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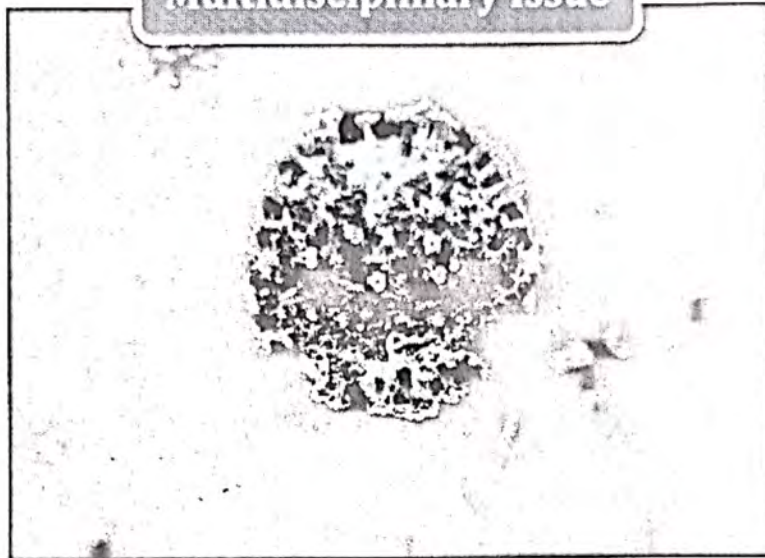
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MVA Government in Maharashtra : Tensions in Center-State Relations.

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Abstract :

After the Lok Sabha elections, the Maharashtra Assembly elections were held in October 2019. After the election results, many dramatic events took place for the establishment of power. After winning 105 seats in the 288-member assembly, the Shiv Sena broke its pre-election alliance with the largest party, the BJP, and formed a government with the Congress and the NCP. For this, Shiv Sena also withdrew from the NDA at the Center. Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray became the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Thus, the Corona epidemic in Maharashtra in just two-three months after the formation of the Mahavikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra, the efforts of the BJP to overthrow the government and the various obstacles created by the central government and the governor in the way of the government have to face. Running a three-party government is also a big challenge for Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. Nevertheless, the Thackeray government has successfully completed its one-year journey. In this research essay, an attempt has been made to review various challenges in the course of the year of the Thackeray government.

Keywords : Mahavikas Aghadi (MVA), Shiv Sena, Governor, Hindutva, Presidential rule.

Introduction :

After the assembly elections in Maharashtra in October 2019, the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance came to an end and the three parties, Shiv Sena, Congress and NCP, formed the Mahavikas Aghadi (MVA) and formed the government. In November 2020, this Thackeray government completed one year. While it is difficult to run a three-party government, the Corona epidemic crisis and its deteriorating economy, natural disasters, wet drought, obstacles created by the central government and the governor, agitations by Marathas and other sections for reservation and most importantly by the BJP, the main opposition party. Attempts to trap; The Thackeray government has faced many such challenges from the very beginning. However, the rapprochement between Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray and their interactions with Congress leaders Balasaheb Thorat, Ashok Chavan and others have enabled the MVA government to meet all the challenges so far.

MVA Government : A revised version of Shiv Sena's early politics :

On November 23, 2019, keeping Maharashtra in the dark, Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar were suddenly sworn in as Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister. However, this government proved to be a failure and the Thackeray government was formed in the state. Uddhav Thackeray and six other ministers were sworn in on November 28, 2019 at the same Shivaji Park ground where Balasaheb Thackeray's rhetoric was raining down.¹ Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray

unexpectedly became the chief minister, but as his career took shape, the corona crisis collapsed and the chief minister began to reach out to the people on television.² But Shiv Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray has a history of forming political alliances not only with Congress and Samajwadi but also with Muslim League during his lifetime. Later, when he formed an alliance with BJP, he had given up the habit of going with Congress. But now that the BJP has left, naturally Shiv Sena has turned to Congress.³

