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When Has The Bureaucracy Treated People With Respect ?

Sandeep Pandey

There is pressure from the government officials in Delhi that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal should apologize for the alleged assault on Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash inside the CM's residence by Aam Admi Party Members of Legislative Assembly. Two MLAs Prakash Jarwal and Amanatullah Khan have been arrested whereas there has been no action against employees who beat up minister Imran Husain and Delhi Dialogue Commission chairperson Ashish Khetan inside Delhi Secretariat earlier. Quite clearly this is yet another attempt in a series embarked upon by the Central government to discredit the AAP government. It appears that the Bhartiya Janata Party is not able to swallow the comprehensive drubbing it received at the hands of AAP in Delhi elections till now.

It appears that such an unpleasant situation arose because the officials of the Delhi government were not paying heed to the ministers, skipping their meetings and sitting on their files. Lieutenant Governor was requested to intervene as services were a matter in his control

but nothing changed. The resulting frustration and a sense of having no control over the bureaucracy probably created an emergency where CS was called to a late night meeting at the CM's residence. Whatever happened with the CS was unfortunate and should not have happened but the bureaucracy has to introspect why such a situation was created in the first place? The origin of the problem is the supremacy given to the position of LG over the Delhi government which is incongruous in a democracy. Democracy is a rule of the people, by the people and for the people. Who is a more authentic representative of the people - the political executive or the bureaucrats? Unless this anomaly is not corrected the problem in Delhi will persist.

In the present tussle in Delhi the bureaucrats are being painted as victims and the politicians as villain. But let us examine the character of two classes. Politician is there in his/her position for five years and then has to seek reelection if s(he) wants to continue. Bureaucrat holds a permanent position with tremendous immunity. If the benefits enjoyed by

the bureaucrats are compared with those of elected representatives a clear imbalance will be seen in favour of bureaucrats. Just compare the housing and the attendant staff given to bureaucrats and elected representatives. While it is easier to meet politicians even at their homes, the bureaucrats normally don't meet people at home. They always maintain a distance from people. It is much difficult to hold a government official accountable than a politician towards people. Politician gets chance for corruption for limited period whereas government employees are ensconced comfortably benefitting from corruption for longer periods of time. In fact, it is the government officials who have institutionalised corruption. A very elaborate system of commissions in terms of percentages is in place to get work done in the government. It is the bureaucrats who educate the new politicians in positions of power about this. The bureaucrats teach the politicians about how to scuttle rules/laws to manipulate their way or to stall decision making. In fact most of the time bureaucrats are busy (ab)using the system for the powerful against the common people's interests.

A few examples are, in Uttar Pradesh the government has embarked on an anti-encroachment drive and is demolishing mostly settlements of underprivileged population but it is not touching powerful corporate schools like the City Montessori School which has illegally built a school building against which a demolition order is pending for the last 21 years. The UP government is on a spree having committed more than thousand encounters and killed over 30 alleged criminals since the Yogi government came to power but has not given permission for cases to be tried against Yogi on serious

charges of hate speech, attempt to murder and rioting. The then UP CS Alok Ranjan chose to ignore a High Court order in 2015 making it compulsory for officials, ministers and judges receiving salaries from the government to send their children to government schools. He was supposed to file a compliance report within 6 months. The IAS officers, against all democratic norms, want a separate school for their children.

LG Anil Baijal has advised CM to reach out directly to the officer who are protesting and seeking Arvind Kejriwal's apology in order to resolve the crisis. He has said that the unfortunate incident of alleged misbehaviour and physical assault on the CS' was 'unprecedented' and had had a 'demoralising effect' on the bureaucracy. How many times the bureaucrats or magistrates order lathi charge and firing on people where it could be avoided? Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was of the view that in a democracy a government cannot resort to such extreme measures. Thousands and lakhs of people are left demoralised because of (in)actions of bureaucracy every day in this country. People can be seen sitting on dharnas outside government offices, tehsils, district headquarters and in state and national capitals merely because bureaucrats are not listening to them. Sometimes they have to inflict torture on self by sitting on fast or self immolating themselves just so that they can be heard.

Baijal has also said that in the course of his long career in government he did not recall there being such a wide rift between the elected government and the bureaucracy. Can the LG tell which distance is greater - between a government and bureaucracy in strained times like at present in Delhi, between elected government

and people or between bureaucracy and people in normal times?

The CS before attending a meeting of the cabinet after the alleged assault incident, amid heavy police deployment, wrote to the CM that he would attend the meeting based on the assumption that the CM 'will ensure there there is no physical attack and verbal abuse on the officers.' Further he said 'It is hoped that proper decorum will be maintained and dignity of officers will be protected.' Common people are afraid of police because of the abuse they can be subjected to at their hands. The government officials who will not even offer an empty chair to common people in their offices and humiliate them in every possible way from making them run unnecessarily or seeking bribe to do their genuine work or file false cases to take revenge have a desire to be treated with respect.

As Arvind Kejriwal entered the Secretariat for the cabinet meeting several top officials stood in the lobby wearing black bands as a mark of solidarity with the CS. They have every right to do so in a democracy. But they should also realise that only a CM like Arvind Kejriwal or Mamta Banerjee may allow this. They wouldn't have dared to do this in front of Narendra Modi or Yogi Adityanath. In UP Bareilly District Magistrate Raghvendra Vikram Singh has been chagrined for merely raising a rational question - why Hindutva groups raise anti-Pakistan slogans in Muslim localities? More shockingly Ashok Kumar Shukla posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate in Amethi was reprimanded for simply questioning the marathon meetings at the state capital which seemed unnecessary to him.

