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Courageous Civil Servants

Kuldip Nayar

Government officers after retirement take to sanyas, but some courageous ones have spoken against the intolerant society that India is becoming. In their open letter they say, “It appears there is a growing religious intolerance that is aimed primarily at Muslims.”

Apparently, there has been no discussion or mention about the sentiments of this letter. The BJP which sets the tone of society probably did not want any discussion and let the matter die as it has. Yet, the fact remains that the Muslims do not get their due. They are 17 crores or 12 per cent out of India’s total population of 1.2 billion. As Justice Rajinder Sachar’s report has pointed out, the treatment meted out to them was worse than what the Dalits go through.

The report is a decade old but none of its recommendations has ever been implemented, not even under the Congress. What it means is that a soft kind of Hindutva had spread into the country even before the BJP came to power. One expected the Congress party to take up the point made by Justice Sachar. I understand that he even went to the Prime

Minister (Manmohan Singh) at the time to complain that if the government was not serious about implementing its recommendations, why did it waste his time and the time of other members of the Commission?

Manmohan Singh at the time expressed his helplessness. He reportedly told Justice Sachar the bureaucracy seemed to have come in the way and what was promised to the Muslims remained only on paper. The report had hardly any adherent when the BJP came to power. The Muslims, once in a while, do recall the report to underline their grievances, but the media has shown no interest.

Even otherwise the media has come to tilt towards Hindutva. The voice of pluralism is hardly audible. Things have come to such a pass that those who talk about pluralism are looked down upon and considered pro-Muslim for some personal gain. The BJP philosophy has come to prevail. The Congress Party which draws its connection with those who struggled for independence and its ethos of one country for all without distinction of caste or creed is not credible any more.

The dynasty rules the party and does not give space to anybody else. Even the Working Committee of the party, which used to be in the news, does not exist. One has never heard of the AICC, or the party president's elections. In an effort to let her son, Rahul, be an arbiter, Congress President Sonia Gandhi has seen to it that there would be no dissenting voice.

Senior members of the party openly express their disappointment that new and fresh voices are not entertained by Mrs Gandhi because she is keeping the seat warm exclusively for Rahul. He is so much the apple of her eye that even daughter Priyanka—she goes down better with the masses—has been pushed into the background.

Priyanka's most powerful selling point is that she resembles her grandmother, Indira Gandhi. Never mind that Indira had many negative points. For example, the excesses committed during the Emergency when one lakh people were detained without trial. The Shah Commission, which held open sittings to bring out how the common man was maltreated, said in its report that the Emergency was imposed because Indira wanted to save her seat after Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha disqualified her for six years. Instead of honouring the judgment she changed the whole system of governance. Subsequently, she allowed her younger son, Sanjay, to effectively rule the country with the support of his red necks.

Back in those days there were also a handful of serving and retired civil servants who dared to defy authoritative governance and suffered the punishment meted out

to them for having shown courage during the Emergency. Indira was very particular that those who challenged her were sidelined.

The government of Narendra Modi is not about promoting one man and his idiosyncrasies. It is more about ideology, the Hindutva. That makes it much more ominous. One person can always be removed but ideas are harder to dislodge. That is the difference between totalitarianism and democracy. In the first, it is one person who tries to change the people. In the other, it is the people who change top rulers.

Unfortunately, today it is Hindutva versus pluralism. Despotism of one person has been replaced by the despotism of ideology. This can be seen in the way a 15-year-old Muslim, Junaid, was stabbed to death on his way back from a shopping spree to celebrate Eid. Those responsible for his killing first abused him on account of his religion.

What is tragic is that those who struggled for independent India do not count and the ones who were never near the frontlines are ruling the country. Where were the Hindutva voices when Nehru, Gandhi and Maluana Azad were caned by the people in solar hats?

There are some liberal voices who recall the independence movement and Mahatma Gandhi who led it, but the ruling party's emphasis is on their philosophy which was looked down upon in a pluralistic country for which the nation was fighting.

It is tragic to see that the civil servants themselves are wearing the badge of Hindutva. In UP, where the BJP has come to power, Chief

Minister Adiyath Yogi has transferred 26 top secretaries to the government to make way for the people he considers nearer to his party's philosophy. This is different from the centre where the Prime Minister has reportedly seen to it that those secretaries who fail to do their jobs are given due warning. Modi is considered by the civil service to be a ruler who means business.

So far there is very little evidence that Modi can rise above ideology. He still has two more years to go in his five-year tenure. Maybe, he would now take some hard decisions to put the country before the party.

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Visa Tangle too Disrupts Software Business

Mrinal K. Biswas

Whether information technology industry is set for a course of boom to blur is the current angst for India. The spectre of restrictive H1B visa policy by the US and the creeping disruption technology are the twin threats that put a great strain on India's \$150 billion IT industry.

Whether there will be a sigh of relief because of bold predictions by the software association of 1.3-1.5 lakh new jobs in 2017-18 period, along with 10-11 per cent domestic revenue growth backed up by 7.6 per cent rise in exports last year is under the country's keen watch at present. According to National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nassocom) chairman R Chandrashekhar, this industry faces continued headwinds from the US market.

The Indians mistakenly hoped that Trump-Modi meet last June-end would untangle US threats of putting a stop of a free run of Indians in the US software and services sector. The subject was not there on the discussion table of the two leaders because Prime Minister Modi was aware of US President Roland Trump's sensitivities on foreign workers flooding the US job market, particularly in the IT industry.

The Indians working or will be working in the US under optional practical training (OPT) falling within science, technology, engineering and medicine (STEM) category have come under the Trump administration's critical review, to the consternation of India's ever

expanding middle class who wish to move to the land of opportunity with their knowledge-based education. There is a fear that the new administration will be heavy-handed and cut down present strength of STEM workers and severely limit new admissions with strings attached. At present, US issues 85,000 H1B visas each year—65,000 to foreign workers and 20,000 foreigners just graduated from US universities. In 2015, some 64 per cent of this H1B visas were issued mostly to Indian IT technocrats who are employed at greatly reduced pay by American standard .

