

BJP-NDA Government for an out and out authoritarian rule!

A few days ago Adi Godrej, one of the corporate chieftains of our country while congratulating Prime Minister on his recently proclaimed grand vision of India as a \$ 5 trillion economy had this to say that “with the growth vision and dreams firing away, it is all not a rosy picture. Impoverishment still massively plagues our nation. Rising intolerance, social instability, hate crimes, violence against women, moral policing, caste and religion based violence and many others sorts of intolerance are rampant across the country”. Thus he accurately described the gloomy conditions pervasive in our country.

But instead of tackling these shameful conditions and bettering the overall conditions of the people and their welfare, the B.J.P-NDA rulers are so determined to make our ruling-system into an authoritarian regime.

When we see at the bulldozing of certain important bills that adversely affect the lives and freedoms of people in the parliament with the tyranny of their brutal majority in the parliament, their brutal method of passing the bills, and the anti-people, anti-democratic content of those bills passed—all point out at the attempts of establishing their authoritarian regime in our country.

They shed all the democratic pretensions, abandoned the so-called parliamentary procedures and conventions. They blatantly pushed the bills in parliament and passed them in to acts. By doing this they have exposed the ugly side of parliamentary democracy and the hypocrisy involved in portraying members of these legislature bodies as the representatives of the people and their aspirations.

The right to information Act 2005 (RTI), which is believed to be “a weapon against arbitrariness, privilege and corrupt governance” by its architects like Arun Roy was the result of struggle by activists. It is whittled down into a pale shadow through an amendment claiming that its aim is to ‘rationalise’ the status of authorities. The amendments modified the status, tenure, and conditions of the R.T.I commissioner’s as government servants. Their freedom and autonomy are removed. Now they cannot be impartial and independent information commissioners. This is a retrograde step to benefit the vested interests

that have hold on the administration. With this amendment to R.T.I. act 2005, the B.J.P-N.D.A government has removed the salutary effect of the act that provided some check on wrong doing by the vested interests.

Another act—the protection of Human rights act 1993 too has been amended in these very parliamentary sessions. This amendment ensured that only government’s nominees are appointed to the National Human Rights Commissioner.

According to the original Protection of Human Rights act 1993, “only a person who had been the C.J.I (Chief Justice of India) could be made the NHRC chair person. But the present amendment to the act includes the provision that apart from a CJI, a former judge of Supreme Court can be the chair person of the NHRC. Thus the present amendment gave discretionary powers to the government to pick up the NHRC chair person. In other words it paves the way to appointment of “yes men” on the NHRC.

Yet, another Amendment to the unlawful activities act 1967 too has been passed in the present Parliament sessions. This Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act was passed by the Indira Gandhi government. From that time onwards the successive governments seeking increased powers to deal with disaffection amended the Act to that end. This law was amended in 2004 by making a comprehensive anti-terror law that provided for punishing acts of terrorism. This act was further amended in 2008 and 2013 to strengthen the legal framework to combat terror.

But again the UPA government amended it according to Amit Shah, the union home minister- to “smash” any one declared a terrorist or urban naxalite. The new anti-terror unlawful activities (prevention) amendment Act-2019 gives the country’s security agencies extraordinary power to name individuals including suspects as “terrorists” and even seize their property. This removes the individual’s right to life and liberty. The adverse consequences of terrorist tag causes irreparable damage to a person’s reputation, they may be subjected to arrest and detention even after obtaining bail from the courts. They may have their movements restricted besides carrying the taint. The security forces will have a free run against anyone seen as non-conformist with those running the state.

Our past experience suggests that more powers to the investigators means more they will be misused. Union Home Minister Amit Shah’s warning that his government would not spare terrorists or their sympathisers and his reference to ‘urban naxalites’ are portentous of every possibility of misuse of this Act.

A close parallel can be seen between “sedition” and unlawful activity as has been apprehended by the former union minister P.Chidambaram.

When this law was applied to individuals it will be catastrophic at the level of his fundamental rights.

Now who speaks against government can easily be tagged as ‘terrorists’ and incarcerated without any trail. The BJP-NDA government with this amendment to UPA, has equated anti-government stand to unlawful and terrorist activities.

From all these amendments and Acts a pattern is emerging that the state is empowering itself to not only being legally unaccountable but also is concentrating powers with itself.

This is nothing but establi-shing authoritarian regime in our country and the BJP-NDA government is resorting to this misrule, misusing the powers vested in it.

The absolute powers snatched by the B.J.P-NDA government through these undemocratic and repressive draconian amendments are certainly anti-people and authoritarian.

A strong and united people’s movement against these repressive acts is the need of the hour!
