“Most dangerous person in the world is the person who believes he has discovered the meaning of life” (Isaiah Berlin)

Corporatisation is not development and market control does not mean freedom of choice. The current observation of right-wing populist[1] understanding about the various sociopolitical notions directly
shows the prevalence of right-wing mindset at the general level. Some of the debates about the rise of right-wing alternatively seen as de-escalation of check over the right wing mindset which was always in its ritualised format within the cultural domain. This change in the language of rising has, in reality, halted the deep-seated need for change. In other words, the language of development in the name of right and authentic leadership immobilises social mobility and the further chance of social change.

The notion that in a democracy, it does not matter who gets elected has taken democracy and election in the reified understanding. The whole position of social change has been turned into different direction moderated by the populist understanding and reduced it to something inflated form of understanding of technology, traditions, and culture. Right-wing populism is not about the culture which people share, but it is an amalgamation of hegemonised beliefs about the modernity as anti-cultural together with the power discourse and state support. It is the imposition of one power discourse on others giving no space to an alternative version of the reality. The rise of right-wing government is not that democratic system has chosen it, but it also shows the rise of identity politics based on the social mobility and social class climbing based on the populist notions about Vikas (development)[2].

The current times of majoritarianism combined with development and security nurtured the deep-seated support for the Varna and caste system. As Varna and caste system is not separate from the Hindu religion and in the current time, it has got its strong support from the politics of Hindutva. In one way, the leader who represents the system has got its face, which mirrors the face of impression long lived in the history of India, that is about identity purity and impurity. This dichotomy of the Indian society has overpowered many fields of thoughts and extended into the daily struggle of people from poverty, casteism and patriarchy. These events of the rise of right-wing are not new as it spread in a hegemonic way and it does not have the debatable ground too, as it was clear about what is deserving and undeserving, pure and impure, upper and lower, capable-mindful with incapable-mindless. Thus whole self aggrandization of being tolerant, as Hindu religion claim, towards the other was nothing but the right-wing propaganda to show itself as indigenous Hindu and the victim of outside forces. This categorisation of Hindu self-nurtured the hidden animosity for the diverse group and minority in the name of cultural revivalism which was suppressed in the past by the colonial force who brought the modernity and replaced the culture with new voices. This social order of caste and gender cannot be the result of the one-person army but the dominant identities who are driven by these social constructions, where even the hardest leader is the victim and who depict the face of the society or is a mirror image.

The notion that development is the marker of modernity is a historical paradox. In the times of ‘rise’ development or Vikas has been limited to the rise of highways, deforestations, corporatisation, the building of smart cities for upper middle classes, mines together with the revivalist agenda of Hindutva. This whole effort of the refurbishment of culture through the methodology of violence, trolling, humiliations of the leader who represents dissenting ideas has given the name of a new modernity, which is intolerant toward the socially powerless. The modernity which revitalises the fading pride of being from dominant caste and culture having the power to control the oppressed, which is the marker of one’s solid stand in the society. The diversity is needed to provide a comparative ground to asserts one’s dominance again with all the tools of regulations such as beating, killing, lynching, insulting and reactionary and intolerant.
The possibility of dialogue is less or no more, as questioning to the powerful is anti-national and contrary to the prevailing ethos of society. This prevailing ethos and nationalism, transformed through the force of Hindutva ideology and the agenda of this kind of development and modernity are the representations of the middle class and upper caste culture which in the current times heavily influenced the other classes too. Their aspiration elevate through these discourse of new modernity and change, which stamped the authenticity of Hindu Varna and caste systems, patriarchy, and populists understanding of poverty and social class (see Guduvarthy, 2018[4]). A critical impact out of many of these development politics showed how the dominant industrialist class expanded its discourse about change and new India, which channelised the charisma of leader and took the hermeneutic turn where youths in all sections, middle class, academician, workers and other ordinary people were profoundly influenced and taken over.

The whole idea of development was constructed into the varieties of meaning by the people. As people want change, the development agenda shaped the hope of people and constructed their new self, which is in rhythm with the power discourse of the right wing. The power of right-wing authoritarianism[5] injects as one’s self where both symbolises as one. Thus any idea contrary or critical to the agenda of the state is seen as a replacement of one’s self with something toxic and anti-cultural. So, to be a critique of power, to be dissenter and dialogic, one has to bear the brunt of being with the enemy who wishes to destroy the culture and ethos of India. Here the enemies are the nations or people from the diverse group who hold different religious practices, people from the minority background who are the victims of that dominant culture, and people who do not see the majoritarian leader as a representative of their collective self. For example, if the leader built the special economic zones (SEZ)[6] eroding the tribal from their land and memories, their protest against the power and state’s attempt is brutally rejected as anti-nation and anti-development.

