

CHANGING TIMES

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THE HEALING NEWSPAPER

Thursday, December 12, 2013

“Healing Cataract Vision”

Nalin K. Nirula



Being unaware of realities blocks vision and understanding, creating either the ignorance of the innocent or the ignorance of the arrogant.

Politicians are frustrated, shocked and bewildered by the massive showing of the newly formed Aam Admi Party (AAP) in New Delhi. The BJP spokesman Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, reportedly mocked the success of the AAP in the New Delhi poll results, labeling the AAP as the ‘Aam-Amrud Party’--the mango-guava fruit party.

In October last year Congress president Sonia Gandhi’s son-in-law Robert Vadra famously derided the Aam Admi activists as ‘the mango people in a banana republic’ on his Facebook page. His remark was widely condemned, and he quickly cancelled his Facebook account.

At the recent Assembly elections, the people of New Delhi cancelled the Congress’s account in the Assembly by voting Congress out of office, in favor of the BJP and the AAP.

The Bharitiya Janata Party started off as an offshoot of the Congress party. The BJP is really not very different from the Congress party in its belief in its own infallibility.

Additionally, it also bears the burden of the belief that it has the Hindu God-given right to govern.

The problem with all the established political parties is simply that, they have never come across a political animal such as the Aam Admi Party and they do not know how to deal with this phenomenon.

The oldest party was secure in their Gandhi and Nehru

family freedom-fighting credentials. If they have lost their direction sufficiently, then they are likely to promote the dynastic family as the ‘father and mother of the nation savior’ ploy to get back into power.

If they do go that way, it would only highlight how disconnected the Congress leadership is from the people realities of the nation. That will leave the BJP as the current major contender for making the government at the Center.

However, the emergence of the Aam Admi Party, making anti-corruption the issue touched a nerve in the electorate and has upset all calculations of all political parties.

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‘As long as political parties remain in denial and unaware about the impact of AAP, it is to the benefit of the people at large. This is because being underestimated gives more time for the movement to gather force. It is most encouraging for those who are against corruption in public life.’

There are two signs confirming the AAP’s impact on Indian politics at the local & the national levels:

First, AAP is running on a demonstrated, and delivered platform of transparency and direct accountability to the people. Second, people from all over the country contributed to AAP’s regional and localized New Delhi campaign—they have shown support spontaneously. These factors ought to be alarming for the established political parties, but their arrogant ignorance does not permit them to see this.

When it gets to national elections, it would not be useful for the people of New Delhi to vote for BJP instead of the AAP on the basis of the Narendra Modi factor and the national presence of the BJP. It will only delay the reforms being sought. In the meanwhile, both the BJP and Congress are succeeding in alienating the common man—the Aam Admi by their antics and utterances.

Social revolution and change always comes from social activism that is often seen to border on the anarchist and revolutionary, going back to the time of the freedom movement against British rule in India.

It is recorded history that often yesterday’s anarchist has become today’s government in power.

When Anna Hazare’s anti-corruption movement gathered force in 2011, his movement was also called ‘anarchist’ even though the movement was a peaceful one.

The BJP had a similar trajectory into the public limelight as the AAP is having now. The key difference is that the AAP is delivering a transparency and accountability on a platform and in a way that no other political party has been able to do.

Shortly before the recent elections the then Chief Minister of Delhi, Sheila Dikshit said, in reference to the AAP, ‘these parties are like monsoon pests; they come, make money and go. But they fail to survive as they don’t have a vision.’

She made this remark in September on the occasion of laying a sewerage system line for unauthorized settlements in Okhla. A sign of things to come-- a lot of garbage needs be removed and processed for the benefit of the common man.

The cataract of pompous self-importance clouding the vision of the politicians needs a surgical healing.

As to when this will get done, is up to us all, and the stand we take.