The US administration and law-makers worried at lack of jobs for eminently employable Americans in the STEM sector because of availability of cheap immigrant workers seem determined to clamp down on foreign workers for whom Donald Trump stands steadfast. At present, visa-holding knowledge workers earn \$60,000 annually against the normal pay of \$130,000 for an American in that field. Trump appears to insist that the eligible aliens must be offered a shade higher than the normal pay to show that it is worth paying because there is not enough qualified Americans to take jobs in that sector.

Similarly LI visas, which US State department issues to high-skilled foreign workers for transfers to the US after they work in American companies abroad for some period. It is found that in 2011, some 25,898 of the 44,820 LI visas issued went to the Indians. These two types of

visas are issued for a maximum period for seven years for executives and managers and five years for others. Business process outsourcing (BPO) is another mechanism, under US close watch, through which American companies outsource large volume of work at less cost to Indian companies like Infosys, TCS.

It is still an open question how the US administration will act after reviews of the current issue are placed on the table of Trump. It is almost certain that the present leeward of the Indian IT industry in particular will cease to exist in the new order of things. In that event the Indian IT industry may go downhill, because our IT sector is sustained chiefly by its marketability in the US and Western Europe, the latter also showing signs xenophobic tendencies. Our globally acknowledged software expertise is the mainstay of our services sector which command 55 per cent share of the national economy (agriculture holds 18 per cent, industry 27 per cent). A diminution of this strength will affect hard India's thriving middle class.

It is not that gloomy, says Nasscom. Infosys claims that revenue growth in constant prices last year (2016) was 8.3 per cent, which was the fastest in the industry, despite various headwinds. But increasing automation is giving pain nevertheless. The onset of disruption technology is playing havoc and has severely disturbed the survival instinct of the existing software business in India and abroad.

A disruption technology is one that displaces an established technology and shakes up the industry or a ground-breaking product that creates a completely new industry. Harvard Business School Professor Clayton M Christensen has coined the term disruptive technology in his book *The Innovator's Technology* in which he shows sustaining technology relies on incremental improvements to an already established technology while disruptive technology lacks refinements, often has performance problems but it appeals and invites. Through disruptive technology laptops are replacing desktops, PCs displace typewriters, personal computing disrupts television industry as well as great number of other activities, E-mails largely make letter-writing obsolete, cell phones disrupt telecom industry which in turn are yielding grounds to smart phones, social networking upsets phones, emails, instant messaging and event planning. Cloud computing, 3D printing and more such innovative measures have revolutionized the software industry and the revolution has just begun.

Indian IT is inadequately equipped to cope with the oncoming disruptive technology which is basically innovative in nature. There will be some of the most innovative and evolutionary disruptions we will see with more connection, more automation and with more significant impact in business and investments. Finance will be automated, big data will get even bigger, the internet of everything begins, mobility will continue to dominate and the like. Indian engineering institutes are turning out large number of IT technocrats but with little knowledge of disruption technology. It is feared that some 80 per cent of them will be unfit in the new scheme of things.

Some 65 per cent of the existing IT technocrats are unable to acquaint themselves with it and are bound to lose jobs. They are at best *cybercoolies* and expendable. Indeed, Infosys has "released" more than 11,000 jobs last year because of automation. The little known HIS Research projected that India is set to lose 6.4 lakh low-skilled

positions by 2021 because of intensified automation and disruption.

It is not only visa problem for the budding IT technocrats the disruption technology is the bane for new and existing technocrats as well. The software business as a whole is at a crossroads.

GST or Great Harrassment ?

These days BJP bigwigs are pitching their voices to claim great patriotism by repeating the hackneyed slogan; *One Nation, One Tax*. If that is now exhibited as an article of faith, one fails to understand why the party was opposing the same thing tooth and nail just three years before. Early ruling dispensation under the Congress had introduced the bill of GST. And the BJP, then forced to occupy opposition benches, was calling it a most vicious piece of legislation. It is difficult to fathom what brought about change of heart in the saffron camp.

Well, there is a saying in Hindi: *Der se aiye, durust aiye* - Better late than never. However, one wonders why the superb legal brain behind the bill made it so complicated. In the first place, the claim of being "One Tax" falters on two counts. There are as many as seven rates of taxes. Why so? It could very well have been reduced to, say, 10 % and 20%. And a diarchy-like system is introduced. One category to be monopolized by the Centre is over 15 million and the other below 15 million to be administered by the States.

Most obnoxious is the proposed levy of 5 % on cloth. Like food, cloth is also a primary need of the

common people. One is reminded of the wicked step of old colonial rulers who had put tax on salt.

The law as of today has conferred draconian powers on the Tax Administrator. It is a patent feature of the bureaucratic machinery that it indulges into harassing tactics even if many checks and balances are provided in the law. Here, the law itself has bestowed tremendous powers on bureaucracy, euphemistically called as Anti-profiteering Authority. Are learned lawyers in the drafting section so naive? Do they not know that the ingenuity of the business world knows no limit while designing the lanes to bypass the law?

The law provides that the registered dealers will have to file quarterly returns and also annual returns. Why? Can not the clerks in the GST office do simple addition of four figures?

It is very atrocious on the part of the Government to have given effect to the new law without having a trial run for a small area and short period.

Well, the traders should be prepared for worst kind of harassment. And the consumers for great turmoil.

—Pannalal Surana

Government Negligent Towards Right to Education

Sandeep Pandey

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act came into being in 2009 and became effective from 1 April 2010. However, Government's attitude towards its implementation is at best lackadaisical.

It is the duty of government and local authority to ensure that children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group are not discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing elementary education on any ground. But in the 2016-17 academic session 105 children were denied admission by City Montessori School, Navyug Radiance, City International, St. Mary Intermediate College and Virendra Swaroop Public School in spite of an order by the District Magistrate under section 12(1)(c) of the Act. 14 of these children who were supposed to be admitted to CMS went to the High Court but even the High Court didn't give a clear-cut direction for admission. Would the administration, government and court have been so lax if these children belonged to the elite?