The focus of the present paper is to explore why, in some sociocultural context, the doing of a leader is perceived as work not done or done contrary to their interest? The choice of a leader by some group begets into the belief polarisation lest they portray the image of in-group with the samesocio-cultural background. In India, the country of many beliefs connected to the religion, caste, languages, and region, we can guess that we appropriate our leaders who represent our shared culture. However, the definition of leaders also changes according to the need rather than solely through the identities, but not much scientific data are available. The crisis of leadership is felt from time to time, and we have observed the turns in our interpretations of a leader. For example, India, as claimed by the Hindu nationalist, has Hindu past, contrary to the other groups who reject this idea of Saffron tunnel building, instead emphasis on the multicultural ethos which makes India a nation. Sometimes not doing something makes the idea of the nation as safe connections to different identities, as compared to doing something to stop it with an iron hand and destroying the freedom of being as a citizen with varied sociocultural identities. Thus, how the leaders conscious ‘doing’ and conscious ‘not doing’, construct the meaning of a nation is a significant point of contentions.

What are the politics of doing and enactments? Does an authentic leader mean who does something for the community? What if that leader enacts the prejudices held by the dominant group? Will he be, in a real sense, an authentic leader? The neoliberalism has changed the meaning of development from social aspiration to individual aspirations. The hegemonic aspirations[7] of the new middle class, which was captured by the new India discourse changing the discourse of diversity politics and democracy into the homogenised form of nationalism. Social aspiration linked to the community building, for example, enhancement of the group’s dignity and self-esteem and giving back to the community by the
members, in contrast to the individual aspiration as believing one’s merit, the superiority of class, and ejecting out of the community, if circumstances are favourable.

Neoliberalism is not seeming to be self-sustaining and multiplying economic approach but very much promoted, socially constructed through the dominant discourses, invisible, and regulated capitalists' enterprise in the name of free reign. The current leadership promoting the neoliberalism are representative of classes that believe in individuality and independence, meritocracy and market, globalisation and technocratic capitalism. They believe that technology is the saviour of humanity which they constructed according to their experiences and rejects the experiences and values of other caste and tribal groups as savage, non-meritocratic, antagonistic to the idea of new India. The point of contention is despite their apparent knowledge of being liberal, their Hindu self becomes more rigid when it comes to caste-based rituals and to follow the saffronized modernity.

The politics of doing and development is not a new subject for any political regime, for example, the coming of special economic zones (SEZ), smart cities, big industries, roads and IT hubs at the cost of farmers and tribal interest. These developments had raised the employment of the middle classes, but at the same time isolating the lower classes and forcing them to the menial labour works. Instead of giving a technological help to the manual scavengers and labourers who risk their life, more emphasis is given to the skilled classes which are well versed in technological handling of education, government-run website, and banking service. Thus, an image of ‘development and doing’ is created, depicting a universal picture of the development and happiness of people. The Hindutva self and its representative leader have categorised the Indian society into a web of rigid categories which has less chance of bringing authentic social change which could protect the minority, diverse groups, and environment. Hindutva ideology is contrary to the natural self which connects to the ecology, rather it mesmerises itself in the false ego and selves, leading to destruction and making the minorities voiceless. The idea of India as propagated by the Hindutva forces cannot materialise under the universal and homogenous ideological system. However, there is less doubt that it is mostly present almost everywhere in families, institutions and in everyday interaction and will never vanish, and the concretisation of social categories without dialogues and tolerance will be contrary to the idea of India.

