



ISSN: 2319-9490

Available online at <http://www.ijcrs.com>

International Journal of Current Research in Life Sciences
Vol. 07, No. 04, pp.1688-1689, April, 2018



RESEARCH ARTICLE

DEMOCRACY AND IDENTITY POLITICS

***Basappa Athani**

Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, Karnatak University, Dharwad-580003, India

Received 04th February, 2018; Accepted 19th March, 2018; Published 15th April, 2018

ABSTRACT

Democracy as a political regime is linked up with citizen participation as well as rights. According to the well-known framework of R. Dahl for the analysis of the concept of democracy the participation aspect may be confronted with the rights aspect. Individual rights are strongly entrenched in the democratic state ideology, sanctioned by the many declarations of human rights. Just as democracy may be developed by collective rights, so citizenship may become more complex and minority orientated. It is true that a genuine democracy respects and cultivates natural differences. Democracy in this manner is an art of governing people in the principle of respecting human differences.

Key words: Democracy, Identity, Politics, People, Civic Equality, Ideology, Victimhood, Citizen.

Copyright © 2018, Basappa Athani. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Basappa Athani, 2018. "Democracy and identity politics" *International Journal of Current Research in Life Sciences*, 7, (04), 1688-1689.

INTRODUCTION

Three basic principles are equal standing as a citizen--or "civic equality"--along with liberty and opportunity. The interpretation of these principles varies across democratic views, but the variation does not detract from the fact that civic equality, liberty, and opportunity are core principles of any morally defensible democracy. The broad range of views compatible with these principles all can be called democratic. Identity groups act in ways that both aid and impede democracies in expressing and enacting these principles. The benign neglect of identity groups by political scientists and the hypercriticism of popular commentators are not terribly helpful in understanding or assessing their role in democratic societies.

Identity Politics

Identity politics are political arguments that focus upon the interest and perspectives of groups with which people identify. Identity politics includes the ways in which people's politics may be shaped by aspects of their identity through loosely correlated social organizations. Examples include social organizations based on race, class, religion, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, ideology, nation, sexual orientation, culture, information preference, history, musical or literary preference, medical conditions, professions or hobbies. Not all members of any given group are necessarily involved in identity politics. The term identity politics and movements linked to it came into being during the latter part of the 20th century.

***Corresponding author: Basappa Athani,**
Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, Karnatak University, Dharwad-580003, India.

It can most notably be found in class movements, feminist movements, gay, lesbian and bisexual movements, disability movements, ethnic movements and post colonial movements. Minority influence is a central component of identity politics. Minority influence is a form of social influence whereby a majority is influenced by the beliefs or behavior of a minority. Unlike other forms of influence this usually involves a personal shift in private opinion [citation needed]. This personal shift in opinion is called conversion

Four kinds of identity politics

Four kinds of identity groups cultural, voluntary, ascription, and religious--are worthy of separate consideration because each highlights a different set of ethical issues raised by the presence of identity groups in democracies and the ways in which they can either aid or impede democratic justice. Although the four kinds are not mutually exclusive, by focusing on culture, choice, ascription, and religion we can more readily examine the most important issues revolving around the relationship between group identity and democracy. I therefore have devoted a chapter to each kind of identity group.

- All politics is identity politics. Political activity is and, at its best, is animated by efforts to define and defend who I am, or we are, or you are, or hope to be, or hope to be seen to be. By extension, it is motivated by our imagination of what is or ought to be mine or ours or yours. It is not only about self government. Nor does it always involve much in the way of public debate. What

structures it, often beneath the surface, is the always unfinished enterprise of self construction and self-presentation. The choices and the commitments we make in politics are ones with which we mean to or by which we cannot help but identify ourselves. In democratic politics, moreover, the conflict is among putative equals. The norm of political equality not only destabilizes temporary victories. It also unsettles taken for granted hierarchies and, so, identities and thus renews the spring of political energy. In this way, identity politics and democratic political freedom are, in principle and often in practice, mutually supportive, each of them enabling the vitality of the other.