The local authority is responsible under the Act to maintain records of children up to the age of fourteen years residing within its jurisdiction and ensure and monitor their admission, attendance and completion of the elementary education. They are supposed to provide infrastructure including school building, teaching staff and learning material, facility for training of teachers and ensure good quality elementary education. But

Municipal Corporation is blissfully unaware of its role under the RTE Act in Lucknow. The situation is likely to be the same in other places.

Government and local authority have been tasked with establishing schools in the neighbourhood where there are none, within three years from the implementation of the Act. But there are a number of residential areas like Sector P, Basic Services for Urban Poor Housing, near Jogger's Park, Dubagga in Lucknow where there are no schools. How are the children supposed to receive education?

The local authority has also been assigned the duty of ensuring admission of children of migrant families to government schools. Vijaya Ramachandran, social activist and daughter of former President R. Venkataraman has been working for the cause of education of children of construction workers and brick kilns in Kanpur for over four decades now. Her request to the government and administration to get children of these workers enrolled in government schools is being completely ignored.

The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath while launching his 'Study Well, Grow Immensely' campaign has distributed books, uniform, shoes, socks and school bags to children and said that he doesn't want a single child to be out of school but didn't elaborate on how he wishes to achieve this. The only good thing he said was he would like

to restore the positive image of government schools.

In Lucknow recently a fast was organised to get Justice Sudhir Agarwal's judgment implemented which directs the children of all those receiving salaries from government to study in government schools. The government chose to ignore the fast. The fast was withdrawn on the 7th day on 3rd July, 2017 accepting juice from a child who begs and mother of another child whose admission was ordered by the DM in Navyug Raidance school but the school didn't admit this child. This was a slap in the face of government and administration. Will Yogi tell us how he proposes to get these 105 children admitted to schools which are openly violating the RTE Act? During the current academic year also CMS has gone to the court challenging 40 admission orders stating that these children do not fulfill the norms prescribed under RTE Act. How can it be that Jagdish Gandhi, the manager of CMS, finds fault with every admission that is being approved in his school by the Basic Shiksha Adhikari, the district level education officer? Either the BSA is incompetent or Jagdish Gandhi is playing truant. Does the administration or government have the will power to take action against powerful private schools? Jagdish Gandhi is certainly denying the right of education to some children.

It is good that the government wants to restore the prestige of its schools. But that is not going to happen by merely distributing

material items required to attend schools including books and dress or by tree plantation campaign which has been linked with the enrollment drive this year in U.P. till 31 July. It will happen only when the children of government officers, employees, people's representatives and judges will study in government schools. The quality of government schools will change dramatically overnight if this happens which will directly benefit the poor as their children will also receive good education then. Additionally, it will create an option for middle class who are forced to spend exorbitant sums on the education of their children.

There is also a demand that like the Act implemented from this academic year in Gujarat which places an annual limit of Rs. 15,000 for primary schools and Rs. 25,000 for middle and higher middle schools and Rs. 27,000 for higher middle with Science as fees for private schools a similar law should be brought in U.P. The fees limits for U.P., which is a poorer state compared to Gujarat, has been proposed as Rs. 6,000 and Rs. 10,000, annually, respectively for primary and middle-higher middle sections.

Lately the Uttarakhand High Court has been very proactive in giving strict rulings related to state of government schools there. It has ruled that until all government schools have basic facilities like benches, tables, chalk, duster, separate toilets for girls and boys, computers, science laboratories, fans for summer and heaters for winter, good quality mid-day meals, library, water purifiers, two set of dresses for children the government would not be allowed to buy luxury items like expensive cars, air conditioners and furniture. The court has come down heavily on the

higher level officials including Principal Secretary of education department saying that if they don't arrange abovementioned things for schools their salaries would be stopped from January, 2018.

Farm Movements Should Give More Attention to Reducing Costs

Recently the demand for better and more remunerative farm prices has been rightly raised by several farm movements. While this is certainly needed, at the same time the other very important aspect of reducing costs should not be ignored.

In recent decades the costs of our farmers have increased greatly. Firstly, the government gave full support to those policies and technologies which involved increasing use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, diesel, expensive seeds sold by big companies in place of farmers' own seeds as well as various farm machinery. Secondly, once farmers had been lured or rather trapped into this technology, then prices of several inputs and implements were increased arbitrarily.

Next came the growing control of big companies over seeds with some multinational companies and their subsidiaries or partners playing a dominant role. The ground for this was prepared by efforts to somehow extend patents or intellectual property rights to seeds and farming. Then the final stage is being reached by trying to spread the technology of GM crops which is highly concentrated in the hands of a few giant multinational companies at the global level. This can potentially increase the costs and debts of farmers very steeply after a certain

Similarly, Madras High Court in a recent judgment has disallowed starting a English section saying that teachers have no interest in teaching in government schools as their own children don't study in them.

stage and at the same time the risks of farmers will also increase greatly as the GM technology is inherently a very hazardous and risky technology.

There is another reason why costs of farmers may increase further in future. These expensive technologies which are being foisted on farmers are also ruinous in ecological terms with very adverse impacts on natural fertility of soil, on water levels and quality as well as on several pollinators and earthworms. Once ecology is devastated any sustainable improvement in farming and its productivity is just not possible. Hence over a period of time the costs and difficulties of farmers are likely to increase further.

Hence it is important to emphasize that the solutions to the problems should be found along lines which are ecologically protective and in addition are also able to keep the costs of farmers at low levels. These aspects are very important but have somehow not received the due attention even from movements of farmers. Therefore it is important to re-emphasize the importance of these aspects.

The writer is a freelance journalist who has been involved with several social movements and initiatives.

—Bharat Dogra

Secularism and the State : Categorising the Nehru Model

Anil Nauriya

I. The “Nehru models”

The Historical Nehru Model and the Posthumous Nehru Model

In most circles where opinion-making on behalf of minorities takes place, one of the reasons for appreciation of Jawaharlal Nehru’s approach towards the minorities generally is his statement that majority communalism, that is, sectarianism, is more dangerous than minority communalism. He said that “the communalism of a majority community must of necessity bear a closer resemblance to nationalism than the communalism of a minority group.” (*The Tribune*, November 30, 1933) This statement must, however, be understood along with his insight expressed on the same occasion that majority and minority communalisms feed off each other. (*Idem*). His approach is not therefore a blank cheque to minority communities to nurture and nurse their own respective communalisms as some of his majoritarian detractors allege.

