

Bhima Koregaon Case: The Ultimate Game

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Bhima Koregaon violence more than being caste clashes are an epitome of the divide India policy. 'Divide et impera', a divide and rule policy which the British successfully used to rule over India was adopted in letter and spirit by their successors. The Left, which has a history of anti-India activities from supporting the Chinese during the 1962 war to sabotaging the 2008 Nuclear deal with the US, in order to please their political masters in China, believes in destabilising India along its fault lines to further its ideology of communism. Communism from Russia to China came through violence and bloodshed. Community rebellion and internal instability of a nation are some of the fodder on which communism thrives. Baba Sahab Ambedkar also believed that communism thrives on bloodshed. He said "*The Communists say that there are only two means of establishing communism. The first is violence. Nothing short of it will suffice to break up the existing system. The other is dictatorship of the proletariat. Nothing short of it will suffice to continue the new system*¹." Thus violence and bloodshed are what communism thrives upon. Though class is a pivotal element of communism, in India more than class the fault line lies along caste system and the entire agenda of communists in India is to exploit the society on those lines. Bhima Koregaon violence is a classic case of how communists use bloodshed to further their agenda. Let's understand Bhima Koregaon clashes in detail to understand the nuances.

Bhima Koregaon Case

Bhima Koregaon, a small village in Pune district holds historical significance due to the British-Peshwa war in 1818. The Maratha forces were led by the Peshwas while the British army was dalit dominated. The British won the war. A pillar, known as Vijay Sthamb (victory pillar), was installed by the East India Company in memory of Dalit Mahars who fought the war². The pillar gained prominence after Dr Ambedkar visited it in 1927³. Over a period of time the war between the British and the Marathas have been given a colour of the war between the Dalits and the upper caste Peshwas. The whole narrative leans on projecting the British as saviours who freed dalits from the oppressing Peshwas. However, the Bhima Koregaon doesn't directly trace its origin from Bhima Koregaon but from Vadhu Badruk village which is just 3 KM away from Bhima Koregaon. Vadhu Badruk village houses a statue of Govind Gopal Mahar, a courageous Pahalwan who is said to have performed the last rites of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Govind Gopal Mahar was himself killed by the British later⁴.

¹ Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar : Writings and Speeches, Vol. 3 First Edition by Education Department, Govt. , of Maharashtra : 14 April, 1987, Re-printed by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation : January, 2014 available at: https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/attach/amb/Volume_03.pdf

² What is Bhima Koregaon case, available at: <https://www.business-standard.com/about/what-is-bhima-koregaon-case>

³ What happened at Bhima Koregaon by Prabhash K Dutta available at: <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/what-happened-at-bhima-koregaon-1326175-2018-08-29>

⁴ Understanding Bhima Koregaon by Prabodhan Pol available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/understanding-bhima-koregaon/article22361017.ece>

The statue of Govind Gopal Mahar was desecrated on 29th December, 2017. There were caste tensions in the village due to the incident which was later fused by discussion among the groups. Later, the Elgar Parishad conclave was held in Shanivarwada in Pune on 31st December. The Elgar Parishad conclave witnessed several fiery speeches from renowned Left leaders mentioning about the statue desecration among other incidents. This stirred the Dalit emotions in the region. Subsequently, on January 1, 2018 when the bicentenary celebration of Bhima Koregaon battle was held and few hindu groups objected to it, there were violent clashes leading to the death of one and injury to many⁵.

