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India and the turmoil in the Middle-East

2/27/2011

Many countries of the Middle-East are currently rocked by the people's protests demanding regime change and political reforms. The awakened public now wants the autocrats, dictators and despots to step down. The "intelligent" rulers of Egypt and Tunisia timely left the thrones in exchange for their lives. But the strange Libyan dictator Col. Muammar Qaddafi has refused to step down until his last breath. For fulfilling this ambition, he is even ready to destroy the nation. And this is the reason that even in the last moments of his rule, Qaddafi has appealed to his numbered supporters to attack the protesters and crush them like "cockroaches". One can imagine if Qaddafi can do such things at a time when his days are numbered, what he could have done with the opponents and dissidents when he used to rule the roost in Libya.

However, this call of aggression by Qaddafi has little effect on people, though some of them became victims of the violence unleashed by his police, army and hired mercenaries. But since Qaddafi has now crossed all limits of morality, his supporters are gradually dumping him. Libya's Home Minister has left Qaddafi. Many other ministers are following suit. A major part of the army is also against Qaddafi. Near a dozen Libyan ambassadors and diplomats have resigned in protest against Qaddafi. Indifference of the State, widespread public outcry and Qaddafi's stubbornness to remain stuck to the chair has created the environment of a potential civil war in Libya. If any large scale violence breaks out in such circumstances, only Qaddafi would be responsible for that. The international community is deeply concerned by the turmoil in Libya. Moreover, the prices of crude oil have skyrocketed due to the ongoing disturbance in the Middle-East.

The spate of people's demands for regime change is presently limited only to the Muslim populous countries. This wave of change is being looked at in different perspectives. While in

some countries the majority Shia community is demanding removal of a minority Sunni dictator, in other places people are against the puppet ruler of America. While people of some countries are fed up by the inefficient and corrupt despots, at some places they are trying to dethrone the monarchs and establish democracy. It can be said that people in every country of the Middle-East have their share of problems. A misconception promoted since centuries has been that democracy is incompatible with the Islam and the followers of Islam only love monarchy or dictatorship. This revolution has also shut the mouths of such propagandist fundamentalists. This revolution has proved that by and large the Muslim society is not only democratic but also non-violent.

Amidst this people's revolution in the Middle-East, many political analysts are guessing whether such kind of situation can arise in India? The reason behind this thinking is that even after 64 years of freedom, India is struggling with the problems of poverty, hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, corruption and scams. Maoism or Naxalism is deepening its roots very fast. For this too, poverty, hunger, unemployment, ignorance and injustice are responsible. There is no doubt that the common man in India is unhappy with the prevailing administrative system. Every minute a debt ridden farmer commits suicide. More than half of our children are malnourished. Officers of the elite Civil Service, Indian Administrative Service, are either shot dead or burnt alive by the mafias, or kidnapped by the Maoists. In the name of corruption, opposition parties are not letting the Parliament to function. Inflation is at an all time high.

People are losing faith in political parties, leaders and the system. Common man can be heard saying that the laws are only for poor while the rich and influential easily manage to escape the law. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh himself has admitted this fact. The former President APJ Abdul Kalam also expressed this concern that instead of smile, there is sadness on the faces of the people. Nothing strange if some analysts are worried of potential outburst by the people, influenced by the change in the Middle-East. Notwithstanding that India is the world's largest democracy; people are equally worried about the future of their family and children as their Middle-Eastern counterparts.

But thanks to our founding fathers and constitution makers, they have woven such a political system, as a result of which the people of India are divided into hundreds of political parties, ideologies, classes, regions etc. Indian Army is constituted on similar lines- disciplined and segmented, so that our politicians can concentrate on their power. On the other hand, by hiding the ground realities, our politicians repeatedly pat their own backs by telling the world that we are the world's biggest and the most successful ideal democracy. But they should not be indifferent to the reality that people have a threshold for everything. Awakened society can't tolerate for long the fear, poverty, hunger and uncertainty about the future of their children. If India wants to maintain the tag of being the world's largest democracy, it will have to deal with the basic needs and problems of the people as soon as possible. Otherwise, the winds of change start blowing anywhere anytime.