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Myths About Unemployment
Neeraj Jain

Hindutva and History
Irfan Engineer

**Indira Gandhi Award for
National Integration
for 2015-16:**
T.M. Krishna's Speech

**The Growing Burden of
Inequalities**
Bharat Dogra

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com
Website: www.janataweekly.org

Acharya Narendra Deva: Life and Politics

Prem Singh

Acharya Narendra Deva, known as the patriarch and doyen of Indian socialism, was born on October 31, 1889 in Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh. His ancestors had come to UP from Sialkot. His schooling took place in Faizabad and higher education in Allahabad and Banaras. He obtained his law degree from Allahabad University and practiced law for some time. But his scholastic mind did not find satisfaction and he became a history teacher at Kashi Vidyapeeth in 1921. He had a good knowledge of Hindi, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, German, French and English languages, and was a serious scholar of history, archaeology, religion, philosophy and culture. Despite having such a wide range of study, his mode of teaching was simple.

It is said that Acharya was born to be a teacher. A politician's ambition and strategic skills were not in him, nor did he push his talent and energy in that direction. The role and reputation of Acharya in Indian politics was of a political philosopher at the national level. Simultaneously, he was an international scholar of socialist theory and ideology. However, he confined his academic

and political activism to Uttar Pradesh. After teaching at Kashi Vidyapeeth, he became the Vice Chancellor of Lucknow University from 1947 to 1951 and Banaras Hindu University (BHU) from 1951 to 1953. His own life was very austere and he used to help poor students financially. His relationship with the students was cordial and inspirational. Lal Bahadur Shastri, the second Prime Minister of India, Kamalapati Tripathi, senior Congress leader and Chandrashekhar, socialist leader, were some prominent names from among his students. Chandrasekhar joined politics with the inspiration of Acharya and continued to honour him as his guru.

Acharya was politically active in Congress, Congress Socialist Party and Socialist Party-Praja Socialist Party after Independence. He presided over the formation conference of the Congress Socialist Party held in Anjuman Ismailia Hall of Patna on May 17, 1934 and was also elected the first president of the new organisation. Acharya's 'Gaya Thesis' is considered to be a masterpiece in the socialist movement in India. Acharya was inclined to follow Marxism as a

contemplative line of thought and method. On one occasion he said that he can leave the party but not Marxism. But he was not a stereotypical or orthodox communist. To his democratic mind, a dictatorial attitude of a person or a group within the communist party in the name of the proletariat was unacceptable. Acharya was a critic of the undemocratic character of the administration of Soviet Russia and the lack of political freedoms there. But he was not a supporter of American capitalist imperialism in any way. He did not see any contradiction between Marxism and the national independence movement of India and movement in the rest of the world against colonial rule. In the same way, he saw mutual supplementation between farmers and workers' revolutionary power. He favoured connecting the agricultural revolution and the socialist revolution. That is why he gave more time to farmer politics. However, he understood the dangers of organising farmers on the basis of caste and religion. Acharya saw the revolutionary movement of India not in terms of divergent viewpoints, but as a part of the various streams of the freedom struggle.

Acharya was a serious student of the ancient culture of India. He made a serious study of Buddhism and its philosophy. He wrote the Sahitya Akademi award-winning book 'Bodhdh Dharma-Darshan' in Hindi. One excerpt from his 1936 speech is: "Our work is not only to end exploitation by imperialism but to end exploitation by all those classes of society which are exploiting the people today. We want to create a new civilization which will be rooted in ancient civilisation, which will have the colours of the country, which will keep the excellent

elements of the ancient civilisation safe, and, simultaneously, which will include new progressive elements of the contemporary world, and, thus would like to present a new ideal before the world." (*Acharya Narendra Deva Vangamay*, Volume 1.)

Like all the important leaders of freedom movement, Acharya was often sentenced to jail. During World War II and Quit India Movement, he remained in jail from 1940 to 1945. In September 1939, when the Second World War broke out, the Congress strongly opposed the unilateral declaration of British government to involve India in the war and resigned from the cabinets. In 1940, when Gandhi launched satyagraha, Acharya, despite his poor health, came forward and went to jail. When he was released in September 1941, Gandhi took care of his health by staying with him in Sevagram Ashram. Acharya was arrested along with other leaders on the call of Quit India Movement. He was released on June 15, 1945.

On one hand, prison greatly damaged his health due to his asthmatic condition, but on the other hand, it also gave him much time for reading and writing. For instance, he started translation of Vashubandhu's 'Abhi-Dhamm Kosh' from French to Hindi in Banaras jail in 1932 and completed it in Ahmednagar jail in 1945, where he was held captive with many leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru. In the preface of his book 'Discovery of India', Nehru has expressed his debt to his colleagues including Acharya Narendra Deva for their scholarship.