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Where Did We Go Wrong ?

Kuldip Nayar

I HAVE always wondered where we went wrong. After adopting a constitution which was secular in letter and spirit, we have strayed into the territory where every pebble is an impediment to the journey towards pluralism. India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, said on the night of 14-15 August, 1947, in parliament and what became popularly known as 'Tryst with Destiny' speech.

"The future beckons to us... We have hard work ahead. There is no resting for any one of us till we redeem our pledge in full, till we make all the people of India what destiny intended them to be. We are citizens of a great country on the verge of bold advance, and we have to live up to that high standard. All of us, to whatever religion we may belong, are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations. We cannot encourage communalism or narrow-mindedness, for no nation can be great whose people are narrow in thought or in action..."

The Muslim leaders who spoke after Nehru were so emotionally surcharged that they outrightly rejected the proposal of reservations in employment and educational institutions as were discussed in the Constitution Assembly which Sardar Patel, then Home Minister, was offering. The Muslim leaders said in both houses of parliament that they did not want anything separate or special. They regretted that they were misled and unwittingly sowed the seeds of partition.

Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah reportedly wanted more and more concessions for Muslims but not separation. But somewhere along, the demand for Pakistan came to be raised. It swept the Muslims off their feet.

Lord Mountbatten whom I have interviewed at length at Broadlands, near London, where he lived told me that Clement Atlee, the then Prime Minister, asked him to see if the two countries could have something in common. Jinnah categorically said no to the suggestion. He said he did not trust them now because after accepting the Cabinet Mission Plan, which provided a weak Centre, they had gone back on the arrangement of grouping where the Hindu-majority Assam was a part. Subsequently, they came to accept the Plan but Jinnah had lost confidence.

I was one of those fortunate people to be in parliament, sitting in the press gallery, and listening to Nehru making the 'Tryst with Destiny' speech. That was 70 years ago. Today, when the head of a fanatic organization, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), is looking to 'consolidate' Hindu vote in state elections and in the coming general election in 2019, I ask myself: Where did we go wrong?

Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS chief, spent nearly a fortnight, travelling to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the two most populous states of the country, where caste fissures run deep and caste and religion arithmetic decides the fate of candidates. In other words, the political outcome at the

centre is depended on the monolithic Hindu voters of the two states.

The RSS chief has been unequivocal while addressing the large crowd recently as he exhorted the Hindus to overcome the differences of caste. His remark was sharp and pointed when he said: "Hindus should be united. Division in society over caste and violence over the issues are the biggest hurdles in achieving this unity and there are forces that take advantage of it."

Apparently, the RSS chief had the non-Hindu voters in mind. Probably, his renewed push for consolidation had also something to do with the emergence of political entities like Jignesh Mevani after the attack on a Dalit family in Una and the rise of the Bhim Army, following clashes between Dalits and Rajputs in UP's Saharanpur. The RSS is said to believe that these are the groups that are covertly supported by the 'ultra' Left.

Bhagwat during his speech also tried to stem the rot that has set in after the central government's recent economic policies, which affected the farmers, and small and medium enterprises which are against the BJP-led NDA. Though the RSS spokesman put up a brave front saying that the visit of the RSS chief was meant to meet the functionaries, it was reportedly to appease the voters as there is a sense of concern within the Sangh parivar over the possibility of caste groupings that could jeopardize the BJP chances at the Centre.

Its deep anxiety on the possibility of a Dalit-Muslim combine emerging in Bihar is understandable because it could cobble together a formidable opposition to upstage the BJP. Hence the RSS is seen building bridges and reaching out to the economically backward classes, particularly the Kurmi and Kori communities, from which it did not get support.

The visits of Bhagwat to Bihar and UP are meant to garner the support the BJP needs to renew their tenure at the Centre, apart from its plans to have the RSS presence in every village as the Sangh is planning to attract more people to its fold. The concerted efforts of RSS to woo the Hindus, with help coming from the Janata Dal (United) of Sharad Yadav, are very much a part of the push to sustain its hold.

The role of Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar is deplorable. For the sake of protecting his government, he has accepted the support of divisive elements which he has fought against all his life. He has tried to defend his move to have the BJP along but it looks like a tamasha. A person who has categorical secular credentials, which was lauded by even the extreme left, has compromised his stand to stay in power.

The fact is that the secular forces have not been able to stem the tide of Hindutva. The Congress is too weak to get people to rededicate themselves to the Idea of India: A democratic and secular country. The BJP with Narendra Modi as Prime Minister looks formidable because the magic of Modi has not waned yet. Probably, the next election in 2019 may go his way. I only hope and pray that the nation would get back to the secular track.

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Let us have Opposition Unity on the basis of Common Minimum Programme

Pannalal Surana

As Lok Sabha elections of 2019 are approaching, there is the talk of opposition unity in the air. Taking into consideration the experience of the days of Congress Hatao (1967) and SVD governments in a number of States and of Janata party government (1977), it is desirable to adopt a positive approach and not of this or that Hatao. No party may be treated as untouchable. Politics of the country needs to be moulded in the direction of elimination of social and economic inequality and communal hatred. All progressive and regional parties are urged to enter into a dialogue and try to forge a United Front based on Common Minimum Programme.

Discussion may be initiated on the basis of following points :-

1. Today's model of development which tries to emulate capitalistic structure of West European and American countries will have to be given up and an alternative model of the egalitarian and eco-friendly development with full employment as the main objectives be developed. Agriculture, forestry, livestock and fishery be accorded high priority. Production of consumer goods be organised in a decentralised manner so that all regions get adequate opportunity to develop in a balanced manner. Heavy industries to remain in public sector, as also banking, insurance, passenger transport, Cooperative institutions to be strengthened in as many sectors

and levels as possible. FDI not to be allowed in defence and retail trade.