One consequence of the focus on this aspect of Nehru’s approach has been that other features of the Nehruvian secular state have not received as much analysis as these deserved. It was hardly ever noticed therefore that there are in fact at least two models that contend for recognition as the Nehru model.

The notion of the secular state that was implemented after independence emerged from the Congress-led freedom struggle. Nehru invariably emphasised the connection between

the establishment of a secular state and the “whole growth of our national movement”. (*The Statesman*, Delhi, July 8, 1951). It is intrinsic to the Gandhi-Nehru framework. It is a model of equality and equal citizenship.

A secular state was thus established which went beyond the usual European notion of a denominational state whose secularism consisted merely in the separation from the very church to which that state was a simultaneously committed. We understood, and rightly understood, a secular state to be a non-denominational state and a state that was religiously neutral as specified in the Karachi Resolution of 1931. Gandhi in speaking of a secular state had also defined it in clear terms in what would now be depicted as a Nehruvian manner, that is in terms of separation of state from denominational religion (May 6, 1933; Jan 27, 1935; Jan 20, 1942; September 1946; August 16, 1947; August 17, 1947; August 22, 1947; November 15, 1947; November 28, 1947; all cited in my article Gandhi on Secular law and State in *The Hindu*, October 22, 2003¹)

Similarly, when it came to society, as distinct from state, both Gandhi and Nehru emphasised the concept of equal respect and protection of all religions, thus reconciling the concept of a religiously neutral state with a concept of equal respect for the humanist values that may be located in each religion. For Nehru “A secular state means a state in which the State protects all religions, but does not favour one at the expense

of others and does not itself adopt any religion as State religion.” (*The Statesman*, July 7, 1951)

And then there is a *constructed* Nehru model or a quasi-Nehruvian model which is actually a posthumous Nehru model constructed largely after the split in the Congress in 1969. This model resembled but was somewhat different from the actual Nehruvian model. It could not last for more than 6 or 7 years and ended dramatically with the firing at Turkman Gate, Delhi during the tenure of the emergency regime in 1976.²

Let me to begin with speak about the first Nehru model.

II. Has the Nehru model failed?

It would be fallacious to say so.

It will be my contention that the actual Nehru model in fact succeeded. It contained and managed a very serious situation that had developed after the partition of India. It built a state based on equal rights for the citizen and a consensus behind such a state. It provided for regional expressions of linguistic aspirations as well.

The problem was essentially not here but with what emerged as a posthumous Nehru model. There was I would say a cut-off point in 1969. After 1969 what might be called a gloss on secularism came to be projected upon the New Congress. The post-1969 left-of-centre circle around the then Prime

Minister, was well-intentioned in wishing to initiate a break from the old guard in the Indian National Congress which it believed was holding up further economic reform. In the process the 1969 split in the Congress which this group helped bring about also, however, cut the Congress off from its roots.³

In fact, the quasi-Nehru model became more contentious in public discourse when it began to be presented as cut off from the country's struggle for freedom and as a sort of immaculate conception. More than the model itself it is this projection that not only became problematic but actually helped the forces of majority communalism in particular to present the Nehruvian vision as an artificial imposition upon Indian society rather than as a natural culmination from its social character and political struggle.

As I have said, the quasi-Nehruvian, or posthumous Nehruvian, model was different essentially in the historical provenance that it sought to project. It sought to delink Nehru from the mainstream national struggle, pluck him out of the Gandhi-Nehru framework and to establish an isolated posthumous quasi-Nehru-model whose definition could be subsumed under what currently passed for academically acceptable progressive ideas. This happened in the context of the Indira Gandhi—CPI alliance post-1969. The alliance itself was unexceptionable; the problem arose in the unhistorical attempt to extrapolate it backwards and seek to diminish or exclude the Congress's own struggles, as it were, from its own history.⁴

Perhaps because the post-1969 model did not have a strong

foundation in historical fact and was an unhistorical attempt to extrapolate backward the post-1969 alliance between Indira Gandhi's Congress and the CPI, it was easily toppled first by a callow youth and his organised hoodlums, and then after 1980 by a succession of Non-Resident Indian lobbies.

The posthumous Nehruvian model could hegemonise the state but could not take society with it. This quasi-Nehruvian model lacked Nehru's democratic temper.

It disregarded society though claiming to speak in the name of the people

In the end in the 1990s, remnants of this model, far from defending themselves against the onslaught from Hindutva could not defend even the gains from the Gandhi-Nehru framework.

III. Why did this projection become problematic?

The answer to this is a complex one.

To some extent an essential and necessary accompaniment had been absent even in the years of the actual Nehru model but this feature came more prominently to the fore after the 1969 events.

K R Narayanan (1920-2005), who would serve as the President of India between 1997 and 2002, saw the point perspicaciously as early as in 1970. In a paper presented at a seminar on Nehru and Nation-building (December 21-23, 1970) at the University of Rajasthan in Jaipur, K R Narayanan observed "In his passion for legislative revolution Nehru and the Indian National

Congress did not, after independence, place sufficient emphasis on the aspect of a social reform movement in the country." (K R Narayanan, *Nehru and His Vision*, DC Books, Kottayam, 1999, p. 34)

This defect or shortcoming came to the fore especially after 1969 because the split in the Congress and the lines on which it occurred had the effect of cutting the Congress off from the constructive work movements, that is the very civil society organisations which were its roots and which had provided it sustenance.

It is necessary to dwell on this point a little further. In the 1930s the Frontier Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan made a tour of Bengal. On coming back he spoke at the Bombay session of the AICC in 1934. And the point that he made was to underline the link between the constructive work programmes of the Congress and its political programmes. He said he noticed in the course of his tour that people were willing to come forward and listen to the Congress wherever the constructive work programme had reached. For example, he noticed, that where the khadi (handspun and handwoven cloth) programme had reached and had been able to help generate some income, people would flock to the Congress meetings to hear their message.

