class peasantry. Gandhiji tried to bring about political and economic reforms in the social system through the 'constructive program for the rural poor peasantry on the one side and on the other side he reduce the need for radical revolution at the grass root level in the vast rural areas (CWMG,xxvi, p-276). In fact, he felt the special for class unity in the society for the success of the freedom struggle at this time. Two movement in Gujarat, the Kheda satyagraha in 1918 and Bardoli Satyagraha (1921) were particularly important in Gandhiji's political

maneuvering for the freedom movement in India. In this case, the support of the noble patidar peasants in the Gujarat was very important due to the meeting of his previous known followers south African Patidars sabha (Desai Mahadev, 1929, p-5). During this time the social system in Gujarat was divided into two distinct classes, one was Raniparaj which consist with upper cast patidars, khanbis, anavlas and vania Brahmin, and other was Kaliparaj which consist with dublas, chodhras, dhudias etc. who are majority untouchables. Some of them Muslim cultivators (Desai Mahadev, 1929, p-4) .

However, he was aware of the peasants nature about non-violence contempt for truth during Kheda movement. Gandhiji felt that in the non-cooperation movement mainly benefited to the upper cast peasants. If the movement in Bardoli is to flow into the freedom struggle then it is necessary to remove this social conflict and bring them in the mainstream of the movement. In this case Kaliparaj class should be thought the overall good of the country and they should participate in the struggle. His speech was aimed at Patidars that God alone is high and we are all low. If there are any grades in God's court, they must to be according to one's deeds."(CWGS, XXVI, P-94). If a sudra became a man of knowledge, he is the greatest Brahmin. He gave impotency to promote patriotism and remove untouchability in Baradoli. (CWMG, xxvi, p-95-96)

Gandhiji was aware of the poverty and reality of the kaliparaj community during his stay in Bardoli in preparation for the first civil disobedience movement. During this time he emphasized on constructive program to build unity among peasantry. Patidar Yuvak Mondal strives to work for the neglected people with great initiative. A Swaraja ashram was build in Surat and six such center were set up in Bardoli for spread the new program enthusiasm. On the other hand Kaliparaj took an oath to abstain from drugs and liquor. Chuni lal Mehata, Jugatram Dave, Lakshmi Das Purushottam are enterprising on khadi exhibition and build up school. Gandhiji's followers used to go on a hunger strike for a few days to bring about unspeakable cruelty to the Dublas sometimes as agri serfs (M. Desai, 1929, P-7). He was engage from 1921-27 in Bardoli Taluka to full fill the objective of building a unified agrarian class through this constructive program.

In 1925, when the British government announced an increase in land revenue, the Patidar land owner decided to oppose it. As a result of government arbitrary method of revenue assessment, the profit of the land owner were reduced and cost of cultivation increased to a great extent. In this case , they demanded for revenue determination by the representative of Gujarat political conference. After the resettlement of 1925 revenue demand has been raised by 30% in Bardoili taluk. Bardoli satyagraha no-tax campaign was organized in 1928 to get rid of this problem.

B.K.U movement in Uttar Pradesh

Farmers' mobilization has recently been developing under the umbrella of B.K.U in the green revolution belt states of India especially in U.P, Punjab and Haryana. Where various farmers organization of political parties such as Kirti Kisan Union of C.P.I(ML), Kisan Sabha of C.P.I and C.P.I(M), and many wings of political parties has been organizationally debased. The long history of peasant movement, subjective (cast, class, religions) objective (agri inputs/ outputs price, situation of market) condition for movement and panchayat raj system add dimension to the farmers movement in Uttar Pradesh. Since 1970s when political power in the state began to depend on the support of farmers, those are mostly middle and rich farmers' (lindberg 1994, Gill 2004, Dhanagare 2016) who have occupied the leadership position of all political parties. Later, when the progress of green revolution slowed down, sugar cane production has been declined and terms of trade changed then this situation created the material

condition of the movement as the profitability of rich farmers decreased and the deficit of poor cultivators increased (Hasan 1989). These politically active surplus producing hegemonic agrarian class (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987) has active against the government. At this time as no adequate responds come from any political party in this region, due to internal disturbance of Congress, Lok Dal and other parties, when the left parties are vocal for agri labor wages issues against rich farmers, in this situation the independent farmers' movement born in this region which is the B.K.U.

