

SR Speeds
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LIBERALISM IN INDIA

SUMMARY OF A TALK BY MR.S.V.RAJU TO THE ROTARY CLUB,
MANGALORE ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 22 AT 7 PM.

The Meaning of the Word

- Liberalism connotes different things to different people.
- In the United States the term liberal is applied to anyone who is to the left of the political spectrum i.e. a leftist - those who advocate a greater role for the state.
- In Europe and the rest of the world the word means exactly the opposite - Liberals are those who want a minimalist role for the State.
- This is how I propose to use the word in this talk.

Liberalism In India

2 Remembering Shenoy and Pai *and also J.M. Lobo Prabhu*

- Gandhiji is often quoted as saying "That government is best that governs the least". He was for minimum government.
- This was also the credo of ^{three} ~~two~~ very famous sons of Mangalore: Professor B.R. Shenoy and Mr. M.R. Pai. ^{the three} Both sadly are no longer with us but it is obvious that there is something in the soil of Mangalore that produces such outstanding liberals.
- This morning in Mumbai a conference room located in the premises of the A.D. Shroff Memorial Trust named after Mr. M.R. Pai was opened by his wife Mrs. Gita Pai

Mr. J.M. Lobo Prabhu

Liberalism In India

3 Liberalism in India - Swadeshi or Imported?

- But Liberalism is not about economics or governance alone.
- It is about values; it is about character;
- it is about tolerance;
- it is about human rights; it is about social justice.

... is the kind of Liberalism that the Indian Liberal Group stands for.

- The topic of my talk is 'Liberalism in India'. Is Liberalism in India a post-independence phenomenon or was it already there before independence.

Liberalism In India

4 Liberalism and the Freedom Struggle

- Until 1925, the Indian National Congress was led by Liberals – men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Srinivasa Shastri, H.N.Kunzru and many more.
- In 1925 with the passing away of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Gandhiji took over the leadership of the Congress he abandoned the way the liberals were handling the freedom movement which he ridiculed as 'petition-mongering' and took the path of agitation.
- It is not for us to pass judgement on the option that Gandhiji chose, but the fact remains that breaking the law became a matter of habit in post-independence India.

Q. A. Hashmi

Liberalism In India

☞ The Indian Constitution – A Liberal Document

- The Indian Constitution was, and despite the many amendments restricting freedom of the individual, remains essentially a liberal document.
- This indicates the influence that liberals in the Congress and outside continued to have.
- While this liberal document ensured an essentially free society it could not prevent the enforcement of socialist economic policies after the First Five Year Plan.
- In 1957 the country abandoned economic liberalism in the direction of a State controlling on the commanding heights of the economy.
- This led to Dr.B.R.Shenoy submitting his famous note of dissent and being dropped from the Planning Commission.

6 Liberalism in Parliament - The Swatantra Party

- Liberalism in India surfaced in the opposition benches of the Lok Sabha from 1960 to 1974 in the form of the Swatantra Party led by C.Rajagopalachari, Minoo Masani, N.G.Ranga, K.M.Munshi and others.
- Though not a member, the leading economic ideologue of the Party was none other than Prof. B.R.Shenoy.
- Economic compulsions forced the then Government to take a 'U' turn that Mr.Palkhivala demanded at his budget speeches.
- Unfortunately the 40-year old licence-permit-quota raj wrought havoc not only on the economic but affected the character of the people.
- Corruption became a way of life and has acquired an octopus-hold on our people which liberalisation has not been able to shake off.



Liberalism In India

7 Liberalism and Liberalisation

- Liberalism and Liberalisation are not synonymous. China has liberalised but continues to be a dictatorship.
- It cannot be said that because India has liberalised the economy, we are a liberal society.
- Intolerance is on the increase;
- *our political parties always personality based do not consider it necessary to have even a fig leaf of policies.*
- Alliances and United Fronts are formed not on the basis of alternative sets of policies but merely to acquire power and that too around personalities.

Liberalism In India

9 An Irony of History

- I referred to the fact that the Indian Constitution is essentially a liberal document.
- Isn't it ironic that when the Preamble proclaimed that we are "Democratic Republic" the then part in power pursued socialist policies which brought India to economic ruin; and when the Preamble now reads that we are a "Socialist republic" we have switched to liberal economic policies!

Liberalism In India

9 Indian Liberal Group

- Low credibility of political parties
- Absence of a principled liberal party in Parliament
- The crucial role of civil society in protecting democracy
- It is in such circumstances, that the Indian Liberal Group seeks not only to promote the right kind of economic policies but also to strengthen civil society by campaigning against corruption and seeking a clean polity based on tolerance, and respect for the rule of law - the basic ingredients of a liberal society.

From
 11/11/20 Basic Principles

- Q. What is the
- Q. What is the Basic Principles
- Present Literature