2. Fifty per cent reservation for women in Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas.
3. Speedy implementation of recommendations of Sachar Committee so as to enable minority communities to participate in mainstream economic, social and political activities of the nation.
4. Faithful implementation of tribal sub-plans and SC-sub plans. Regular payment of scholarship and stipend amounts to SC and ST students.
5. Common, free and quality education to all children be provided by the State. Privatisation of education be totally debarred.
6. Public health facilities to be buttressed more in rural and hilly areas.
7. Railway network be so expanded as to cover all district headquarters in the country. Priority be accorded to the State of Jammu-Kashmir and those of North-East.
8. AFSPA to be withdrawn from the Northeastern States and also from Jammu-Kashmir. Meaningful dialogue at official as well as popular level to be encouraged so as to promote

liberal political activity and amity.

9. Fundamental rights of all citizens, irrespective of religion, caste or gender, to be safeguarded scrupulously.
10. With a view to minimizing the influence of money power on elections and to enable poor citizens\ activists to participate effectively in elections, public opinion to be mobilized for suitable electoral reforms, including substitution of present first-past-the-post system by one of proportional representation to political parties.
11. All-out efforts to be made to expedite hearings and disposal of crores of cases pending in various law courts.

This proposition needs to be discussed in various groups and parties. Public campaigning on the basis of the above propositions to be run so that attention is focused on issues and policies instead of personalities.

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Why This Neglect of Indigenous Technology ?

Bharat Dogra

It is time and again stated by the government that it wants to encourage indigenous technology but is this rhetoric matched by reality? One way of examining this is to see how some of the funds available for this very specific purpose have been utilised.

About three decades back a decision was taken to raise a special fund for the promotion of indigenous technology. For this purpose a cess called Research and Development Cess (RDC) was imposed on all imports of technology. The amount collected from this was to be deposited with a board called the Technology Development Board (TDB). The TDB was given the responsibility to use this money for promoting indigenous technology in the best possible ways.

All this appears to be a very good idea but we need to ask how it has worked in actual practice. In a report placed before the Parliament in December 2017, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) pointed out that in the two decades from 1996–97 to 2016–17 only Rs.7,885 crore were collected from this cess. Keeping in view the massive import of technology by India, it appears that several possibilities of collection of this cess are being missed out and due to this reason adequate funds have not become available from this cess.

However what is even more shocking is the extent to which this cess has been underutilised or

unutilised. According to the CAG report, out of the Rs 7,885 crore collected in two decades, only Rs 609 crore were actually disbursed to the TDB. In other words less than 10 percent of the collected funds could be utilised while over 90 percent of the RDC funds remained unutilised as these were not even disbursed to the TDB.

Considering that the promotion of indigenous technology is such a high priority objective and funds are so badly needed for this purpose in several important areas and sectors, it is shocking to know that for two decades 90 percent of the TDC-related funds available specifically for this purpose were not utilised for the stated objective. This tells us something about the actual commitment to the promotion of indigenous technology. One can only hope that after being reminded by the CAG of this sorry state of affairs in a crucial area, the government will take some effective remedial action with a sense of urgency so that RDC funds are utilised effectively for their stated objective of promoting indigenous technology.

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Modi goes Wrong with Right

Mrinal Biswas

The recent far right political challenge to the Right-inclined Modi government is not yet off the political scene. Its trio architects - Subramaniam Swamy, Arun Shourie and Yashvant Sinha – belonging to the BJP fold itself are still continuing with their forays whenever it suits them. The parallel development of rising dissenting members around the government whose decrying of return of protectionism in Arun Jaitley's budget proposals has posed a different kind of a challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Only BJP's fraternal Swadeshi Jagran Manch, unlike in the past, came out strongly in support of Modi government's economic policy as reflected in the budget. "When the whole world is moving towards protectionism why India should be different," Manch convener Ashwani Mahajan asserted. Of different Right tendencies in the economic field protectionism is one which comes handy to Left politicians too.

Arvind Panagariya, the first Niti vice-chairman under Prime Minister Modi and now a US Professor, is known for his rightist credentials. Whether his lashing out of current Modi policy will block out that section of the people who are Right thinkers and are his natural resource base so far for economic policy formulations are concerned is to be seen.

Protectionism is a scar and that has returned through this budget, according to Panagariya, who

in a newspaper article harshly commented that its reemergence has "resurrected a policy that had been consigned to the dustbin of history and economics." Indeed, India refused to beat the beaten track when in a historical moment its economy was opened up shedding aside highly restrictive policies pursued through licenses, permits and the like. That was considered the best policy performance in 1991 initiated by the then finance minister Manmohan Singh under ex-Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. Indian economy since then has been largely integrated with world economy.

The Left was not happy with downsizing of the public sector and strengthening of the private enterprises. But economic prosperity that followed put an end to protectionist policy for good, the economists like Panagaria felt. Their hope lifted further with Modi government's stress on growth economy, as propounded by Jagdish Bhagwati, keeping at bay Amartya Sen's prescription of redistribution which would have returned the government's commanding heights of the economy. Left-Right divide struck at the very time when a fundamental shift in the political firmament dawned on India.

When it became clear that there would be a thrust on growth with an open economy Jagdish Bhagwati's follower Panagariya joined the government. He left at the first sight of Modi government wavering on economic policy. He has come down heavily when Arun Jaitley's budget

imposed variable taxes to give government protection to indigenous enterprises. Criticizing not only the advent of closed economy once again Panagariya felt domestic consumers would be priced out on a wide scale of modern products from footwear to cellular phones.