The vital link that the Frontier Gandhi observed in 1934 was over time lost sight of in independent India and especially in the post-1969 phase of Congress and Indian politics. The flaw which K R Narayanan noticed in 1970 was over-reliance, or rather near-exclusive reliance, on state action, legislation and state policies.

The prevailing logic appeared to be: Now that we are in power we do not need to build up civil society institutions for social reform and action because we have the state to do this for us.

The wages of this neglect were not immediately obvious because, for one thing, the Congress was historically associated with a network of ground level constructive work institutions on whose support it could implicitly rely in the first 22 years after independence. The 1969 split in the Congress gave a rude shock to this arrangement. The implications were not immediately obvious in the short-term. This was for other reasons, primarily the short-term electoral victories that the *posthumous* Nehru model secured in the General Elections of 1971 and the nation-wide elections to the state assemblies which followed in 1972. In the General Elections of 1971 it was the freshness of Indira Gandhi's faction, which had emerged from the Congress split of 1969, that swayed the electorate. In the state assembly elections in the following year there was the added factor of victory in the Bangladesh War.

Yet the overall impact of the 1969 split in the Congress did not take long to make itself felt and it was soon obvious that the Congress, or what remained of it, was on a declining curve.

Meanwhile, the Hindutva organisations on the other hand had been working ceaselessly in society and the rise of these organisations was, in this scenario, like a time bomb waiting to explode.

A more recent recognition especially in the wake of the findings of the Sachar committee has been

that neither the Nehru model nor the posthumous Nehru model, nor indeed the models of development in force in other opposition-ruled states in their action on the ground placed adequate *special* emphasis on policies to ensure the welfare and human development of the minority communities. (This was although Nehru himself recognised as early as in 1951 that such special emphasis would be required especially in the case of Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others: See *The Statesman*, Delhi, July 8, 1951) And that more specific steps are required for their education and development.⁵

IV. What Now?

The short-coming or defect to which K R Narayanan drew attention in 1970 remains. Until this is remedied the outlook would remain grim. Even if the present ruling dispensation returns to power and confines its focus to re-adjustment of state policies it is unlikely to remedy the flaw that KR Narayanan underlined.⁶ Similarly, whatever combination of political parties comes to power in the near future, it is unlikely to be able to provide the durable alternative that is required if it merely follows a statist approach. A long-term alternative can come about only with the emergence of a secular party which has the backing of grassroots civil society organisations with roots in the community life of the Indian people.

Merely taking control of the state will not suffice.

[Lecture delivered at the Dr K R Narayanan Centre for Dalit and Minorities Studies & Centre for Zakir Husain Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia on March 3, 2009. The endnotes are subsequent additions.]

(Endnotes)

¹ https://www.academia.edu/19387056/Gandhi_on_Secular_law_and_State

² This event in 1976 marks the end of the heyday of the posthumous Nehru model in a political sense. The Constitutional structure with respect to secularism did not change and, in fact, an express reference to the secular character of the Republic was inserted in the preamble to the Constitution by an amendment made later in the year.

³ For a development of this point see my article "1969 in Retrospect", *The Hindu*, 17 March 2000 :

<http://www.thehindu.com/2000/03/17/stories/05172523.htm>

⁴ That is, for example, the extensive pre-freedom struggles conducted by the Congress and such peasant organizations as were non-antagonistically associated with it, the various Congress-associated institutions' constructive work programmes, and their strivings for the social rights of the underprivileged and for a linguistically accommodative and non-sectarian understanding of nationalism inclusive of the minorities.

⁵ Whether this should be achieved through programmes directed at minorities specifically or through programmes aimed at the underprivileged irrespective of religion, caste and creed is a matter for consideration. In my opinion, a mix of the two approaches would be more likely to succeed than the one or the other.

⁶ The expression 'present ruling dispensation' refers to the Congress-led coalition in power in India in 2009 when this lecture was delivered.

Modi Brings Israel Out from Closet

D. K. Giri

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Israel, first ever by an Indian Prime Minister is an historic event, for both the countries. Modi was given the top-most reception with the 'highest protocol team' led by the Israel's Prime Minister himself. Such honour is extended only to the pope and the American President. Also, Modi will be staying in the same luxury suite at the King David hotel that US President Donald Trump stayed in during his visit. So, apparently, the Israelis consider Modi's visit very significant, taking place in "changing paradigm and changed architect" of international politics, as suggested by Mark Sofer, an important official in Israeli establishment and a former Israeli ambassador to India. On Indian part, Modi is also doing few things first time during this visit. He is not going to Palestine as Indian leaders have done in the past. India is treating Israel-Palestine relation as a de-hyphenated one. India also seems to treat this visit, important in as much as it wants to bring its friend Israel out from the closet to be the closest ally. Foreign policy commentators are remarking that, "we should know who our friends are in international politics and Modi is doing just that". This is Modi's second visit to Israel - he has been there before in 2006 as the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Modi is impressed with the military and economic achievements of Israel, and he is not shy of acknowledging it when others were, due to vote-bank politics, says another ex-diplomat and commentator. Yet others would urge India to get closer to Israel given the uncertainty of

relations with unpredictable US president Trump; the hope and strategy is that Israel will back up our relation with the US, and make up the gaps in it. Obviously, India-Israel relations are quite close at the moment and under BJP, they are likely to be closer as BJP is not dependent on the vote-bank that influenced the relation in the past. India's policy towards Israel suffered from a mismatch between national interests and international principles India would have liked to adhere to. This has been the burden of "Nehruvian foreign policy". Nehru's idealism took precedence over pragmatism that is India's national interest. This is evident from several lapses in India's foreign policy in the past including towards Israel. India voted against the UN resolution on creation of Israel on 29 November 1947. Israel was created on 14 May 1948. After two years, in September 1950, India recognised, but did not give Israel the diplomatic contact. It took 42 years for India to have the diplomatic tie with Israel. In 1992, Prime Minister Narashimha Rao allowed the Israel diplomatic mission to start operating in India. By then, things had changed so much, that India found it easy to do so. The cold war had ended, the Soviet Union, India's close ally had disintegrated; India had suffered the worst foreign currency shortage, had gone to World Bank for loan, and United States for defence support. It is believed that US put some pressure on India for diplomatic ties with Israel. India was wary of the reactions of Arab countries in dealing with Israel, but

by 1992, many Arab countries had recognised Israel. India knew that the Oslo peace accord was to be signed between Israel and Palestine, which was done in 1993. In fact, the story in the India's foreign policy circle is that an Indian diplomat asked PM Narasimha Rao, in exasperation, "Shall we wait for every Arab country to recognise Israel before we set up diplomatic ties?" The Prime Minister saw the point and relented:

