

RECIPROCAL AMONG POLITICAL UTOPIANISM

POLITICAL MYTHS AND POLITICAL REALITY:

EVIDENCES FROM SRI LANKA

P. L. T. Purasinghe¹

Abstract

There is an unbreakable and a powerful relationship between politics and utopianism. Politics is a continuous struggle for power. Therefore it is a continuous struggle occurred openly at a time as well as closely at another time among opposite parties to occupy power in practical fields established the power and spread it. There is an apparent contradiction between the power struggle practically in the society and conceptual politics. Conceptual politics indicate a nature of utopianism ideal and the struggle for power exercised practically in the society is a very complicated process moving between reality and myths, reasonability and unreason ability, justice and in justice, morality and immorality, non-violence and violence, practical politics can happen through bullet or ballet. There for according to the nature of success in the above mentioned process, the final results of the political struggle are determined. Here a wide distance between conceptual politics and practical politics can be identified. This contradiction is that political conceptions do not become the reality. This paper critically examines the number of political myths and their impact to the political system of Sri Lanka.

Key Words: utopianism, political myths, political system, Sri Lanka

¹ **Senior Lecturer and The Head, Department of Political Science, University of Jayawardanapura, Sri Lanka**

Introduction

The power struggle in the modern democratic political systems is put into action based on election. The main practice in the power struggle is political parties and politicians. The final result in the struggle for power is determined on the ability of political parties and politicians to win the favors of voters that are the majority will of voters. So it has been the prior task to win the attractions of voters. The ability of political parties and politicians to win the attraction of voters depends on the voter's quantity of acceptance of the solutions presented by politicians to solve the socioeconomic problems faced by voters. Here the utopianism in politics comes out, when political parties and politicians are unable to provide practical solutions to solve the social and economic problems of voters. Political parties and politicians are compelled to determine utopian solutions. These utopian solutions can be regarded as myths. Those myths are only for the attraction of voters, but politicians have no need to make these myths reality. Politicians expect to cheat voters through myths. On the other hand voters too are not interested in it, because majority of voters have no sufficient intelligence to understand them. Though sometimes voters have such intelligence they may have no interesting politics because the normal behaviors of the majority of voters are to live passively entrusting politicians to solve the sociopolitical problems in the country.

Political Parties, Politicians and Myths

Political parties and politicians that are more potential to cheat voters using myths can get the victory in elections. There for during election periods political parties and politicians present myth and utopian ideas in competitive manner. Such political struggles are implemented based on conflict among myths. Politicians try to establish myths in society to cheat voters in one way and in another way to make voters their slaves standing in front of them as superior group in the society in a way of processing a bogus intellectual power. Though the struggle for power is implemented through bullet or ballet, political utopianism is essentially connected with power struggle.

It is a theoretical as well as practical politics to present myths for the purpose of providing happier and more satisfactory life to people by way of solving the sociopolitical issues faced by a system of politics. 'Ideal state' of a Greek Philosopher Plato (Sabine, 1956), 'Universal human

brotherhood fraternity' of Cicero (Sabine, Ibid) a Roman thinker, 'City of God' of St. Augustine a medieval theologian (Sabine, Ibid), 'Utopia' of Sir Thomas More who was a modern thinker (Allen, 1960), Russo's 'General Will' (Ebenstein, 1975), Hegel's 'mysticism' (Ebenstein, Ibid) and 'Communist Society' of Carl Marks (Heywood, 2014) are several examples for political myths.

Political Myths in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lankan politics too such myths can be identified. Since the decade 1970 decade political leaders who were involved in struggle for capturing political power, have presented various s. Examples for such myths are the concept of "Virtuous society" presented by J.R Jayawardhane in the general election 1977 (Election manifesto, 1977), 'the concept of converting Have notes in to Harvest' presented by R.Premadasain the presidential election 1988 (Election manifesto, 1988). 'The concept of giving a human face to open economy' presented by ChandrikaBandaranayekaKumaranathunga in the presidential election 1994 (Election manifesto, 1994), 'Regaining Sri Lanka' primminister by Ranil Wickramasinghe in the general election 2001, 'Thought of Mahinda' presented by MahindaRajapakshe in the presidential election 2005 (Election manifesto, 2005), 'The future vision of Mahianda thoughts' presented by MahindaRajapakshe in the general election 2010 (Election manifesto, 2010) and the concept of 'Good governance' presented by MithreepalaSirisena in the presidential election in 2015 (Election manifesto, 2015).

Above mentioned election manifestoes given by political leaders in every election are known as political myths because they never came in to reality in the world. Especially the founders of the concept of good governance presented by MithreepalaSirisena in the presidential election 2015 did not define its clear meaning to the people and also they did not consider whether this concept could be made a reality.

Though the common people did not have a theoretical comprehension about the concept of good governance, the politicians who presented this concept defined it as abolition of the present constitution with the president ship centered with power and establish a democratic governance, uproot the theft and corruption and give punishment to corrupted people, provide a solutions for

the national problem, create a sustainable development instead of mythical development and re-establish a healthy democratic politics. As Aristotle stated 'it was a creation of an environment of a living a very happy and satisfactory life' in politics. In the general election 2015 the majority of voters expected to make the political environment introduced as good governance a reality in Sri Lanka, but the principles included in the concept of good governance are different from it. These principles are ruler of law, participation of people, transparency, responsibility, accountability and justice. But it is doubtful whether not only common people but also the politicians who presented a concept of good governance had a theoretical understanding about it. However the concept of good governance was able to do direct influence towards the decision of the majority of voters.

Conclusion

The paper identifies political myths have been a part and partial of political campaigns in Sri Lanka. Voters who are attracted to myths during election period are not interested finding whether these myths come in to reality. This is the mystery of political myths. Though the myths can easily be presented in election periods, it is not easy to make them real after the politicians get the power. Common voters do not understand this contradiction and the final result is that myths and ambitions of people are in conflict each other. It is natural that this conflict goes up to the government change. This is the nature of the political process based on democratic governance.

References

- Allen, J. W (1960), A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century, University Paperbacks, Methuen, London.
- Ebenstein, William (1975), Great Political Thinkers, 3rd Edition, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co. New Delhi.
- Election Manifesto of United National Party (1977), M.D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd, Colombo.
- Election Manifesto of United National Party (1988), Government Press, Colombo.
- Election Manifesto of People's Alliance (1994), Sri Lanka press, Colombo, 1994
- Election Manifesto of United National Front, (2001), Shakti press, Colombo, 2001

- Election Manifesto of United People's Freedom Alliance ,(2005),Government Press, Colombo.
- Election Manifesto of United People's Freedom Alliance 2010,Government Press, Colombo.
- Election Manifesto of New Democratic Front (2015), Sineru Solution Press, Colombo.
- Lasswell, Harold. D (1936) , Politics: Who Gets What, When, How, The Macmillan Company, New York.
- Pierre, Jon & Peters, Guy. B (2005)Governing Complex Societies, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Sabine, George. H (1956) A History of Political Theory, 3rd Edition, George G. Harrap& Co. Ltd, London.