Even RBI Governor Urjit Patel warned of some taxes on capital and said these would inhibit capital investment, Other government insiders like Dr Rathin Roy and Dr Surjit Bhalla, members of Prime Minister Economic Advisory Committee (PMEAC), demurred on long-term capital gains tax. It is a moot question whether they will enjoy their present positions if Modi decides to stave off this challenge from his own Right affiliation.

The Modi government's intense desire to project a pro-poor image with large allocation of funds for the rural sector and approaching a universal health insurance scheme giving a cover to 50 crore of disadvantaged people are seen to have hardly enthused the people. The disappointment of his retinue of economists has not augured well for the government.

The Modi government has decided to take field operations to gather support for the budget proposals as a new policy initiative on economics. Ministers and Party faithfuls apart, journalists and economists are being engaged on the budget economics.

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Socialist Party (India)

National Executive Meeting, Kozhikode, Kerala

3 - 4 February 2018

Political Resolution

The Indian Constitution is passing through the crisis of a serious threat from the ruling establishment of the country. The present government is not only destroying the basic values of socialism, secularism and democracy embedded in the Constitution, but its leaders are also openly declaring that they have come to power to make changes in the Constitution. They are openly advocating for a pro-corporate, theocratic and dictatorial India which is against the very nature of the Constitution that calls for a socialist, secular and democratic India. The right to life and dignity of not just the Muslim minority, but other minorities and vulnerable sections of society such as Dalits, Adivasis and women too, is under threat. Those who oppose this anti-Constitutional design of the government are killed in broad daylight and no action is taken against the killers.

The Modi government is promoting the private sector at the cost of public sector and diluting the labour laws in favour of industrialists. The Government is determined to dismantle the public sector, the basic anchor for a socialist society. The centralisation of power in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is another example of ignoring the Constitutional spirit of democracy and decentralisation. This government has now launched a campaign to promote the concept of 'one country one election'. This idea is against the federal and democratic spirit of the Constitution.

In such a challenging situation every Indian citizen who believes in the Indian Constitution must give a serious thought to the dangerous developments taking place in the country.

The Socialist Party condemns this unconstitutional, inhuman and undemocratic attitude of the government in strongest terms. The Socialist Party demands that the government should make efforts:

- to withdraw the decisions of FDI in retail and in defense sectors immediately;
- to withdraw all decisions related to the handing over of the PSUs to the private sector;
- to withdraw all decisions pertaining to labour laws which dilute the rights of labour;
- to ensure that government jobs will not be reduced, scrapped or made contractual, and fill up all vacant government jobs/posts without delay;
- to stop privatisation/commercialisation of education;
- to introduce a common school system in the medium of mother tongues;
- to ensure a Minimum Support Price of at least one and half times the cost of production (including cost of inputs, cost of family labour and cost of working capital plus imputed cost of land, called C2 price) for all crops, and ensure that farmers get this cost for their produce;

- to waive all loans given to farmers/fishermen/artisans;
- to stop privatisation/commercialisation of health services;
- to stop election funding by the corporate sector, even in the guise of separate electoral trusts formed by corporate houses;
- to revive the Women Reservation Bill in the State Legislatures and the Parliament;
- to publicly disclose the names of the big defaulters of public sector banks, whose total bad loans have crossed more than Rs 8 lakh crore;
- to disclose the names of all Indians who have accounts in Swiss Banks and other tax havens without delay, and to bring back black money as promised by Narendra Modi in his election campaign;
- to introduce a minimum of 30% income tax on the higher income groups and the corporate sector;
- to introduce an inheritance tax and thus reduce gross inequality in society.

With these immediate demands, the Socialist Party appeals to the citizens of India, particularly to the youth, and to all the political parties to come together to protect the Constitution of India in order to build a self-reliant, prosperous and civilised nation.

**Thus Stands the Socialist Party
Upholding Brotherhood and
Equality**

Remembering Jawaharlal Today

C.N. Chitta Ranjan

The following article, by the first editor of Mainstream, appeared six years after Jawaharlal Nehru's death in Mainstream's May 23, 1970 issue. Although the situation in 1970 in the country was quite different from the one prevailing today, the similarity of the contents of this article with the present scenario in India is indeed striking.

When last week Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on behalf of the people of India squarely accepted the grim challenge posed by communal reaction and declared that these enemies of the nation would be relentlessly fought at every level, history was repeating itself; for, she was speaking the language of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru whose uncompromising commitment to secularism and democracy is her own heritage as much as the nation's.

When the Prime Minister referred to the "naked fascism" visible behind Jana Sangh President Atal Behari Vajpayee's provocative and mischievous speech which could only be interpreted as a green signal for communal gangs to continue and intensify their inhuman activities against the minority communities, chiefly the Muslims, she was unconsciously echoing words used by her great father over two decades ago.

Cherished Values

Not long after the murder of the Mahatma, Jawaharlal described the dark forces of communalism as "the Indian version of fascism", and expressed his determination to prevent them from attacking the secular base of Indian democracy. When Smt. Indira Gandhi compared Sri Vajpayee's gesticulations to those of Hitler, she obviously had much more in mind than the Jana Sangh leader's waving of arms. Like her father, she saw clearly the threat

to all cherished values of the country enshrined in the Constitution in these gestures and the diabolical words that accompanied them.