The states conscious politics of doing development and creating an imaginary space of sound and prosperous life, under the garb of more considerable effort with the help of media and political workers (karyakartas), they intentionally tried to stop freedom of universities and educational space, for example, arresting the critical leaders in the name of anti-nationality. Also, the presentations of the political will such as cleanliness movement (Swach Bharat Abhiyan) under the politics of doing cleanliness very much attach to the inherent purity and impurity based social structure under the garb of which the caste-based occupational system has rigidified. The millions of manual scavengers (safaikaramcharis) are from lower caste background and the token to present India as a clean state forcibly normalised this caste-based occupational system. There is very less improvement of these workers’ status and working conditions with the help of technology which the government promoted as a useful tool of development. The discourse of development is limited but profound. It focuses more on the economic rise and poverty removal rather than life with dignity and social justice (see Rebecca Eapen[8], EPW). The term development may connect to some set features of the developed economy, and the political discourses based on development seem above the involuntary identities laden in one's permanent belongingness to the social groups such as caste.
The discourses on doing and not doing are not new in the Indian political system. How the history of any nation is co-constructed with the people and goals are not made clear? Does development and doing are co-constructed goals? Who is involved in those co-constructions? No doubt change matters for every class where poverty and economic change matters a lot, especially to the oppress classes when they had lost any scope of another kind of social change, so economic change is a bull work for their hope, as they feel they cannot cross their involuntary identities such as caste, and gender. Two waves of nationalism and the politics of doing observed. First, the politics of doing at the time of soft right and at the time of hard right is not to deny that hard right weakened when soft right reign over India. The bipolarity of being different kinds of right is also not an illusion that the right was not any person but spread in the sociopolitical and local need of the people. It is also not that right personality does not matter but the deeds and needs. The rhetoric of development and the way people think that this is a matter of authentic leadership and how any leader shows the people his authenticity, what rhetoric followed and what image is portrayed (e.g. Main Bhi Chowkidar rhetoric, either you are with India or with Pakistan rhetoric). The notion of development as leaders’ market it to the people is incomplete without a critical positioning of neoliberalism and capitalism. There are several instances where the development agenda of prominent industrialists are quickly established and given a green signal as compared to the fulfilment of the basic needs of people. The state induced administrative reforms have become the face of democracy in India, whereas local level power distribution and institutional development for the marginalised hardly noticed (see Gurukkal, 2018, p. 108). What is development and how this has turned into developmentalism is a matter of oppression when the notion of development itself overpower the weaker section of society and snatches their freedom with little space of raising the voice.

In conclusion, the massive movement to normalise history, rationality and development, the current leadership has claimed itself as authentic, righteous and absolute. It fitted into the scriptural model of Gita that whenever there is a breach of righteousness and morality, god transforms himself into human and come to earth to restore morality and righteousness. This transformation of god into the current leadership is becoming absolute and unquestionable. It has infused enough anxiety among the dominant groups that if our PM was not elected what will happen to India and all the promises made. In the same way, as people punished for criticising god and becoming unrighteousness through their criticality, the general masses of India, who are also thinking beings was made unpolitical, unquestioning and prone to the coercive ideology of Hindutva (see Gurrukal, 2018). In an ideal way, authentic leadership must be valid to democratic values and deeds. However, there are many people from the marginalised background together with Dalit, Muslims, tribal and other who do not have the voice and are continuously on the verge of marginalisation without any scope of social change. The ideology of Hindutva is dehumanising and oppressing without any space for understanding the power dominance and state designed democracy. The coming up of various capitalistic enterprises are considered as pro-development but help given to the needy students to study in the university at the subsidy rate are not encouraged or rejected as unnecessary exchequer cost on the taxpayer money. There are colossal funding and charity given to the religious trusts, which are unaccountable to the public and making the Hindutva group more potent at the local level. Overall, these attempts to politicise the karma has added fuel to the self of the current regime and dominant groups majoritarian ethics at the cost of authentic democratic processes.

Notes:
Here I critically evaluate the right wing politics and right wing authoritarianism (RWA). However, some scholars are talking about the existence of other kind like left wing authoritarianism (LWA) in US context (Conway, Houck, Gornick, & Repke, 2018) where authoritarianism exists in both the cases and directly connects to prejudice, dogmatism, and attitude strength. In India there is not specific scientific research highlighting the existence of LWA (see Finding the Loch Ness Monster: Left-Wing Authoritarianism in the United States).

See also EPW Engage highlighted few myths about caste based reservation policies, one of them is "Unmeritorious people are getting promoted. India will never become a developed country like this." Thus the politics of development are much connected through the right wing populism about merits, development and progress against the notion that reservation deaccelerates development and progress, which is a myth and illogical.

EPW Engage: How Many People Will We Continue to Displace In the Name of Development? https://www.epw.in/engage/article/how-many-people-will-we-continue


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