Prime Minister Nehru was guided by anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, and third world solidarity. He was averse to any close tie with the colonial west, and Israel was veering to the west. History has it that Nehru spurned the request made to India by Israel through Albert Einstein to support formation of Israel in the United Nations. In addition to his abhorrence to western colonialism, he had domestic political compulsions. Having taken the Kashmir issue to UN, Nehru needed the support of the Arab countries. The subsequent Congress leadership had an additional compulsion, the vote-bank that supported Palestine. At the same time, Nehru sought Israel military support when China invaded India in 1962. The Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion refused initially as Nehru wanted no Israel flag on the arms supplies, but when Nehru agreed to have them under Israel flag, the arms and ammunitions were sent from Israel. Again in 1971 war with Pakistan, India asked for support from Israel. Then Israel Prime Minister Golda Meir promptly

diverted the arms to India that were being shipped to Iran. When India did the nuclear tests in 1998, major countries including USA and Japan imposed sanctions, but Israel did not join them. It continued to do business with India. Next year in 1999, in Kargil War, Israel again rushed military equipments India urgently needed, and following the war, Israel helped improve India's military intelligence and surveillance critical to anti-terrorist operations. Another milestone in the bi-lateral relations was the visit of Ariel Sharon in 2003, the first by the Israel head of state, when the Delhi statement of friendship and co-operation was signed. Since then, there have been many high-level visits from both countries including the Indian President in 2015 and the Israeli president Reuver Rivlin this year. The current India-Israel bilateralism is based on two main pillars; the defence, and agriculture although there are other trade subjects. Some, journalists are in fact saying that, in partnership with Israel, India has the chance of fulfilling its age-old slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan".

On defence, India is the biggest market for Israeli arms, and for India, Israel is the third largest supplier after US and Russia. Israel sold Phalcon aircrafts to India whereas it withdrew its sale of the same aircrafts to China, as US opposed to it. US have considerable say in Israel military sales as many Israel defence technologies are developed with US funds. The defence cooperation between India and Israel has grown from buyer-seller relationship to joint-production and research. The co-production is expected to help both the countries sell to other third world countries. Joint military exercise by the Israel and Indian armed forces would provide further strategic depth

to the relationship. India-Israel defence cooperation continues to grow stronger, although many projects are shrouded in secrecy. India is one of 39 countries Israel has signed a "secret cooperative agreements" to prevent information leaks from joint-security projects. Israel intends to buy arms from India too. The Israel defence sources say "while we sell one weapon to India, we want to buy another from them". This augurs well for India as it will benefit from two-way transactions.

In agriculture, the co-operation started seriously with the signing of the Agreement on Agricultural Cooperation in 2006. The Agreement unfolded into Indo-Israel Agriculture Project. Its main goals are: increasing crop diversity, increasing crop productivity, and increasing resource efficiency. Through this project, Israel provides best practices, technical know-how, training and orientation to Indian farmers. Moreover, the project has set up 26 Centres for Excellence in agriculture, out of which 15 are operational. These centres showcase advanced Israeli technologies: horticulture mechanisation, projected cultivation, orchard and canopy management, nursery management, micro-irrigation and post-harvest management. The project is in third phase now as Indo-Israel Agriculture Action Plan for 2015-18. Israel has one of the best agriculture technologies in the world, and their deployment in India has led to 5 to 10 fold increase in crop-yields with 65 per cent reduction in water use, and considerable decrease in the use of pesticides and fertilisers, according to a report on the project in 2015,

Another area Israel wants to

deepen co-operation with India is the space technology, in an attempt to reduce their over-dependence on USA. Israel and India have had space cooperation since 2008, when the Israeli commercial radar imaging satellite TecSAR was launched by ISRO. Next year, Israel gave India a radar imaging satellite which India named as RISAT-2. This satellite aims to provide India with greater earth observation power for surveillance and defence. There are talks about closer cooperation in cyber security.

In this visit, there will be three MoUs in agriculture and water, space cooperation and on launching of CEO forum. There is also a plan to set up an Indian cultural centre in Jerusalem. The media speculates that, Modi and Netanyehu will take the relationship into new heights. What are those new heights, however, is not clear. Both the Prime Ministers pay tribute to India-Israel 'deep connections' and 'natural partnership' and their ability to complement each other. True, both the countries are plural, democratic, have similar security concerns, at least in regard to terrorism. Israel had come out strongly and openly in favour of India on terrorism, and has named Pakistan, for its terrorist acts in India.

Experts in India support a closer tie between India and Israel. But, from Israel point of view, there is an elephant in the room. That is Iran. India wants to have normal ties with Iran and is planning to have gas pipeline from it. Israel is wary of Iran's antipathy for the Jewish state. Iran is also secretly building its nuclear capability. When push comes to shove, India has to make a choice. The choice is between petroleum and renewable or nuclear

energy. Accordingly, it can identify or discard allies. The second thorn in the flesh is the so-called 'Islamic Terrorism'. If India moves closer to Israel it may incur the animosity from terrorist organisation not only from Pakistan, but from other Islamic countries too. How far this theory is plausible, is a matter of solid evidence on the origin of terrorism. So far, it is all coming through or from Pakistan.

Modi has some liking for Israeli technology and ability to defend

itself against collective hostility. It has stood its ground of alone in the Arab world. It was expected that, under Modi, India would have a sudden pro-Israel shift. It seemed so initially but Modi stepped back a bit and tried the usual balancing act with Arab countries. The Palestine President was invited to New Delhi and Modi visited other Arab countries too before going to Israel.