Jawaharlal Nehru was among the first of the national leaders during the years of the freedom struggle to understand the true character and aims of the parties of communal reaction among both Hindus and Muslims. He often underestimated their strength, no doubt, but he was never in doubt about what precisely they stood for, whose interests they were frantically trying to protect at the cost of national unity and cohesion.

Vested Interests

He saw clearly enough that both Hindu and Muslim communalists in those years were in fact henchmen of British imperialism whose game they were playing to further the petty interests of a handful of affluent persons in either community. Communalism to him was the most obnoxious expression of the struggle of vested interests in collusion with the alien power to prevent awakening among the masses of India to which the National Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji had directed all its energies.

In the early thirties, Hindu communalism was represented by the Hindu Mahasabha whose offspring is the present Jana Sangh. Of the Mahasabha, Nehru said that it "not only hides the rankest and narrowest communalism but

also desires to preserve the vested interests of a group of big Hindu landlords and the princes". He firmly held that the activities of the Hindu communal organisations "have been communal, anti-national and reactionary".

It is a fact of history that Nehru did not spare the Muslim communalists who supplemented the work of the Hindu communalists. "Most of them," he declared once, "are definitely anti-national and political reactionaries of the worst kind."

In the early thirties he noted that the Hindu reactionaries as well as the Muslim communalists represented no more than a handful of vested interests subservient to the colonial power, and that neither had much hold over the masses of the country despite their obvious capacity to foment trouble taking sinister advantage of religious differences. He was indeed categorical that "there is no essential difference" between the two types of communalism.

One important difference he did note, however. This was that "the communalism of a majority community must of necessity bear a close resemblance to nationalism than the communalism of a minority group". This was especially true of India, for the Hindus are largely confined to this country and in religious terms they have little affinity with the world outside—a proposition which is obviously not true of minorities like the Muslims, the Christians and others.

It is easy for the Hindu communalists to pretend that they are genuine nationalists taking advantage of the fact that the roots of other religions lie outside the country. This point is of importance in the present context, for today's Hindu communalists, led by the Jana Sangh and RSS, are precisely making this claim to nationalism for themselves and constantly casting doubts on the loyalty to the country of the minorities on the strength of the wider association of the religions of the latter.

The purpose of the Hindu communalists now, as it was before independence, is to prevent the socio-economic status quo from erosion by the modern ideas of equality and democracy. While this was equally true of the Muslim communalists, whose symbol paradoxically enough came to be the irreligious and ultra-modern Jinnah, Nehru and some other national leaders realised that the greater danger to national purpose was posed by the communalism of the majority community. They realised that minority communalism could be effectively curbed only if majority communalism was eliminated.

Hence the leadership Gandhiji and Jawaharlal gave in the struggle against the dark forces of communalism beginning with the ones entrenched in the upper classes of the majority community. There is no doubt that they did succeed to a great extent in reducing the strength of Hindu communalism despite the consistent efforts of the British administrators to encourage it.

Grim Consequences

In the case of Muslim communalism, however, the efforts of the national leaders were not so successful, the main reason being the backwardness and utter poverty of

the majority of Muslims which the Muslim League was able to exploit to the full and in the most cynical manner. It was only when partition actually took place accompanied by the most unprecedented bloodletting and misery for millions of families, both Hindu and Muslim, that the grim consequences of a communal attitude etched themselves on the minds of both Hindus and Muslims.

At the time of partition the leaders of India more than the leaders of Pakistan were on trial; Pakistan had been carved out on foundations of hatred, and religion was used as a cloak to build a state whose sole purpose then was to satisfy the enormous vanity of a handful of arrogant individuals led by Jinnah. India, however, had different traditions imbibed over a far longer period.

The national leadership and the people as a whole were firmly committed to establishing a secular democratic state in which all citizens would have equal rights and all religions would have their place without any one of them being permitted to influence the administration. To the rulers of Pakistan the killing of the Hindu minority was not something altogether abominable; at any rate the philosophy on which they had chosen to found their new state precluded violent reaction to communal orgies.

Not so India; to the leaders of this country, the message of hatred and murder that the vast numbers of Hindu refugees brought from across the border was something that had to be fought fiercely and subdued. It did not, rightly, occur to them that the Hindu refugees or their friends this side of the border were justified in wreaking vengeance on innocent Muslims, men, women and children, living their own lives here as citizens of free India.

It is no accident that there was no parallel in Pakistan to the healing missions undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi in areas where minorities were under attack by organised hooligans, or to the great personal risks that Jawaharlal took by rushing into the midst of frenzied, armed mobs to prevent the butchery of innocent members of the minority community. The difference in attitude stemmed from the difference in purpose in establishing a free state.

Secular Forces

In the years before freedom it was Mahatma Gandhi who led the secular forces in the country despite his preference for communicating with the Hindu masses in the language of the shastras and the epics which the ignorant and the illiterate could comprehend easily. His concern for the safety of all minorities and for all the oppressed sections even within Hindu society was manifest not merely in his words but in his actions.

But, after the attainment of independence, it was left to Jawaharlal Nehru to lead the secular democratic forces in the struggle against communal reaction. This he had to do in the face of sniping from his own ranks often: for example, it is no secret that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, whom the Hindu communalists of today appear to have adopted as one of their apostles, thought in terms of packing off Muslims from this country in retaliation for the misdeeds of the Muslim majority in Pakistan against the Hindu minority there.

Jawaharlal put his foot down against such tendencies and insisted that it was the sacred duty of the majority community to protect and look after the interests of the minorities who had become citizens

of this country, irrespective of the behaviour of the neighbouring country. The people were with Jawaharlal and he succeeded in isolating the communalists in his own camp and establishing understanding with secular forces outside his party.