- However, it can also work the other way around. Identity politics can dampen or smother democratic political freedom. And democratic politics itself sometimes seems to sponsor this tendency, undermining itself by fostering a perversion of identity politics.
- Identity politics promotes difference and grievance is the most misguided complaint and, in the end, the least troubling of them all. Difference, of course, is vital to self definition and self assertion. And grievance is a fuel that motivates the exercise of political freedom. Neither is necessarily inconsistent with respect for one's antagonists. Indeed, in a nation like ours, the respectful democratic antagonism they can foster is woven into the patriotism that binds us together.
- Ultimately, its identity may be sucked into such black hole characterizations as "the powerless" or "the disenfranchised" or "the subordinate." This is the "victimhood" syndrome. Like the other pathologies, it is much deplored. But like the others, once entrenched, it is difficult to dislodge. The reason, again, is that it is so useful a weapon in democratic conflict. It is a weapon with which to denigrate the terms of the conflict and then to short circuit the political fray.

In democratic politics, most people are most influential in groups, and identity groups manifest a basic freedom of association. Given the freedom, individuals will identify in groups. But an identity politics that is not informed by a sense of justice will divide more than it will unite democracy. The key then is to use one's sense of democratic justice to inform and assess identity politics. Identity in Democracy demonstrates the many ways in which a politics that depends on identity groups but is also informed by a sense of justice can work to better secure equal liberty, opportunity, and civic equality for all individuals, not only for the most privileged or the most powerful members of advantaged or disadvantaged groups. Identity politics are not progressive in fact they can be dubbed 'change proof'. At the heart of this politics is a disregard for the dynamic forces of a democracy.

Conclusion

In fact these groups are more appropriately described as political groups or parties who stand only for their own local benefit. Culture and language are not eternal differences. When people can agree to build a common house for themselves their lives will improve. Ethiopians should stand together to get rid of ethnic-based politics and engage in the counter movements of justice and democracy. The politics of recognition has dual effects while empowering marginal communities during democratic participation in India. On the one hand, identity politics provides democratic empowerment to a few communities or specific sections of communities, while, on the other, it disempowers people of the same communities who are not yet able to understand the language of democratic state and lag behind in creating group visibility. Thus, identity politics in democracy includes a few and excludes some others, while it is fuelled by tendencies of inclusive exclusion. Through a case study of Chamars in Uttar Pradesh, a low Dalit caste that has now been politically empowered, this paper shows how identity politics alone cannot handle horizontal inequalities among marginal groups. The Constitution of independent India made all forms of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, gender or place of birth punishable by law. In fact the independent Indian state went a step further and instituted certain legal and institutional measures, albeit temporarily, to enable the historically disadvantaged groups and communities of people, to participate in the game of democratic politics on equal terms. These included reservations for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes in jobs, education and elected bodies in proportions to their population.

REFERENCES

- Aggarwal, P.C. 1971. 'Impact of Green Revolution on Landless Labourers : A Note'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 6(47) pp. 2363-5.
- Alexander, K.C. 2000. 'Rural Development Studies in the Eighties - (4)'. in *Third Survey of Research in Sociology and Social Anthropology*, vol. II, edited by M. S. Gore. New Delhi: ICSSR and MANAK Publication Pvt. Ltd.
- Chakravarti, A. 1975. *Contradiction and Change: Emerging Patterns of Authority in a Rajasthan Village*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Gupta and Dipankar, 1982. *Nativism in a Metropolis: The Shiv Sena in Bombay*. Delhi: Manohar. Yadav, Yogendra (1999) *Electoral Politics in the Time of Change: India's Third Electoral System*, *Economic and Political Weekly*,
- Srinivas, M.N. 1955. 'The Social Structure of a Mysore Village'. In M. Marriot ed. *Village India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Verma and Vidhu, 2004. *Engendering Development: Limits of Feminist Theories and Justice*. *Economic and Political Weekly*.