Aftermath of Bhima Koregaon Violence

The police made a series of arrests in connection to the Bhima-Koregaon violence and also for alleged plot of '*Rajiv Gandhi styled*' assassination of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, which was discovered through a letter during investigation. In the aftermath of the Bhima Koregaon case police made 16 arrests and filed three chargesheets (including one chargesheet from NIA)⁶. Most of the arrests included the so called activists, academicians and artists who had alleged connection with the CPI (Maoist) groups. Famous politicians like Arun Jaitley and movie maker Vivek Agnihotri referred to such academicians and activists as '*Urban Naxals*'⁷. The term Urban Naxal gained prominence in the political discourse as the case gained prominence in the media. The arrests in the case started in 2018 with the arrest of Sudhir Dhawale, Surendra Gadling, Mahesh Raut, Shoma Sen and Rona Wilson. Later police arrested Varavara Rao, Arun Ferreira, Vernon Gonsalves and Sudha Bharadwaj. The NIA took over the case in January 2020 and made several arrests till November 2020 which included the arrest of Jyoti Raghoba Jagtap, Sagar Tatyaram Gorkhe, Ramesh Murlidhar Gaichor, Anand Teltumbde, Gautam Navlakha, Hany Babu and Father Stan Swamy. All the accused were charged under provisions of anti-terror law Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and several sections of IPC which included Section 153A which deals with promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, etc⁸.

⁵ Bhima Koregaon-Elgar Parishad: A timeline of events available at:

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/bhima-koregaon-elgar-parishad-timeline-events-151798>

⁶ 2 years, 3 charge sheets & 16 arrests — Why Bhima Koregaon accused are still in jail by Apoorva Mandhani available at:

<https://theprint.in/india/2-years-3-charge-sheets-16-arrests-why-bhima-koregaon-accused-are-still-in-jail/533945/>

⁷ Arrests in Bhima Koregaon case frame a transformation in India's polity and police force by Christophe Jaffrelot available at:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/bhima-koregaon-case-stan-swamy-nia-chargesheet-naxals-6907744/>

⁸ 15 persons arrested in Bhima Koregaon case so far: A brief history available at:

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/15-persons-arrested-bhima-koregaon-case-so-far-brief-history-132694>

Finite and Infinite Game

James P. Carse describes two types of games in Game Theory, namely finite games and infinite games⁹. For a game to exist there should be two players. The primary characteristic of a finite game is that it is played to win, however, an infinite game is played to continue the game. In finite games there is a definitive end while an infinite game continues in perpetuity. There can be multiple finite games in an infinite game. Understanding the game is very important for a player to win or be part of the game. Simon Sinek in his book 'The Infinite Game' explains how a player's time is concluded in a game¹⁰. In a finite game the game finishes when the time duration for which the game is supposed to be played ends. However in an infinite game, the game continues but a player ceases to exist when the person runs out of resources and will. Thus the secret of playing the infinite game is to continue playing to sustain as long as possible in the game. The players who play the infinite game sustain for longer periods of time because they are able to plan better, execute better or even strategise better owing to their understanding of the larger worldview of the game they are part of. The whole idea is to be an infinite player in an infinite game. Infinite games are more to do with culture, civilisation, global politics among others. On the other hand, a finite game can be a game of chess or a football game or an election battle among others. James P Carse in one of his lectures mentions religion as the ultimate infinite game and war as the ultimate finite game.

Bhima Koregaon Case- A Finite Game within an Infinite Game

The British expeditions in India were just not restricted to economic looting and plundering but it extended to cultural, civilisational and religious imposition. The British in India were playing a civilisational and religious war. This is amply evident from various acts such as the change in the education system, rewriting Indian history, enforcing new laws and the various missionary expeditions in India during the British rule. The idea was to rule in perpetuity and the religious and civilisational links were a big hurdle. British were playing an infinite game of culture and civilisation. On 15th August 1947, though India got independence from the British but the infinite game of religion, culture and civilisation continued with new players in the fray. The nationalist players rejoicing at the withdrawal of the British didn't realise the imminent challenges which faced them for a long time. The expansionist Abrahamic faith sympathisers and the communists ideologues replaced the British in the game. The perpetuity of the civilisational infinite game continued with new players and energy.