A little after independence, Nehru said:

We in India have suffered from communalism. It began in a big way from the Muslim League. The result was the partition of India. The Muslim League type of communalism is now more or less outside India. Some odd, foolish individual may indulge in it here, but that does not count and nothing can happen in India today from that source. But that poison has, by some reverse process, entered other people's minds and we have Hindu and Sikh communal organisations as communal as the Muslim League ever was . . .

If you examine the gospel of communalism even under the cloak of nationalism you will find that it is the most dangerous thing and breaks up that essential and fundamental unity of India without which we cannot progress.

Non-Communal Approach

At that time he noted, too, that communal elements had infiltrated the Congress and pleaded that Congress candidates "must be chosen with particular care so that they might represent fully the non-communal character and approach of the Congress". As for the Jana Sangh and other communal organisations, they were trying "to frighten the Muslims and exploit the vast number of refugees who had suffered so much already".

He uttered a clear warning to

the communal organisations whose echo was heard in the Lok Sabha the other day from Srimati Indira Gandhi; Nehru said: "So far as I am concerned and the Government I lead is concerned, I want to make it perfectly clear that communal forces will not be given the slightest quarter to sow seeds of dissensions among the people."

It is no accident that during the fifties, although there were engineered communal incidents here and there, the communal organisations were more or less ineffective. It is no accident either that the minorities in the country came to look upon Nehru as their greatest protector.

It was only during the last years of his life, when his powers were waning and opportunists in power were able to strike deals behind his back, that the communal organisations, notably the Jana Sangh and RSS, began to gain strength once again. Since his death these forces have become increasingly arrogant and violent. And they have been joined by organisations like the Shiv Sena which owe their growth to tolerance and even encouragement from certain Congressmen in office and from vested interests which see in such groups effective instruments to mount an offensive against the progressive policies and attack parties and individuals wedded to socialist ideas.

It is not just by chance that in Bombay, Ranchi and elsewhere the communal organisations have been making open attempts to divide the working class on communal lines and destroy trade union solidarity.

Smt. Indira Gandhi's chin-up acceptance of the challenge of communalism is undoubtedly heartening, but it will amount to little

unless the administrative machinery is purged of the communal elements that have infiltrated over the years, firm action is taken to put down poisonous propaganda by the communal organisations and their publicity sheets, and all forward-looking parties and individuals are swiftly mobilised at all levels to give a determined fight to reaction in all its forms.

Let us remember Nehru's warning which is as relevant today as it was when it was uttered. "Communalism bears a striking resemblance to the various forms of fascism that we have seen in other countries. It is in fact the Indian version of fascism. We know the evils that have flown from fascism. In India we have known also the evils and disasters that have resulted from communal conflict. A combination of these two is thus something that can only bring grave perils and disasters in its train."

The warning is timely in the wake of Ahmedabad, Chaibasa and Bhiwandi. But the struggle against the fascist threat posed by the Jana Sangh, RSS, Shiv Sena and the rest has now to be much more broadbased than it ever was in Nehru's time; the roots of the poison tree have to be cut and destroyed, and this calls for a dedicated national effort.

In this task, the Prime Minister obviously has the capacity to provide the leadership, but what we need are leaders in every village and every mohalla who will make the elimination of the communalists their first task. Let this battle against communalism be turned into a massive national crusade as the nation pays its homage to the memory of Jawaharlal Nehru this week on the sixth anniversary of his passing away.

How Far Have We Deviated From the Ideology of Our Constitution?

S. V. Narayanan

Constitution day on November 26, similar to other days of national importance, has become another day of ritualistic celebration without much critical introspection. Even though the Indian Constitution was adopted in principle on November 26, 1949, the majority of its provisions were formally adopted on January 26, 1950, to commemorate the declaration of complete independence or purna swaraj by the Indian National Congress on January 26, 1930.

The significance of Constitution Day is not in the explicit ritualistic reverence to the supreme legal document, but in critical introspection of our progress in fulfilling the basic ideology of our Constitution. The constitution makers' clarity of thought in creating a just society is clearly reflected in the founding philosophy of our Constitution.

The Constituent Assembly debates show the commitment of its members in giving life to the idea of India in an inclusive manner based on the principles of social justice and democracy. The unique nature of Indian nationalism, as highlighted by historian Ramachandra Guha, is not based on any single religion or language, as in European counterparts. That shows the inclusive nature of Indian nationalism overcoming the conflicting social identities to create a political citizenship for the overall development of the nation. The Constitution and its ideology have laid a strong foundation for such an inclusive nation respecting the

differences and strengthening social justice in the newly independent nation.

Ideology of the Indian Constitution

Ideology could be defined as a set of ideals or beliefs, which forms the basis of the economic or political system. Ideological beliefs not only give hope for a better society, but also recognise / accept the existing inequalities in society for its people to introspect about their progress in the future.

Even though our Constitution is a lengthy document, its ideology is well entrenched in its preamble, revealing the nature of the newly independent nation. The ideology in the preamble not only declares our freedom, but lays a strong foundation for a society based on equality, justice and liberty. The Objectives Resolution moved by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1946, which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly in 1947, is almost reflected in the preamble of the Indian Constitution. It clearly lays down the path to be taken by the future Indian state to create a strong, united and inclusive country, eliminating all forms of discrimination.

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN, SOCIALIST, SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;

And to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this 26th day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION."

* words' Socialist and Secular were inserted by the 42nd amendment in 1976.

The Constitution adheres to principles of social justice with a strong moral foundation. These foundations lay down the contours for all objective legal codes to be enacted and followed by the independent state. The Constitution weaved a fine balance between social justice and liberalism by following the path of social liberalism as its ideology.