Acharya, like Gandhi, considered ethics as the criterion for both life and politics. The greatest

significance of Acharya Narendra Deva's ideas is to combine the moral values of a person with the revolutionary process of social change. He was therefore opposed to the ethics-neutral tendency developed in the Bolshevik stream of Marxism.

When the socialists came out of Congress and formed the independent Socialist Party in 1948, he, along with his colleagues, resigned from the UP Legislative Assembly seat that he had won on Congress ticket, even though it was not needed then and no one had demanded it. But Acharya believed that to remain a member of the Assembly after forming a separate party different from the Congress would not be morally justified. He lost in the by-polls. Congress leaders, intoxicated by power, campaigned against him in an undignified manner in the election. Nevertheless, Nehru himself was surprised with his election defeat.

Acharya died in Madras on February 19, 1956 at the age of 67 years. He had made an outstanding contribution to the Independence struggle and later to nation-building as a teacher, thinker and socialist leader. Nehru in his obituary in Parliament said, "The death of Acharya Narendra Deva means something much bigger for many of us and, I think, for the country than just the passing away of an important person. He was a man of rare distinction—distinction in many fields—rare in spirit, rare in mind and intellect, rare in integrity of mind and otherwise too. Only his body failed him. I do not know if there is any person present here in this House who was associated with him for a longer period than I was. Over 40

(Continued on Page 15)

Myths About Unemployment

Neeraj Jain

Discuss with any group of young people, whether educated or uneducated, and they come up with the same 2 or 3 or 4 explanations for the prevalence of unemployment in the country. These commonly held beliefs are all actually false. Nevertheless, most people have come to believe them, because our policy makers and intellectuals have been deliberately propagating them. These commonly believed myths put the blame of unemployment on the youth themselves, or on society—in other words, the policy makers are not to blame for the scarcity of jobs in the country.

Myth One: India’s population is so large that it is not possible to provide everyone jobs.

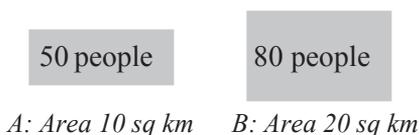
Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s propaganda minister, is reported to have said: ‘If you repeat a lie often enough, people will believe it.’ Following in his footsteps, our country’s establishment intellectuals have been propagating this myth about India’s population being too large to explain the huge unemployment crisis facing the country. They have been so successful in their propaganda, that probably 90 percent people of the country have come to believe it.

Once you come to believe in this argument, the policy makers are no longer to blame for the unemployment crisis. They can then claim—we are trying so hard to create jobs, but all our efforts are in vain, as our country’s population is so huge. The blame then falls on us; we are unemployed, because there

are so many of us.

In fact, people give this same argument about there being too many of us to explain our country’s huge poverty and malnutrition levels too!

This myth can be debunked by a simple argument. Suppose there are two areas, A and B. A has an area of 10 sq km, and B has an area of 20 sq km. A has a population of 50, and B has a population of 80. Which is the area that has more population?



Most readers will immediately answer: A has more population. Why is that so, when the number of people living in B are more than in A? That is because the population density of A is more than of B. So, obviously, what matters is population density, and not population.

Let us now compare the population density of India with some other countries (Table 1).

Table 1: Population Density of India and Other Countries¹ (per sq km)

Country	Population Density
Belgium	372
India	401
Israel	395
Japan	335
Netherlands	413
South Korea	513
Taiwan	651

Except for India, all the other countries in Table 1 are high income countries. India is classified as a lower middle income country (World Bank classification). Even though the population densities of these high income countries are more than or comparable to India, yet, their unemployment / underemployment levels and poverty levels are much less than India.

Let us take a different example. In 2016, Brazil had population of 207.7 million and an overall population density of 25 inhabitants per square kilometre (in 2015). This figure is way below the population densities of all the high income countries mentioned in Table 1. And yet, Brazil has a per capita income much below these high income countries, and is facing double digit unemployment²—when actually it should have had no unemployment if population or population density was responsible for unemployment.

Obviously then, it is not population or population density that is responsible for India’s unemployment crisis. Actually, if we examine this issue more closely, we will find that population growth and employment generation are not adversely related, but complement each other. Greater the population, more is the production required—of food, soap, oil, clothing, housing, etc.—and so more will be the jobs generated for producing all these goods; society will also need more schools, hospitals, buses, etc.—all this means more jobs in all these areas too. Therefore, it is not India’s large population or population density

that is responsible for the huge level of unemployment in the country; the reasons lie elsewhere.