Replacing the British players, the communists in India dream of imposing communism with the help of Russia earlier and China currently. Civilisation, culture and religious ethos of Sanatan Sanskriti is the biggest hurdle in the fray. The British exploited two major fault lines in India, the caste fault lines and the religious fault lines. The communists today thrive on the same idea and

⁹ "Finite and Infinite Games- A Vision of Life as Play and Possibility", The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, Inc. 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022, Collier Macmillan Canada, Inc., Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 86-14304

¹⁰ Sinek, Simon. 2020. The Infinite Game. London, England: Portfolio Penguin

agenda. Using Dalits for political purposes is one of the tools for dividing the society. Creating a dalit identity separate from Hinduism is the main aim. This is in line with how the British aimed to create a separate identity for Muslims during their rule. The same can also be seen in the creation of Khalistani identity by ISI. This is to exploit as well as further the divide in the country. The communists today are playing this infinite game of civilisation and culture to destabilize the society. The 'Urban Naxal' in the media, academics and professional sphere print concerted stories to further the agenda. The nationalist players need to understand this infinite game and respond accordingly.

Now, Bhima Koregaon case is a classic example of the communist agenda in India. If we see the chargesheet details of the police regarding Stan Swamy we can clearly identify the pattern I mentioned earlier. According to the police chargesheet, the event was part of the larger plot to create unrest in the society. The main agenda was to stir the Dalits through fiery speeches which could ultimately lead to chaos in the society. The charge sheet further stated that the Elgar Parishad event was organised through the financial assistance of banned outfit CPI(Maoists). Moreover, it stated that it is the policy of the CPI (Maoists) to mobilise Dalit community's sentiments and mislead them to take violent path against the system. In the chargesheet the NIA made a clear case of Stan Swamy being at the epicenter of Bhima Koregaon case and he planned to take on the Government through a planned militia¹¹. The NIA laid out that under the garb of Dalit activism Stan Swamy supported the Maoists in India¹². The NIA chargesheet also stated that it was found in search and seizure that Stan Swamy was in touch with many Maoists and even received Rs 8 Lakh to further Maoist agenda. The NIA further included in the chargesheet that Stan Swamy wanted to use Muslim Dalit forces to further his agenda.

Thus, we can clearly see how the communists want to exploit the fault lines in India to further their agenda. Their main goal is to spread unrest in the society eventually leading to bloodshed and a future possibility of communism in India. It's an infinite cultural game they are playing. The nationalist forces need to treat it like an infinite game where communists should be forced to exhaust its energy and resources and be forced to leave the game. Also, cultural assimilation of dalits in the civilizational mainstream should be an end goal. In the regular discourse, contribution of Dalits in freedom struggle and cultural preservation should also be given a thrust. Moreover, alienation of Dalits from Hindu culture and civilisation should be effectively and efficiently restricted. The strategy of defeating the left forces shouldn't be to win a few battles but to preserve the heritage, culture and religion as a part of the infinite game.

Conclusion

The Communists in India are playing an infinite game of cultural and ideological imposition. Bhima Koregaon incidence is just a small play in this infinite game. The agenda is to

¹¹ See This is what NIA's Bhima Koregaon chargesheet says about Stan Swamy by Kamaljit Kaur Sandhu available at:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/this-is-what-nia-s-bhima-koregaon-chargesheet-says-about-stan-swa-my-1731272-2020-10-13>

¹² See <https://www.barandbench.com/news/litigation/nia-reply-stan-swamy-appeal-bail-bombay-high-court>

exploit the fault lines in India to defeat the nationalistic forces who want to preserve heritage and culture. The nationalist players should treat it as an infinite game to wear out the communist will and drive them out of their resources. Covering the fault lines and cultural assimilation of major players is important. It is important to redefine the rules for the nationalistic forces to drive the narrative and sentiment in their favour. It's not a one off incident or finite game play that can be stopped by winning the battle or war. It can only be successfully played by driving the energy and will out the opposition players for it to move out of the game. This should be the end goal of an infinite nationalistic player.