Social Liberalism

Classical liberalism, which insists on minimum interference by the government, considers protecting the freedom of the individual as a core political value. Limited government, following the laissez-faire economic policy which emerged after the industrial revolution, played a vital role in the development of capitalism in Western countries.

Based on the ideas of John Locke, Adam Smith, David Ricardo and others, classical liberalism was critical of the welfare state, as it interferes with the functioning of free market. The economic downturn in capitalism in the beginning of 20th century led many Western governments to move towards social liberalism, where the government plays an important role in addressing the economic and social evils of the society as a consequence of the development of capitalism in areas such as health, education and poverty alleviation.

Social liberalism as an ideology acknowledges the market economy, but at the same time expands the role of government in reducing social inequities based on principles of social justice, for the smooth functioning of capitalism.

Thus, the principles of justice, equality, and liberty, along with secularism, form the core components of the constitutional ideology of social liberalism in India. The founding fathers of our Constitution envisaged an egalitarian society based on such ideal principles, but does our contemporary reality really reflect these values?

Reality Check

The founding principles of our constitutional ideology are mutually interdependent, making them indivisible and inalienable rights of every citizen. Justice—social, economic and political—lay the foundation for other principles of equality and liberty to be realised in an effective manner. Justice not only gives equal opportunities but also means positively treating unequals in an unequal manner to create equality. This basic social liberal ideology laid a strong foundation

for all positive discrimination intervention by the government. The protection of individual rights along with social justice can be understood clearly from the preamble of the Constitution.

Inequality

Persistent and increasing inequality in a society shows that the principle of economic justice has failed to realise its objectives. Further, the denial of economic justice extends its influence in denying justice in the political and social domain as witnessed in contemporary India.

According to Thomas Piketty and Lucas Chancel in their research paper titled Indian income inequality, 1922-2014: From British Raj to Billionaire Raj, income inequality in India is at its highest in the last 100 years. The top 1% had around 21% of total income in the 1930s, which reduced to 6% in the 1980s and again reached 22% by 2014—the highest ever level. Since the 1980s, when we first began adopting a neoliberal political economy (officially in 1991), the income share of the bottom 50% has considerably reduced and the top 1% has increased.

Further, according to Anand and Thampi, in Recent trends in Wealth Inequality in India, the top 1% of India had 28% of the country's wealth by 2012, which was an increase of 11 percentage points since 1991. The same period saw the decline in the share of the bottom 40% from 5% to less than 4%.

The Report on Fifth Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey (2015-16) by the Ministry of Labour and Employment showed that at the all-India level, around

77% of households did not have a single regular / salaried person. More than 67% of households had an average monthly earning that did not exceed Rs 10,000. Within the labour force, more than 71% were not eligible for any social security benefits. Only 1.8% of the labour force in India earned more than Rs 50,000 a month and 0.2% earned more than Rs 1,00,000 a month. This data shows the extent of vulnerability and inequality among the working population of India.

Global Hunger Index

India occupied the 100th position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2017, out of 119 countries. In Asia, only Afghanistan and Pakistan are behind us. The report further stated:

At 31.4, India's 2017 GHI score is at the high end of the 'serious' category, and is one of the main factors pushing South Asia to the category of worst performing region on the GHI this year, followed closely by Africa south of the Sahara.

The shocking aspect of the hunger index is that we were at the 55th position in 2014 and now we are at the 100th position within three years. The worrying aspect is that the totalitarian regime of North Korea and war-ravaged Iraq are ahead of India in the index. The high malnutrition level among children, women and other vulnerable groups contribute towards our declining position in the GHI. This further shows how economic and social justice is being denied to a majority of the population, violating the basic ideology of our Constitution.

Discrimination against Minorities

The Sachar Committee report (2006) on the social, economic and

educational status of the Muslim community in India revealed the institutional discrimination Muslims face in India. The literacy rate of Muslims was far below the national average and only one out of 25 students in undergraduate courses and one out of 50 in postgraduate courses in ‘premier colleges’ were found to be Muslim. Muslim representation in Civil Services was only around 3%. Muslim children are at greater risk of being underweight or stunted compared to other communities.

Banks in Muslim areas are marked as ‘negative’ or ‘red’ zones indicating that giving loans is not advisable—limiting their institutional support. Poverty among Muslims is high and even basic facilities like post offices were not operational in Muslim areas. Such institutional discrimination has kept the Muslim community vulnerable, causing them to turn to religious support systems.

The professor Amitabh Kundu committee, formed in 2014 to review the implementation of Sachar Committee recommendations, did not find much improvement in the institutional support system for Muslims. This is against the foundational ideology of justice in the Indian Constitution.

Privatisation of Educational Institutions

The constitutional ideology mixing social justice with individual liberties came under threat after we formally adopted the neoliberal political economy in 1991. The state slowly started moving away from positive intervention through the creation of support systems for vulnerable groups. Privatisation of the public sector has excluded the

hitherto deprived communities from the benefits of social justice.

The table below shows the surge in private institutions of higher learning in India between 2011 and 2017. Since private educational institutions do not follow the system of reservations, a majority of minority, SC/ST and Muslim students are excluded from any meaningful participation.