But the myth about overpopulation being the reason for our country's ills is so deep-rooted that many of our readers will still be finding it difficult to accept the above logic. Let us therefore take a look at another set of statistics. The argument about overpopulation comes across most strongly for resources—that our resources are limited, and obviously cannot sustain such a large population. This is used to justify the huge hunger levels in the country—the argument given is that we do not have enough arable land to produce enough to feed such a large population. Now, if we compare Indian and Chinese agriculture, we find that though India has one-third the land area of China, our arable land is marginally bigger than China's. Yet, China produces 40 percent more wheat and rice than India; while China's fruit production is three times India's production!³ Despite this, our godowns are overflowing with foodgrains, and we have become the world's largest exporter of rice! So obviously, Indian agriculture is in crisis not because of our large population, but because of our agricultural policies. And we have the largest number of hungry people in the world, not because of our large population, but because our people are too poor to buy foodgrains, and the government is not willing to distribute foodgrains to them at cheap rates and is more interested in exporting them.⁴

Myth 2: We are unemployed, because we are not capable enough.

This is another common answer given by unemployed/

underemployed young people, that they do not have a decent job because they are not capable enough. Most believe that this is why they have not been able to succeed in competitive examinations.

Ask them why are they doing a BA or a BCom or a BSc degree, which today is not going to fetch them a job, and why did they not take admission in an engineering / management / medicine degree, and they will reply that it is because they are poor, and they did not have enough money for paying the college fee.

Ask them why are they poor, and they will answer that it is because their parents are not capable enough. And why are their parents not capable? Because they did not have money for a decent education. And why is that so? Because their grandparents were not capable . . .

Isn't this argument—that we / our parents / our grandparents etc. are responsible for our present fate—very similar to the 'karma' philosophy propagated in ancient times by wily Brahmins to justify the caste system! We do not ask why has engineering / management / medical education become so costly? Why has higher education, and even good quality school education, become reserved for the children of the rich? Why is the government not spending enough on education, and instead is privatising education, because of which education has become a profit-making business? Instead of raising these questions, we blame ourselves / our fate for our inability to take admission in a good professional course that can get us a decent job.

In fact, even in our country, till the

1980s, higher education was almost entirely in the public sector, and it was possible for children from the poorest sections to get educated in the best engineering or medical colleges in the country. The economic reforms that began in 1991 as a part of globalisation have resulted in gradual privatisation of higher education in the country.⁵

It is another matter that even if one is somehow able to get admission to an engineering or management college, the chances of landing a good job are not very high. According to the All India Council for Technical Education, out of the 8 lakh graduate engineers who pass out from technical institutions in the country every year, more than 60 percent remain unemployed!⁶ And many of those who do get a job get low-paid jobs. Similarly, for those who are somehow able to shell out the Rs 1 lakh or so needed per year to get admission to an MBA degree course, an ASSOCHAM study finds that only 7 percent of the graduates from the 5,500 Business schools in the country (excepting the IIMs and a few other B-schools) are employable; if at all they are able to get jobs, they earn less than Rs 10,000 a month.⁷

Myth 3: There are many jobs, but people don't want to work. They only want cushy arm-chair jobs.

Even if this is true, it is so only for the upper classes who are ashamed of getting their hands dirty doing manual labour.

On the other hand, the millions who migrate from villages to cities in search of work live in horrible conditions in the slums, and are willing to take up the the hardest and

the riskiest jobs. They work at construction sites, or in roadside eateries, or as loaders in market places, or as private drivers, and so on. Tens of thousands of graduates break their backs working night and day as autorickshaw drivers, or stress themselves out working 12 hours a day as contract labourers in factories at barely subsistence wages, or work long hours as waiters in McDonald’s and Cafe Coffee Day restaurants

The upper classes, who believe that ordinary people in our country don’t want to do hard work and so there is unemployment, forget that their luxurious houses have been built by the hard labour of these very ordinary people working long hours in the blazing sun, the highways on which their SUVs run have been built by ordinary people working under the open skies in hazardous conditions, the food on their dining tables comes from the backbreaking toil of farmers working night and day on their fields . . .

Myth 4: Reservations for Dalits, Women entering the Workforce, Migrants Taking Over Jobs for Locals – are responsible for the Unemployment Crisis

Many upper caste youth believe that they are not able to get jobs because of reservations for Dalits. While many men believe that they are not able to get jobs because women have started taking up jobs. Many others believe that they are unemployed because migrants have taken over the jobs in their region / State, and therefore they are attacking migrants.

