

Defections and horse-trading

Synopsis: Defections and horse-trading is one of the many dimensions of all-pervasive corruption in India. It is blatant betrayal of the trust by the elected representatives. No political group is free from the contagion. Power-seeking politicians engineer and manipulate defections easily in these times of fractured mandate den grab power by hook or by cork resulting in colossal waste of public money and jumbo-size trading only when they themselves become the victim of it, and it is a big irony. The existing Anti-defection Law is flawed and defective and needs immediate review and amendments. There are many should and good suggestions to make theater-defection law stringent, effective and good suggestions to make the anti-lack courage and will-power to evolve a reach the consensus among them.

Defections are engineered by dangling carrots of ministerial berths and other profitable positions in government. Consequently, the size of ministries is often very large and uncohesive and at the great cost of public money. Accordingly, there are jumbo-size cabinets and a lot of waste of taxpayers' money. There are often mid-term elections, by-polls and uncalled for dissolutions of the assemblies and legislatures as well because of the nuisance. And ultimately it is the country and the people who suffer a pay for the sins of political bosses.

When the land is stripped of its green cover, soil is lost and damaged by erosion. Nearly 26 billion metric tonnes of topsoil is being eroded every year. It takes from 200 to 1000 years to form 2.5cm of topsoil under normal agricultural conditions. It is estimated that from 20-300 tonnes per hectare soil is lost annually. Topsoil is lost many times faster than it can be replaced. The erosion is called the silent theft. A single rain or storm can erode century's old accumulated soil from a field stripped of plant-cover. Soil is that valuable substance which causes plants and vegetation grow. Soil is the life-giving substance. Ultimately men and animals, all depend on plants, grass, grains etc. If this vegetation and plant supporting soil is blown or washed away, the land becomes useless from the agricultural point of view because the sub-soil, underneath it is not potent enough to support plant life. Without this vital cover of topsoil, the land becomes arid, barren and useless.

Water and wind are the two major agents of soil-erosion which wash or blow away the top-soil. Poor agricultural practices which strip the land of its vegetative cover are the cause of soil-erosion. As a result of erosion about 4330 million hectares of arable land had to be abandoned during the last 4-5 decades. This degradation of land caused by erosion is a very serious problem.

In the developing nations of Asia, Africa and South America, the problem is the worst. Soil erosion is affecting 15 per cent of the earth's cropland area. The shrinking forest covers result in flash floods and erosion of the land. There are storms as well across the denuded area of land and the soil is blown away constantly... Soil erosion is likely to continue in coming years. At the present rate of erosion there would be about 30 per cent loss of the global soil inventory by the year 2050.

Erosion by sea water and desertification has made the situation worse. Desertification is there on a vast scale. Nearly 21 Mha of present rate of desertification about 1.2 billion people would be affected by the turn of the century. The global warming, because of greenhouse effect, will make the sea-level rise above present level by 20 cm by 2030 and 30 cm by 2050 leading to inundation of large areas of land. Glaciers and icecaps have started melting and causing thermal expansion of the oceans. India has a vast coastline and erosion by sea has caused losses on a vast scale. About 175 Mha land in the country is already degraded. The land under agriculture is 143 Mha, 56 percent of it's suffers from varying degrees of degradation. Of the total of 75 Mha forest land, 40 Mha suffers from degradation. It emphasizes the abuses of our natural resources in the past and even in the present. Conservation is one of the major human problems and must be addressed immediately and effectively. Earth is the 4ojly known living planet because of its varied natural resources which support and sustain life. Without these natural resources like water and soil, the earth would have been another dead, desolate and deserted planet like Mars or Jupiter. Water, soil, forests and wildlife are our valuable natural resources and must be preserved at any cost.

These are some of the very good suggestions and arguments in regard to the desirability of arriving at some concrete solutions to prevent house-trading, but as yet everything has been, as it were, in a limbo. It is high time that ant9i-defection laws are reviewed and suitable amendments made into eight of past experiences. It is certain that defection, horse-trading, floor-crossings and bribery cases like that of JMM would continue as usual and unabated.