Prime Minister Modi is hard to predict. He is fond of springing

surprises. Although bilateralism is a process not a one-off affair, he may give a strong push to the relations to make it a durable friendship between the two countries. The international circumstances will demand him to do so. Only that both countries have large minority population, and they must maintain their pluralist culture, they must treat their minorities fairly in their respective countries, failing which, they will lose the legitimacy of a new friendship, will be seen as comrades-in-arm in anti-Islam campaign.

Western Railway Employees Union

Grant Road Station Building (E), MUMBAI – 400 007.

WREU, the oldest trade unions in the country, earlier known as BB&CI Railway Employees' Union, is in the services of Railway men since 1920. WREU, a free, independent and democratic trade union, is a founder member of AIRF and HMS.

WREU fought for upliftment of railway men and their family in particular and labour class in general for the last 94 yea.rs. WREU/AIRF is instrumental in creation of PNM, grievance solving machinery in 1951, payment of PLB to Railway men since 1979, implementation of series of Cadre Restructuring in Group 'C' and 'D' categories in Indian Railways, implementation of recommendations of the 4th, 5th and 6th CPCs with modifications and RELHS Scheme for Railway men.

WREU was led by prominent trade union leaders, viz. late Miss. Maniben

Kara, Late Com. Jagdish Ajmera, Late Com. Umraomal Purohit, Late Com. Chandrashekar Menon, etc. In memory of late Maniben Kara, WREU established a charitable trust namely "Maniben Kara Foundation" with the objective of lighting against the evils of the society.

Apart from trade union activities, various non-bargaining activities such as organizing Health Check-up Camps, Blood Donation Camps, Family Planning Camps, Anti-Dowry campaigns, HIV-AIDS Awareness Campaigns, Safety Seminars, Trade Union Education Class, 'Adult Education, Guidance Camp, etc. are conducted for the benefits of the railway men and the general public.

Satyagraha as a Peaceful Method of Conflict Resolution

Vibhuti Patel

The quest for peace is an eternal pursuit for human fulfillment. Peace or absence of antagonistic, violent, or destabilising conflict is essential for existence to become life, for survival to become human. Human beings can become human and humane only in conditions of peace. Creativity, spirituality, individual and collective achievements attain grandeur and glory only when there is peace. Qualities of compassion, forgiveness, love, sharing and universal solidarity become cherished and sought after virtuous attributes only when a community, society or nation is at peace-within and without. War on the other hand, internal or external, civil or military, declared or undeclared valorises bravery-the capacity to kill or be killed-the destruction of human life and accomplishments; it mocks compassion and conscience; it belittles refusal to erect artificial walls that divide human beings in the name of one identity or the other; it glorifies the destructive principle and devalues the principles of creation and life. The warmongers are invariably persons with few qualms of conscience, ever ready to eliminate and exterminate human life, emotions, thought, ideas, and achievements.

Mahatma Gandhi developed an integrated approach and perspective to the concept of life itself on the basis of his experiences and experiments. His ideas, which came to be known as his philosophy, were a part of his relentless search for truth. [Iyer. 1973, p. 270]. The concept of *Satyagraha* is related to

the social, political, cultural, economic and psychological conditions, which influenced the life and personality of Gandhi. He adopted the non-violent approach to resist all the forces that exerted pressure on him physically and psychologically.

He believed that the supreme law that governs all living things and the universe is nothing but love and non-violence. It was Gandhi's firm belief that the basis of all religions of the world was the law of love. The very purpose of non-violent resistance and upholding the principles of truth was none other than asserting the freedom of oneself over his mind and body.

Gandhi's concept of *Satyagraha* is an integrated concept and includes truth, non-violence, non-stealing, chastity or *Brahmacharya*, poverty or non-possession, bread labour, fearlessness, control of the palate [*Asvada*], tolerance, Swadeshi and removal of untouchability.

Scope of Satyagraha

According to Gandhi, *Satyagraha* can be adopted by anybody. Gandhi said that *Satyagraha* was like a banyan tree, which had innumerable branches. *Truth-Satya* and *non-violence-Ahimsa* together made its parent trunk from which all the innumerable branches shoot out. [Iyer. 1973, p. 265]

Satyagraha has also been

considered as a weapon of soul force to resist any kind of oppression. While Gandhi regarded *Satyagraha* as a way of life, during the freedom struggle of India, *Satyagraha* was used as a weapon to resist the authority of the state and to achieve various things for the general welfare of the people.

Gandhi and his chief lieutenant Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had conducted the *Satyagrahas* at Champaran and Bardoli not only to achieve material gains for the people, but also to resist the unjust authority of the then British regime. The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, which was started with the breaking of the *Salt Law* at Dandi, and the Quit India Movements were classic examples when Gandhi and his colleagues used *Satyagraha* as a weapon of the soul force.

Satyagraha as a means of resistance and conflict resolution has different forms. Hunger strike [fasting], *Hartal* [striking work], *hijrat* [immigration] etc. are some of the forms suggested. The principles, conditions and qualifications of *Satyagraha* are relevant to all these forms.

Relevance in the Twenty-First Century

Is *Satyagraha* relevant to the present-day society or the Twenty-First Century? The answer is not a simple *yes* or *no*.

When we try to decide whether it is relevant to the present day society,

the fundamental thing we have to consider is the nature of the present-day individual.

Gandhi was well aware of the increasing influence of materialistic considerations on the modern society and individual. According to Gandhi, the main objective of *Satyagraha* was to eradicate the evil or to reform the opponent. In the present socio-economic political system, there is a dire necessity to wean the individual away from the influence of wealth, luxuries and power.

In all the educational institutions, right from the lowest level to the level of university, it would be worthwhile to teach the young people the concept of *Satyagraha* and the principles of truth and non-violence, as the basic factors contributing to the peace, harmony and the welfare of the society.