Percentage of Private Institutions of Higher Education : All India

Year	University	Colleges/ Recognised Institute	Stand-alone Institutes	All Institutions
2011-12	29.25	72.58	78.73	60.19
2012-13	31.86	73.77	76.91	60.85
2013-14	33.19	74.59	75.66	61.15
2014-15	35.36	76.09	75.07	62.17
2015-16	36.47	76.69	75.18	62.78
2016-17	38.74	76.86	74.44	63.35

Source: All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) – 2011 to 2017

Percentage of Teachers in Higher Education Institutions : All India

Year	SC Teachers	ST Teachers	OBC Teachers	Muslim Teachers
2011-12	7.07	2.01	23.65	3.07
2012-13	6.71	1.92	23.28	2.95
2013-14	6.81	2.01	23.64	3.17
2014-15	7.12	2.1	24.16	3.3
2015-16	7.43	2.09	25.53	3.36
2016-17	8.35	2.2	32.16	5.09

Source: All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) – 2011 to 2017

Need for Course Correction

The founding ideology of the Constitution, combining liberalism and social justice in the form of social liberalism, is slowly being defeated as we have already deviated from it considerably. The ‘justice’, ‘liberty’ and ‘equality’ in the preamble are slowly losing relevance and have become mere ritualistic words for the ruling class during times of celebrations like Constitution Day.

The whole ideology of social justice has been defeated by the privatisation of higher education institutions, as we see lower participation of vulnerable groups as teachers in these institutions. Instead of the welfare state envisaged and established by the constitution makers, the old society based on hierarchical division has become dominant.

Critical introspection clearly shows how we have failed miserably to live up to the expectations of our founding fathers. The further weakening of constitutional values is going to threaten the idea of India that evolved from a complex mix of cultures, religions, regions etc, with social justice, secularism, liberty and equality as its core principles.

Courtesy : The Wire

India-Pak Ties Can Get Worse

A. G. Noorani

The current stand-off between India and Pakistan is highly troublesome, and needs to be stopped — at once. For, it is accompanied by gruesome violations of the ceasefire on the Line of Control in Kashmir as well as the International Working Border. The language used in the verbal spat itself is menacing enough. Things can get out of hand.

On February 12, India's defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, "I wouldn't certainly set a timeline (for action against Pakistan). But will say this; Pakistan will pay for this misadventure. I repeat; Pakistan will pay for it." She was referring to a militant attack two days prior at the Sunjuwan military station in Jammu, in which five soldiers and one civilian were killed, and 11 persons including an Army major were injured.

The very next day, Pakistan's defence minister Khurram Dastgir warned, "Any Indian aggression, strategic miscalculation or misadventure, regardless of its scale, mode or location, will not go unpunished and shall be met with an equal and proportionate response." The precision in the language reflects deliberation. Home minister Rajnath Singh and Indian Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat are as belligerent.

The home minister said on January 21, "India's image in the world has become that of a strong nation and we have given a strong message to the world that we can attack our enemies not only on our soil, but also in their territory." A few days earlier, Gen. Rawat said, "If we will have to really confront the Pakistanis, and a task is given to us, we are not going to say we cannot cross the border because they have nuclear weapons. We will have to call their nuclear bluff."

This is a reckless charter. True, neither the United States nor the European Union is as involved in South Asia as it was 15 years ago, when they issued a joint statement in March 2003 laying down a programme for a ceasefire followed by a summit; hence the ceasefire understanding in November 2003.

It is easy to begin an armed conflict of whatever dimension. It is difficult to predict, however, how it will end. Gen. Rawat should read Barbara Tuchman's classic on the origins of the First World War, *The Guns of August*, published in the same year as the Cuban Missile Crisis. In July 1964, Henry Kissinger annoyed the strategist Herman Kahn as he unfolded to a seminar at Harvard his elaborate theory of escalation, which formed the subject of a huge and useless tome. "Herman, you know our leaders. Will they have the time or capacity to understand that steps of the (escalation) ladder you describe?" Kahn was speechless. Do our leaders understand better?

On January 21, a former Indian intelligence agency chief said, "There seems to be no strategy at all. The situation is getting out of hand. The ceasefire is as good as over."

Shelling across the LoC exacts a huge toll on lives; almost entirely of the poor. Since 2016, when the militant leader Burhanuddin Wani was killed, there has been a steep rise in the young joining the militancy. "The number of local terrorists in Kashmir is at an all-time high," one correspondent reported.

On January 14, Gen. Rawat made a pertinent point when he stated, "The political initiative and all other initiatives must go simultaneously hand-in-hand, and only if all (emphasis added) of us function in synergy can we bring lasting peace

in Kashmir". Successive Srinagar-based 15 corps commanders have said precisely that.

Recently, the national security advisers of India and Pakistan, Ajit Doval and retired Lt. Gen. Nasser Khan Janjua, met in Bangkok and Russia. But the directors-general of military operations of both countries last met in December 2013. The need of the hour is a formalisation, in writing, of the ceasefire understanding of November 2003.

Given the will, the problems are not insoluble — provided that the Doval doctrine is discarded. Pakistan's lapses should be discussed at the conference table. It cannot be "brought to heel" by mindless confrontation and attempts to isolate it internationally. None of the other states joins in this sport.

Meanwhile, an all-time low is reached in the refusal of visas to pilgrims who wish to go to the dargahs of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz in Ajmer and Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya in New Delhi. What about the Pakistan-India agreement on the maintenance of places of religious worship signed in Karachi on August 4, 1953? The demolition of Babri Masjid violated paragraph 1.i (protecting, maintaining and preserving the sanctity of places of worship), while the refusal to grant visas to pilgrims violates paragraph 1.ii (increased facilitation for pilgrims on auspicious days). This is apart from the 1974 Protocol on Visits to Holy Shrines. Last December, 192 pilgrims were refused a visa to attend the urs of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.

Can things get worse than this? Of course they can — which is why we must stop the drift now.

Courtesy : The Asian Age



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