

THE EMOTIONAL POLITICS â?? THE NEW NORMAL

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(In just over a decade, I wondered, how the awareness quotient of Indian public had risen exponentially. And in this context, I want to narrate, the electoral battle in my home state of Andhra Pradesh. If there was anything fought on an exploding hostile pitch, baring all the venom, it got unfolded between two traditionally rival parties.)

Iâ??m an avid follower of politics, especially of India where I live; it doesnâ??t stop there, I can also speak about an additional keenness in the regional politics of Andhra Pradesh where I grew up â?? the whole fifty-eight years.

My initiation into the domain, rather anxious keenness of politics had happened three decades back when I was about to enter the family enterprise and into the second year of my marriage.

Remembering that was India in the year 1984, still in the throes of evolution, post-independence. Itâ??s a â??permit and restrictionsâ?? era and underdevelopment where the front rooms waited devoid of multi-channel TVâ??s. We were considered lucky if we could get a phone connection after a two year waiting, scooters sold in a premium, barely two or three car models in the market to choose from, communication to distant places was through â??trunk callsâ?? handled by a telephone operator. Today, for many, it might sound like a scene out of The Flintstoneâ??s movie setting.

I was 28 then, just managed to creep out of the parent-dominated grip, rearing to hurl myself into the limited knowledge frontiers available in India. Those were the days

where regional magazines, periodicals hung across a rope, dangling down, much like a clothesline, across all pan and cigarette shops. There, one day, I noticed an English Magazine, â??India Today,â?• with a bright cover picture, â??operation Blue star,â?? in Punjab Golden temple. Itâ??s a military action taken out by the armed forces to remove the militant religious leaders taking refuge in the temple compound.

Reading the article, I had swallowed the first political potion that remained in me since then, as a deeply ingrained obsession. Till today, itâ??s impossible to sleep without watching the late night news bulletins and dying to read the online political reports early in the morning the frothy toothbrush still dangling in my mouth.

Nothing was evident in the last quarter century than the enormous transformation in the lives of people across the sub-continent, India. Flashing of the scores of TV channels, the behemothic spread of tentacles of digital media: the twitter, the facebook, the Whatsapp â?? and its frightful percolation â?? no matter, the age, gender, location, profession, and in any local language, it remained unsparing and alarming. Its transformative outcome â?? armed with the latest gadgetry, the public could access â?? with a mere swipe, to huge fountains of data, details, knowledge, evidence of governmental policies, affairs of state, facts and data. Nothing got left as non-public or off the record. The social and political scoops, the plump details have been flashing across the nation on TV screens, on millions of smartphones â?? day in and day out.

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In just over a decade, I wondered, how the awareness quotient of Indian public had risen exponentially. And in this context, I want to narrate, the electoral battle in my home state of Andhra Pradesh.

If there was anything fought on an exploding hostile pitch, baring all the venom â?? personal and political, from spiky retorts, no holds barred horrid political confrontation; it got unfolded between two traditionally rival parties.

After two months, the most offensive electioneering I have ever witnessed, the result was as stunningly unbelievable as the silent flood of anti-incumbency that hit the regional satraps. And the concurrent tide of ruthless damnation that swept away the deep-seated hatred for caste dominated affinities â?? that have been socially, financially pounding the grass root level communities since decades.

Strangely, both the parties stood stunned, the victorious at the windfall of peopleâ??s mandate. And the vanquished at the humiliating stampede of peopleâ??s rejection.

My interest was to dissent in the psychological entropy that played in mind of the leader of the ruling party defending his position against the opponent, much younger to him in age and experience: fighting for a political space after ten years of discrimination, intimidation, and isolation.

In the end, the ruling party leader met his Waterloo, and they crowned the challenger â?? as the new leader of the state, who valiantly fought amidst the severe odds.

Letâ??s see the mindset of the defeated leader, although, he was holding the strings of power for the last five years and with substantial political acumen and ambition.

What would happen when someone sleepwalks through their political existence for five years? Itâ??s the attitude the routed chief flaunted day after day, month after month living unconsciously, never waking up to the shrewdness of reality and the vigilant masses living in it. He was never alive to the shifting of perceptions, choices, preferences that were changing, among the rank and file, as fast as one changes a handkerchief.

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Every word of his: the proposed actions, conceived plans seemed never carried a wider vision, increased maturity, greater awareness, and higher consciousness. He never thought about the psychological ingredients a leader was required to instill â?? an intense trust, a robust acceptance, a staunch connect with the public. When happened, it would have been a promising glow that, perhaps, has shone on the unswerving path, down for five years, where all the constituents would have kneeled behind him â?? as trusted foot soldiers.

He came back to power, five years ago, broadly based on popular choice. And the state put pining for hope, of his vast capabilities, experience. Reasonably enough he enjoyed a wide base of supporters across the newly bifurcated state.

Perhaps, the intoxication of power, or authority or to redeem a long, tortuous spell in the political wilderness, quickly, drained out of him the extraordinary options he has before him to make the state a vibrant and promising. And use the fundamental capacity to act self-less in decision making that would create an impact on the social welfare of the state.

He never brought in the appropriate awareness to his activities, instead of seeing reality; he chose to run away from it. Days went ahead, floating in an illusion of digital improbabilities, castles on non-existent clouds. It was his non-thinking like an unapparent shadow had created a groundswell of animus. It turned out, at the end of his term, morphed into a giant tidal wave that washed-out and shattered to pieces the

foundation of his political party and his public image just in one five-year term.

If not realized quickly, sycophancy is a slow poison and sure death to any political head, but he embraced it never took a decisive stand to shun it altogether. Instead, he stuck to an approach â??Iâ??m popular, Iâ??m the best, my experience and popularity were intact,â?? and the haughtiness has shown off and got publicly visible like a lighthouse â?? but seemed crooked, foggy and false.

The clamor of public grievances was at its high neglected pitch, â??itâ??s all the bleats of the opposition cadresâ?? was his outright denial rant.

Few media reporters illustrated the declining popularity of the ruling party, gradually sliding into a hopeless pit of trouble. His response, â??things worked for us in the past, itâ??s just a passing situation, we will see, we have time, I know, it will change, letâ??s wait and see,â?? a clear-cut stance of not choosing the option of good-management, excising the administrative powers. Summed up, it means the leader was subverting the survival of the party and the well-being of the state. And itâ??s clear selective blindness not to see the writing on the wall.

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The defeated chief never lived consciously, even though his experience prompted likewise, he never attempted to translate into action what he rightfully believed and promised to the public. He chose not to see, not to understand, not to listen, thus his rule, his message, his character rang with unfairness, hurtfulness, pretense â?? and a distasteful stubbornness not to admit his shortcomings. When the public surveyed with their street-smart prudence, I felt there was a secret, shared resolve for a change. They single-mindedly went out in large numbers to cast their ballot. The overwhelming turnout showed an angry swell â?? a sure recipe for disastrous decimation of both the ruling party and its chief.

By the time he had seen the cruel reality, for the choices he had made, the options he had sought and sat tight on for a long time, the public sentiment has already decided to choke him to his political death. He neither behaved responsibly to the reality encircling the state, which gave him five years tenure nor took care of the immediate attitudinal changes to bring upon him so that the attitude would sustain the grand trust for a long period in the public eye â?? the protective survival shield for any political leader.

Category

1. Uncategorized

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