During the first two decades of the Shiv Sena's existence, there were differences between the Maharashtra Congress and the Mumbai Congress. At that time, Balasaheb had taken advantage of it. That is why the Congress Chief Minister from Vasanttrao Naik to Vasantdada Patil was constantly accused of being loyal to Shiv Sena.⁴ The Shiv Sena was also ridiculed as Vasant Sena. Despite being the main constituent of the NDA, the Shiv Sena had backed Congress presidential candidate Pratibha Patil in 2007, despite opposition from the BJP. At that time, Shiv Sena had at least the issue of Marathihood. But five years later, the Shiv Sena openly supported Pranab Mukherjee, the Congress' presidential candidate. The Shiv Sena had taken the position that Pranab Mukherjee should become the President as he is better than Bhairon Singh Shekhawat of the BJP.⁵ Thus, the Shiv Sena, which was formed in 1966, has been in politics for the first 20 years, mainly with the Congress. For the next thirty years, Hindutva has been the subject of controversy, that is, the alliance with the BJP. The Shiv Sena-BJP alliance broke down

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after the results of the 2019 Assembly elections, fifty years after the establishment of the Shiv Sena party. The Shiv Sena, which had earlier sided with the BJP to keep the Congress out of power, has now turned to the Congress to keep the BJP out of power. The method of politics of Shiv Sena does not seem to have changed. Because this is the method of Shiv Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray to increase his own strength by taking an unexpected role in the changing politics. Uddhav Thackeray has only implemented it under changing circumstances.⁶

MVA Government : Tensions in central-state relations :

As the Shiv Sena ousted the BJP, which had won the highest number of 105 seats in the Maharashtra Assembly elections, the financial crisis of the MVA government through the central government became an important part of the BJP's strategy. Corona has crippled the state's economy. During the April-September period of 2019, the revenue of the state was 1 lakh 30 thousand 400 crores. In the same period in 2020, this income fell to 99 thousand. In the budget for 2020-21, the total revenue of the state was estimated to be 3 lakh 47 thousand 456 crore. However, this income is now estimated to be reduced by about one to one and a half thousand crore. This has resulted in a 67 per cent cut in development expenditure, which has brought development work to a near standstill.⁷ On October 23, 2020, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray lamented that the Center was not paying the dues of the state despite the fragile economic condition of the state due to the Corona. Many ministers in the Naraji Thackeray government have openly criticized the government for deliberately delaying aid and financial assistance to the MVA govt. in Maharashtra.⁸

The BJP is constantly trying to create the necessary environment for the implementation of the President's rule in Maharashtra. In Palghar, the sadhus were killed by a mob thinking they were thieves. Immediately after the incident, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath telephoned Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to express concern over the incident. Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) set fire to the forest and demanded a presidential rule by declaring that Hindus were in danger. In the case of Sushant Singh Rajput and later Kangana Ranaut, the BJP had tried to create a similar atmosphere.⁹

In the Arnab Goswami arrest case, BJP state leaders and even central leaders directly criticized the

Thackeray government's action and went on a rampage across the country. The Thackeray government also said that the BJP government at the Center was deliberately abusing the CBI as the case was referred to the CBI by the Central Government while the Mumbai Police was investigating the TRP scam. Thus began the politics of Shah Katshah between the Central and State Governments. The Thackeray government also alleged that the BJP had deliberately obstructed the move of the Aarey Metro car shed project at Kanjurmarg during the tenure of the former Chief Minister of Maharashtra and the current Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly. After the High Court stayed the construction of Metro Car Shed at Kanjurmarg, the state government started considering moving the Metro 3 car shed to the proposed site for the bullet train in the Bandra Kurla complex. As a result, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of a Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project is likely to be hampered, creating a picture of the BJP and the Center against the Thackeray government.

