**Politics without ethics is a disaster**

“Politics” term is derived from the Greek word, “Politicos”. It means ‘relating to the citizens’. Traditionally Politics means influencing life of people through some form of organized control. History of politics is as old as history of human civilization itself. In case of India, sabha and samiti of Pre-vedic times to modern vibrant democracy of post-independent era, Politics has transformed a lot. But Ethics is fundamental determinant of Politics, without which it will fail in its objectives of ameliorating lives of people.

“A small leak can sink a great Ship.”

 -Benjamin Franklin

Immortal words of the statesman, emphasizes on the critical aspect of Ethical standards in Politics. However, there are critics who see ethics incompatible with politics. Though it is difficult to follow ethical standards in Politics, but without it, sooner or later, the ship will sunk.

History is replete with examples of political disasters and its nefarious repercussions, when ethical standards were disregarded. Reign of terror of French revolution is the classical case of politics ignoring the ethical ways to achieve the end. In 1979, when French revolution liberated the 3rd Estate ( Peasants and common people), it was hoped to bring normalcy. But the same peasants started violent attacks on nobles and the earlier reign of terror continued unabated, albeit the actors changed. In the end, it was the peasants, for whom the revolution was supposedly carried out, suffered the most casualties.

In 19th century, with spread of Industrialization, there was growing need for raw material as well as the new markets. During this times, Politics over resources led to frequent wars among the European powers all over the world stage, be it Africa, Asia or South America. And Millions of people got slaughtered. Selfishness of the western nations with utter disregard to any ethical concerns, led to uneven division of African continent. Without factoring the issues of ethnicity and culture, mindless division of the continent is the main reason of the present day civil wars happening in African Nations.

Even in present times, politics over fossil fuel resources has plagued the whole Middle east and Northern Africa. In 1970s, there was Vietnam war and in 1990s, gulf war. Though most of the times, pretext is about restoring the democracy or protecting the rights of native’s rights. But the real reason for these conflicts are always the narrow political interests of few nations, be it Afghan invasion, Iraq invasion or annexation of Crimea.

Apart from foreign political interference, national leaders/governments have indulged in power grab politics ostensibly throwing the ethical standards down the drain. Pakistan’s military misadventures , totaling four till now, are case in point. Even the Genocides in African Nations like, rawanda (1993) and civil wars in Sudan and Somalia are result of power politics of their respective national leaders. The result is wiping out of entire generations of people.

When there is emphasis on ends rather than just political means, crisis has happened. It’s not always genocide or wars, which have killed millions of people. Disasters have happened in other forms as well. Recent European refuge crisis has spread tremors world over. It is still continuing. The primary reason is collective political failure due to narrow political interests of concerned governments. Daily hundreds of lives are being lost in Mediterranean sea. There have been efforts by various multilateral institutions as well as governments. But until the political class is sensitized with respect to ethical issues, there may be another crisis waiting to happen around the corner. Third world is more vulnerable to the unethical international political discourse. In developing countries millions of people are languishing in poverty and dependent on the Govt. aid and subsidies. But for financial gains, leaders of the 1st world are advocating stringent norms for phasing out of Agricultural subsidies in negotiations of WTO.

Even in case of Climate change negotiations, developed nations usually gang up and shudder away from taking responsibility in line with their historical emissions of GHG. Because of Climate change, mostly the 3rd world countries and poor island countries are at biggest risk and will be affected adversely. 1st world nations should be more ethical in their quest of development and more sympathetic to the concerns of developing nations to avert the disaster from happening, for the sake of future generation.

While international political currents have precipitated many crisis,our own political class is no different. Due to utter disregard for ethical standards, our national politics is polluted. The result is religious conflicts like, 1984 sikh riots, 1992 babri Masjid demolition, 2002 Godhra carnage. Apart from religious skirmishes, India is also plagued with cast based polarization and pestering naxal issue due to unequal development. Recently India has earned a name for itself for various scams like, 2G scam, Coal gate, sardha scam, vyapam scam. The genesis of all these crisis is degeneration of moral compass of our political class. Our parliament is brimming with corrupt and criminal politicians who violate the law with impunity. Even at the state or local level, narrow minded politics has vitiated the atmosphere of harmony. Be it son of the soil movement in Maharashtra, Caste based reservation protests of Gujrat or rajsthan or the recent lynching episode of Dadri.

If the political class doesn’t gather their act together and imbibe the ethical human values collectively in their conscience, there will always be crisis waiting to happen next door. In 1948, Gandhiji declined to join the constituent assembly, but gave the advice to the national leaders.

“Whenever you are in doubt or when self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man, whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate, is going to be any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him over a control of his life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and starving millions? This talisman should serve as guiding torch light for the political class. Then there will be no stopping to ushering of egalitarian world order.