

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF BASAVESHWARA

Ch.Bikshapathi,
Sr.Lecturer in Political Science,
Sardar Patel College,
Secunderabad.

ABSTRACT:

India is the land of philosophers, who influenced the world with their ideology. Vardhamana Mahaveera and Gauthama Buddha stand first in the list of philosophers who influenced the world. They are great and well renowned philosophers, who created great impact on society with their ideology of jainism and buddhism. Their ideologies are later followed by the people as religions. In the 12th century Basaveswara established veera shaiva ,a subset of shaivism fold. It was a revolutionary way of shaivism which contradicted and changed most of the practices followed till then. His time period was shared by many great philosophers, statesmen across the world like Peter Abelard from France, Adelard of Bath from the United kingdom, Ioane Petritsi from Georgia.

KEYWORDS: Chaturvarna, Untouchables, Equality, Democracy, Anubhava Mantapa

INTRODUCTION:

Basaveshwara was a multifaceted philosopher, social reformer, economist, and saint. He was born to Madalamba and Madarasa in 1131 AD, who belonged to hindu orthodox brahmin family. His birthplace is Ingaleshwara Bagewadi which is in present karnataka state in south india

The revolutionary thoughts in Basaveshwara originated at a very young age, He denied and opposed the idea of upanayana, the statutory ceremony in brahmin tradition for boys who attained age of seven. According to most sources, Basava condemned his upanayana at the age of eight. There is also another version of this incident, which says that basava's upanayana was performed but he removed his sacred thread at the age of sixteen. Both versions of the incident clearly represent that basava was against the ideology of this brahminical ceremony as this is merely an exhibition of the caste

system. As he could not bear this insistence from his parents he left kalyana along with his elder sister nagamma and reached kudalasangama.

He spent twelve years in kudalasangama studying vedas, puranas, agamas, upanishads and kavyas. Then his maternal uncle Baladeva (finance minister of bijjala) offered his daughter gangambike to basava for marriage. He accepted the marriage after being convinced by Ishanya guru. Basava left for mangalavada and married her. Then he was appointed as a small employee in the bijjala's kingdom. In less time he grew in power because of his potential in work. After Baladeva's death basava was appointed as finance minister (bhandari) of bijjala.

After bijjala captured kalyana, he made basava as prime minister of kalyana. Being as minister he maintained his role in the kingdom and he also influenced and united the people through his vachanas to fight against the inequalities in the society.

Basava strictly opposed the hindu varna shrama dharma because of the chaturvarna philosophy which says that the professions cannot be chosen by individuals and only to follow the professions which are decided according to their caste. Basava introduced revolutionary social philosophy based on equality, he encouraged inter-caste marriages and he wished to eradicate the caste system and strived for upliftment of downtrodden people and especially untouchables.

He is the first one who came up with the socialism principles in the 12th century itself. The main idea behind his economic reforms is "kayakave kailasa", which means work is worship. When the practice of untouchability was strictly followed in 12th century, he opposed the priestly class and preached his vachanas of equality and believed that everyone is equal before the lord shiva irrespective of caste, colour, creed and sex. As a result of his revolutionary activities he faced a lot of resistance from the people of the upper caste.

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Basava was the real democratic political philosopher in India. He created and constructed a new political structure "ANUBHAVA MANTAPA", also referred as mahaamanne. It seriously condemned and opposed the caste system as it is an inhumane social order created by the upper caste brahminical concept. It worked for the casteless society in india. This attracted many people from different walks of life

and joined it. They are called sharanas. They are permitted to express their perspectives on social, economical, political and spiritual issues without hesitation during the gatherings in the anubhava mantapa. Allama prabhu was the chairperson, Channabasavanna, Siddarama, kakkaya, Akkamahadevi channayya, kinnari bomayya, dasimayya, gangambike, nilambike and others were its members. They all belong to different castes.

Allama prabhu is from a backward caste of temple performers, his father was a dance teacher, He was a saint and wrote many poems about social equality and lord shiva in kannada. kakkaya and channayya belong to schedule caste, they played an important role in anubhava mantapa. This symbolises how basava maintained the social equality in the anubhava mantapa. Everyone is equally prominent without any discrimination in the anubhava mantapa.

Basava propagated:

- Thou shalt not steal nor kill : Everyone should earn their food and things with their own effort, but not by looting others. And should not harm others intentionally.
- Nor speak a lie : should always be truthful to themselves and others.
- Be angry with no one : should be able to control their negative emotions..
- Nor scorn another man : should not degrade others .
- Nor glory in thyself : should not be self boasted.
- Nor others hold to blame : should not blame others and should respect others feelings.

These say that every individual must develop a good way of living and perform their responsibilities. Constitutions of most of the modern democratic countries are based on similar ideologies in different forms.

Basava through his vachanas established the principles of equality. He encouraged the freedom of speech against social, economical and political exploitation. He believed that everyone should have the freedom of expressing their thoughts. He never distinguished the people based on their economic conditions .

Principles of equality:

"Vyasa is a fisherman's son,
 Markandaya of an outcaste born,
 Mandodari, the daughter of a frog!
 O, look not for caste,
 what were you in the past?
 Indeed Agastya was a fowler,
 Durvasa, a maker of shoes
 Kasyapa, a black smith;
 The sage, Kaundanya by name,
 Was, as the three worlds know,
 A barber...Mark ye all, the words
 of our Kudala Sangam run;
 What matters one is lowly-born?
 Only a Shivabhakta is well-born!"

This vachanas clearly say that caste is not considered, but the concern towards the society is important. According to Basava, all shivabhakas are equal.

"You are a blacksmith if you heat the iron,
 A washerman if you wash clothes
 A weaver if you lay the warp A brahmin if you read the Vedas
 False, utterly false, are the stories of divine birth. The higher type of man is the man
 Who knows himself."

"no occupation was superior or inferior to another and that it was honesty and sincerity which decided the merit of the means of livelihood". He considered there should be equal rights and importance in society for women. This may be a common statement in the present world, But it was a revolutionary step in the 12th century as women used to face a lot of discrimination

CONCLUSION:

Basava is an extraordinary rationalist and had matured thoughts from his childhood. Due to his caste, his childhood was covered in hindu brahminical fold. His education and culture was influenced by orthodox hindu social principles.

When he left home to kudalasangama and learnt spiritual ideology and gained knowledge in other subjects, he educated people against the inequalities prevailing in the society.

Because of the chaturvarna system the people of the country are divided into four varnas i.e brahmana, kshatriya, vaishya and shudras, And they are further divided into many castes and subcastes.

In India every caste has their own code of conduct ,culture and traditions. And strictly followed their principles. All these principles created the upper caste people in the society. These principles are against the women, backward castes and untouchables. Being a brahmin he never expected privileges from the society and also he criticised and condemned the people who enjoy those types of privileges in the society. According to him, these types of privileges are undemocratic and inhumane. Basava through his vachanas educated the downtrodden people and he fought against the social evils like untouchability, superstitions, He believed that all are equal irrespective of their caste, creed and sex.

His anubhava mantapa is one of the most important structures in the 12th century to discuss the socio economic spiritual and political issues. The present democratic countries adapt the similar type of legislative structure in their respective countries. Even today there are some countries which did not implement the democratic principles. This makes Basava's political philosophy still relevant.

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