BJP's politics to embarrass the Thackeray govt. through the office of Governor :

The BJP, outraged that the Shiv Sena had formed a government in alliance with the Congress, started propaganda that the Shiv Sena had abandoned Hindutva. 'If the Shiv Sena is caught in the crossfire on the issue of Hindutva, then perhaps the MVA will fail and the Shiv Sena will come out of power. 100 days after assuming office as Chief Minister, Uddhav Thackeray visited Ramallah in Ayodhya and yet neither the Congress nor the NCP objected. The Muslim community agitating over the CAA-NRC issue is happy with the government as it has received indirect support from the MVA government. Therefore, the BJP created a question mark on the Hindutva of Shiv Sena and Uddhav Thackeray by placing a gun directly on the Governor's shoulder and on the pretext of not opening temples. The Governor's controversial letter on Shiv Sena's secularism is an indication of how uneasy the BJP is as it is out of power.¹⁰ The Chief Minister clearly says, 'We don't need anyone to teach Hindutva. Because my grandfather and father told us that.' Uddhav Thackeray's Hindutva is the Hindutva of Prabodhan.¹¹ Uddhav Thackeray, in his speech at the Dussehra rally on October 25, 2020, strongly criticized Governor Koshiyari's letter and the mention of Hindutva and secularism, making it clear that Shiv Sena's Hindutva is not a bell-ringer but a broad one.

The governor had expressed displeasure over the manner in which Arnab Goswami, editor-in-chief of

Republic News, was arrested in connection with the suicide of architect Anvay Naik. Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari had also expressed concern over his condition and safety and instructed Home Minister Anil Deshmukh over phone to allow Goswami's family to visit him. This was strongly criticized by the NCP, a constituent party of the MVA government. It would have been better if the governor had shown sympathy to the Naik family instead of sympathizing with the accused in the serious crime, said Nawab Malik, spokesperson of the NCP and the state's Minority Development Minister. He also criticized the governor for not taking the side of an accused in a serious crime.¹²

Opposition has started the practice of going directly to the Governor instead of going to the Secretary to the Minister or the Chief Minister of the concerned department if they want to make any demand to the Government of Maharashtra.¹³ As a result, tensions between the governor and the cabinet continued to rise. As a result, "the state government had sent the names of 12 members for appointment in the Legislative Council and requested the Governor to make the appointment within fortnight. According to constitutional experts, the names have not been approved by the governor as the cabinet recommendation is binding."¹⁴ Taking advantage of the ambiguity in Article 171 (3) (e) of the Constitution regarding the appointment process of 12 MLCs appointed by the Governor, Governor Koshyari did not take any action on this recommendation of the Cabinet. Therefore, the MVA's suspicion that the Governor is acting on the cue of the Central Government and the BJP seems natural. The Bombay High Court has issued a notice to the Attorney General on December 23, 2020, asking the Center to clarify its role in the matter as there is no clarity in the law as to how long the governor should appoint 12 members to the Legislative Council. The Mahavikas Alliance has sent a list of 12 members appointed by the Governor to Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari three months ago. But Koshyari has not yet appointed these members. The MVA government is tired of trying to appoint members nominated by the governor and now the matter has gone to the high court.¹⁵

Conclusion :

As long as the coordination, mutual trust and cooperation between the Shiv Sena, the Congress and the NCP in the MVA is maintained, the Thackeray government will move forward successfully. But it is important for the leadership of the three parties in the MVA to keep its members from falling apart from falling into the trap of the powerful opposition party, the ruling BJP at the Center. Because the way the BJP has seized power in Goa, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and some other states through the politics of sabotage, the same can happen in Maharashtra. With this in view, the BJP has been pursuing the strategy of implementing 'Mission Lotus' in Maharashtra from the very beginning. As a result, the BJP's development diplomacy cannot be ignored. So even though the Thackeray government has successfully completed one year today, it is difficult to predict whether it will be able to complete its term. However, it is certain that Uddhav Thackeray will have to work hard to sustain the government.

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