Around 1978, B.K.U established their organization in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi. The dominance of the B.K.U movement can be traced back to 1987 to fill the void created in the politics of Uttar Pradesh after the death of Charan Singh. Gradually in the vast area of rural western U.P (where rich and middle jat farmers are dominated in land and irrigation system) the movement began to take hold in the mind of the peasantry through the Meerut siege (1988), rally in Delhi (Oct 1988). Over the decade B.K.U has been able to gain support from various sector of peasantry. A review of the goal and demands of the B.K.U in U.P and other northern states show

that the organization has tried to mobilize the peasantry in the rural areas, essentially putting aside religious and class differentiation and seeking to build a just society with farmers from all section. Ideologically this farmers' movement of all classes of farmers across India seeks to change the society through populist way. Vast areas of Western U.P developed since the British period and most of them are under irrigation system, so the farmers of this part have a long prospered in terms of agriculture. Continuously new agri technology have been promotes to farmers. The level of marginalization of farmers is very low in this region, concentration of rich and medium farmers has been happened continuously, they have become agrarian capitalist or Bullock capitalist by taking advantage of technology and through the process of purchasing of land from small holders. According to B.K.U has channelized the movement based on the interest of surplus producing farmers. Whereas small producers has been transferred by some vague demands of rural-urban parity (Zoya Hasan, 1994). Rich jat farmers forced to landless labors to join the movement in mostly heavy handed method. In the 35-point list of demands does not contain any demands for low wages for agri labors and their harassment at various places. B.K.U is not aware about the landless labors. But still the movement is being carried out under the banner of B.K.U because they are harassed and oppressed by these upper cast jat (almost they have 40% land ownership on agri land), tyagis and rajput peasant in rural society.

Here the B.K.U has channelized the movement in a populist way, where they promote non-class peasant consciousness for build up a undifferentiated commodity producer, centering on urban bias views like the Shetkari Sangathan (S. S) and trying to mobilize the entire peasantry against the way in which bureaucracy neglected the interest of the peasantry in the political system. Determine to establish the movement as a crusade, as a struggle to protect the dignity and self-respected of all farmers (Hasan, 1994). Like Charan Singh, B.K.U has opposed the idea of Nehru for planned heavy industrialization and taking resource from rural agriculture to develop urban industries. B.K.U basically give impotency on the development of total rural economy, the main demand of remunerative price will be benefit to all peasantry.

Since in the many region of western U.P have almost the largest ethnically, economically and land-owning jat population, they play an influential role in organizing the peasant movement. Where large owners also want to get the status of Jat.

The emphasis placed on women contribution to the traditional natural subsistence agriculture in other farmers movement in India in the context of new farmers' movement, though has not been seen in the

case of B.K.U.

Conclusion:

The demands made by agrarian middle rich capitalist through the new farmers movement are in the line with Gandhian trend. Gandhian mobilizing ideology is emphasized in post-indepence India's farmers' movement. where Neheruvian socialism ideology is not emphasized because it depends on the adoption of class specific agrarian polices based on differential of farmars'. Since 1980s every farmers organization like K.R.RS, B.K.U, SS etc. are accept Gandhian ideology from several perspectives. We can not find the pro-poorness in the neo-populist farmers' movement of B.K.U, which we seen in the Gandhiji's populist movement. Thus the organization of B. K. U in U.P is based mainly on Jat sympathy, whereas the scope of dalit and other lower section of society is very limited.

In U. P, while the rich farmers' are mostly successful in cultivating and stocking cash crops, where the poor and marginal farmers are failing to achieve the same success. But they are not going to build a movement on their demanding issues.

The struggle against colonialism or zamindari system in India was defensive in nature for Gandhiji or Charan Singh. But since the 1980s the new farmers' movement has been characterized by the offensive, in which centered on wealthy farmers who are benefiting from global free trade.

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