



Nehru's View on Minorities

Dr. Shazia Akhtar

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, KK(PG) College, Etawah, U.P.
India

ABSTRACT

This paper contains the ideas of Nehru on minority. He depicted the problem of minorities as they faced after independence of our country. He very much urged to tackle the problem of minority and weaker section of society. He observed that Muslims of India are part of joint electorate and also they are integral part of the Congress too which don't want away the principles of communal harmony and he wanted peace and amity between million and millions.

Keywords :- Minority, Electoral, Secularism, Anglo- Indian, Dimension.

“It was a secret fact for a progressive culture, India being caste-ridden society, virtually failed to adopt 'Secular Model' owing to false religious faiths and narrowness of race considering vast diversity within the minority of India, Nehru laid stress on the size of education while recognising the entrepreneurial skill, and hence, widened the scope for minorities and for those sensitive mind, to assess and reassess the social defence between the communities.”¹

Nehru believed that imperial rule sowed the seeds of communalism and created disunity among the subject and discouraged the coming together of the two communities. “Nehru had a deep knowledge of Indian history and culture. The period of muslim rule in India, Nehru though, had produced a composite culture. He was a great admirer of Akbar because of his popularity among the Hindus and Muslims. He praised his efforts in the direction of the cultural amalgamation and consolidation of the 'Mughal Empire'. He appreciated the wise policy of the Akbar who had managed to bridge a gulf of religious ethnic, linguistic and cultural gaps and built a powerful mighty Indian Empire in which the motto 'Unity in Diversity' was valid as early as the 16th century.”²

Nehru wrote “Akbar's success was astonishing, for he created a sense of 'oneness' among the diverse elements of North and central India..... It was not merely an attachment of his person, it was attachment to the structure he had built. His son and grandson Jahangir and Shahjahan, accepted that structure and functioned within its framework. They were men of no outstanding ability; but their reigns were successful because they continued on the dotted lines so firmly carved out by Akbar.”³

“Nehru, the architect of modern India renaissance and great exponent of social democracy, continues to remain the source of inspiration since generation. Undoubtedly, the most outstanding figure with multifaceted personality of the Twentieth century, Nehru worked for building of new India and created a room for universal love to fight against unrealistic goals so as to promote the cause of Indian minority communities of Muslims, Christians, Buddhist and many more.”⁴

The crucial step with great commitment, understanding and purposeful meaning, Nehru remained the most successful man in the modern world. For Nehru, secularism is not an ideology but an action based on long term experience from different countries. Nevertheless, it never mean negation of religion but the co-existence of universal truth. In a nutshell, Nehru was successful in transforming the face of traditional India into a modern world.

Nehru's view on minority had multifaceted, dimensions, which was not merely confined to particular community rather it included women, children, race, caste, sex, ethnicity and even nationality. On the subject of 'untouchable' Nehru said “ It can be gained that the Harijans have been oppressed since ages, certain cruel custom have sprung up that cannot be eradicated merely by legislation.”⁵ Nehru stood for the respect of all religious communities without giving preference, to any particular community. “ His views about human essence, socialist in conviction and revolutionary thinking are well known to every Indian.”⁶ Nehru agreed that the majority community must show love towards minority so that the fear and mistrust may be eradicated.

Nehru most called as Integrationist rather than nationalist who extensively travelled across the sea. With objectivity of mind and his determination to perceive reality. He had a world vision to promote global federation, multilateral equality and the possibility for everyone to lead a good life. This can be achieved only when we produce where- withal to have the common standard, it needs wealth and production of mind to growth of society. To promote equality we have to develop a condition to live happily. The minority problem in any country is directly associated with the nature of governmental economic condition and the population pressure. If domestic policy of nation is ill designed, and politically motivated, minority problem become more serious. Nehru envisaged that domestic government should play equal opportunity for the developmental process.

“ Since the independence majority Indian suffered from social backwardness, illiteracy inadequacy of food and shelter. The framers of Indian Constitution made special efforts to create reservation for SC's, ST's and OBS's to get their due role. Unfortunately, however, most Indians belong to rural and backward areas like landless labourers, marginal farmers and bounded labourers. He lamanted the issue of such communities which were wrongly understood. Personally, he viewed Hindu-Muslim question, mostly belonging to backward community, as outdated and non arguable.”⁷

In India no one wants communal and ethnic tension. It is only foolish politicians who sensitise the issue. An average Indian wants food, shelter and houses. There are socialist, anti-socialist Zamindars, Kisans and other similar groups. "As a great orator and advocate of democracy strongly believed in the joint electorate of Indians for better result. For him the Muslims of India are a part of joint electorate."⁸ They are integral part of the Congress too which don't want wish away the principles of communal harmony, Nehru wanted peace and amity between million and millions.

Nehru had also a great sense of law with Anglo-Indian Community who were discriminated socio-culturally or otherwise since independence. Nehru remarked that with the growth of the spirit of independence and a wider outlook, there was a greater need for a wider dialogue between Congress and Anglo-Indian Community. Nehru was unhappy over the tug of war in Kashmir and outgoing conflict between majority (Muslims) and the minority (Kashmiri Pandits). The continued fear and insecurity among the Hindus and Muslims need immediate safe guard. Nehru being a Kashmiri Pandit was seriously concerned to promote communal harmony in Kashmir even on the last days in office as Prime Minister. Nehru admitted the fact that every minority has been exploited in the name of vote banks because the Constituent Assembly hardly had any representation of peasants and workers. While bulk of the population remained outside the mainstream, secularism for them was nearly a populist slogan.

Pt. Nehru knew that in a multi-religious country could be maintained and communal demand could be fought only by keeping religion away from the state. Thus, the framers of our constitution adopted secularism to fight with divisives forces. For the adoption of the secularism in India, the credit goes to Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.

References

1. M. Chalpati Rao, "miles to go and miles to go" *Mainstream*, vol.,39,No,23,May26,2001,p.16.
2. Jawaharlal Nehru Centenary, Volume-Delhi, Oxford University Press, New York,1989,p.216.
3. Jawaharlal Nehru-'Political leader, CZECHOSLOVAK- India Committee CZECHOSLOVAK society for International Relations, printed by CTKPEPROPRAGE 1981.
4. G.Parthasarathi, "Jawaharlal Nehru: A source of Abiding Inspiration", *Mainstream* (New Delhi) vol.39,no.30,14th July 2001,p.19.
5. Extracted from, Stephen Friendlander, "Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's Democratic concept of State of Society" In N.L.Gupta,ed; *Jawaharlal Nehru* (New Delhi: PUNCHSHEEL Publishers,1989,p.173-174.
6. V.P.Krishna Iyer, *Nehru and Krishna Menon* (New Delhi: Konark Publishers,1993) pp.4-6.
7. Attar Chand, *Jawaharlal Nehru: His Social philosophy* (New Delhi: Amar Prakashan),1989,p.79.
8. *Ibid.*,p.81.