In all the industrial establishments and other places of mass employment also, *Satyagraha* would be a viable alternative to other methods for the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts. And in all walks of life, wherever there is scope for conflict and disharmony, the practice of the principles of truth and non-violence in the smallest way possible, would definitely make a great contribution in bringing about peace and harmony.

Satyagraha as an ideal and as a great weapon of conflict resolution will always serve as a great inspiration to the people of all generations to come, both in India and elsewhere. It may not be possible for ordinary human beings to practice *Brahmacharya*, poverty and simple living in the age of scientific and technological development, but the usefulness of truth and non-violence will always

be relevant wherever the goal is prosperity, welfare and development, because without truth and non-violence, there cannot be peace and without peace there cannot be development.

Three Pillars of Satyagraha

The Gandhian quest for peace rests on the foundation of non-violence. For conflict resolution Mahatma Gandhi used method of *Satyagraha* [insistence on truth or *Zeal for Truth*] that has three pillars:

1. *Sat*-which implies openness, honesty, and fairness:

- Each person's opinions and beliefs represent part of the truth;
- In order to see more of the truth we must share our truths cooperatively;
- This implies a desire to communicate and a determination to do so, which in turn requires developing and refining relevant skills of communication; and
- Commitment to seeing as much of the truth as possible means that we cannot afford to categorize others or ourselves.

2. *Ahimsa*-refusal to inflict injury on others:

- *Ahimsa* is dictated by our commitment to communication and to sharing of our pieces of the truth. Violence shuts off channels of communication;
- The concept of *Ahimsa* appears in most major religions, which suggests that while most people may not practice it, it is respected as an ideal;

- *Ahimsa* is an expression of our concern that our own and other's humanity be manifested and respected; and

- We must learn to genuinely love our opponents in order to practice *Ahimsa*.

3. *Tapasya*-willingness for self-sacrifice:

- A *Satyagrahi* [one who practices *Satyagraha*] must be willing to shoulder any sacrifice which is occasioned by the struggle which they have initiated, rather than pushing such sacrifice or suffering onto their opponent, lest the opponent become alienated and access to their portion of the truth become lost; and
- The *Satyagrahi* must always provide a face-saving *way out* for the opponents. The goal is to discover a wider vista of truth and justice, not to achieve victory over the opponent.

Conflict resolution discourse of modern problem solving and win-win [as opposed to power-based and zero sum] approaches leading to integrative conflict resolution [as opposed to mere compromise and distributive outcomes] strongly echoes Gandhi's own writings and the analyses of some Gandhi scholars. The Twenty-First Century radical thinkers of environment, human rights and women's movements advocate conflict resolution techniques as potentially being about more than the solution of immediate problems that see a broader personal and societal transformation as the ultimate goal.

Gandhian *Satyagraha* should be

squarely located within conflict resolution discourse. In this principle of non-violence Gandhi introduced technique of resistance to evil and untruth. His *Satyagraha* is inspired by boundless love and compassion. It is opposed to sin, not sinner, the evil, not evildoer. For him truth was God. Truth is not yours or mine. It is neither Western nor Eastern.

Process of Satyagraha

The success of a *Satyagraha* campaign to resolve any conflict rests on three basic assumptions. They are:

- That there can always be found some elements of common interest to all the contending parties;
- That the parties are or at least might be amenable to an appeal to the heart and mind; and
- That those in a position to commence Satyagraha are also in a position to carry it through to the end. If these prerequisites are fulfilled, the scene is set for the process aimed at the required conversion to be initiated. This can involve several steps, reasoning with the opponent, then persuasion through self suffering wherein the *Satyagrahi* [Seeker of Truth] attempts to dramatize the issues at stake and to get through to the opponent's unprejudiced judgment so that he/she may willingly come again onto a level where he/she may be persuaded through natural argument. This is the process of moral appeal through self-suffering in lieu of coercion. Gandhi while he summarizes this process says, "I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against

a sharper edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance". [Gandhi, M. K. 1925, October 8. *Young India*]

Hence if the attempts at conversion through these measures fail, the tools of non-cooperation or civil disobedience may be brought into play.

Given this presentation of moral equivalent of *War or Satyagraha* as a background paper, it is now left open to examine and test the efficacy of *Satyagraha* by referring to certain recurring points of debate or controversy:

The role of the individual especially the charismatic personality in *Satyagraha*; Pacifism and *Satyagraha*; *Satyagraha* as a way of life and as a process or weapon of conflict resolution; and *Satyagraha* against incorrigible violence.

In the Twenty-First Century, Gandhian concept of *forgiveness* seems to be central to the theoretical

development of the emerging field of conflict resolution. Forgiveness has been a topic of increasing interest both academically and to practitioners. There seems to be a healing and liberating quality to forgiveness that helps both individuals and societies move away from revenge and toward reconciliation. In a word, forgiveness offers hope. In a time of tense conflicts based on caste, class, ethnicity, race, gender, religion and territory forgiveness may have extraordinary value as a daily ethic, as well as a practical process.

After demolition of *World Trade Centre* youth of America have formed an organization, named as *we want peace no war* and want to start a new dialogue, to replace hatred by propagating friendship among the nations and different communities. The United Nations has declared this decade as the *Decade of Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World*. In this context, Gandhian thoughts on conflict transformation are gaining increasing global popularity.

(To be concluded)

Communal Riots in West Bengal

The Socialist Party strongly condemns the Trinamool Congress government and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for failing to stop communal violence in Basirhat and Baduria areas of 24 Parganas district in West Bengal. The party also condemns the radical Muslims directly involved in communal violence and demands legal action against them. The party believes that RSS is endangering the security of the country by creating an atmosphere of 'Hindu insecurity' in East Border areas for the political

purposes, especially in West Bengal. The RSS should refrain from such disruptive activities.

The Socialist Party pays tributes to communal riots victim Kartik Chandra Ghosh, resident of Basirhat, and expresses sympathy for the affected people.

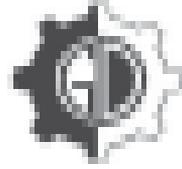
The West Bengal unit of the Socialist Party will prepare a report on the prevailing communal tension by visiting the affected areas.

—Dr. Abhijit Vaidya

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