Reservations

Any democratic and just society that believes in providing equal opportunities to all its members

provides special facilities and opportunities for educational, economic and cultural growth to those sections of society who have suffered social and economic discrimination/ oppression for centuries. The USA implements such policies, which are called affirmative action policies, to address long histories of discrimination faced by minorities (such as Afro-Americans) and women. In India, this took the form of providing reservations to seats in the various legislatures, government jobs and higher educational institutions for the historically deprived castes and tribes. Of course, providing reservations will not by itself end caste discrimination and bring into being a casteless society. But at least this much needs to be done to provide social and economic justice to those who were deliberately denied this in the past.

The belief among upper caste youth that the unemployment crisis is partly because of reservations is fundamentally misplaced. Eliminating reservations is not going to result in an increase in the total number of jobs available; at the most, what will happen is that some jobs that are today going to Dalits will be taken up by upper caste youth. But the total number of unemployed will remain the same.

Today, this opposition to reservations among the upper caste youth has taken a strange turn. The dominant castes in several states, such as Marathas in Maharashtra, Jats in Haryana, Patels or Patidars in Gujarat, Gujjars in Rajasthan and Kapus in Andhra Pradesh are themselves agitating for reservations. They are demanding that their castes be included in the list of Other Backward Classes (OBCs), so that they too can take

advantage of reservations in public sector employment.

Table 2: Total Government Employment (Centre+State+Local Govt.+Quasi Govt.) (in lakh)

Year	Total Employment
1991	190.6
2012	176.1

While all these dominant castes are today demanding a share of the ‘reservation pie’, the fact of the matter is, there is no ‘pie’ on the table. The total number of government jobs has decreased in absolute terms over the last two decades! As it is, total public employment in the country is a small percentage of total employment in the country (just 4 percent in 2010, according to the *Economic Survey 2009–10*); even that has fallen by 7.6 percent over the two decades 1991–2012 (see Table 2).⁸ So, the various caste groups are demanding a share of the jobs reserved for the historically backward castes, when in reality, there are hardly any new government jobs, as public sector recruitment has reduced to a trickle. The government, instead of increasing public sector employment, is reducing public employment—fresh posts are not being created, the vacancies arising out of retirement are not being filled, employment is being forcibly reduced by ‘Voluntary Retirement Schemes’, and several jobs are being contractualised.

Then why are these castes demanding reservation in government jobs? The reason is: on the one hand, agriculture is in crisis, because of which the youth are seeking jobs outside the agricultural sector; and on the other hand, there are very few

jobs available in the other private sectors too—and the few jobs available are contractual jobs that are insecure jobs offering very low salaries. Overall job growth in the economy has drastically fallen. The *Economic Survey 2014–15* admits that employment growth in the economy [compound annual growth rate (CAGR)] decelerated from 2.8 percent during period 1999–2000 to 2004–05, to just 0.5 percent during 2004–05 to 2011–12!⁹ Crafty politicians have taken advantage of this disenchantment among the youth to mobilise them along caste lines for demanding reservation for their respective castes in government jobs.

To give a recent example of this massive rush for government jobs: in UP in September 2015, when the State Government advertised to fill up 368 posts of peons in the State Secretariat, 23 lakh people applied for these posts. Now, whether these jobs are given to locals, or Dalits, or Jats, or women, or men, 22 lakh, 99 thousand and 632 people are still going to be unemployed; an overwhelming majority of the locals, a majority of the Dalits, a majority of the Jats and Yadavs, and a majority of the men and women who have applied for these posts are still going to be unemployed. So what difference does it make to the overall unemployment situation for any of these categories, even if these jobs are reserved for locals, or for Dalits, or for the Other Backward castes, or for women?

Jobs for Women

Many men even today oppose women going out of their homes for jobs, and becoming economically independent. They argue that it reduces job opportunities for men; they also raise the issue that if

women take up jobs outside their homes, who will look after their children and housework?

This is a typical patriarchal view, which considers a woman's independence to be immoral, and believes that ideally her role should be confined to within the four walls of the house. It is only when a woman takes part in social production that she develops an independent identity in society, one that is different from her being someone's mother, sister, wife or daughter. It is only when a woman steps out of her home, and becomes economically independent, that her personality develops, she gains the freedom to develop her inherent potential, and she develops the confidence to face the challenges of the outside world.

This tragic reality, that a majority of women in our society even today are still trapped within their family cages and do not go to work outside their homes, has actually affected society's development. Society has not been able to utilise their inherent brilliance and enormous capabilities for its growth. We need to support women in their struggle to step outside their homes and take up jobs and become economically independent. We need to raise the demand that the economic policies of our country should be such that all men and women desirous of jobs should be able to get decent, secure and well-paid jobs, rather than fighting each other for a share of the limited jobs presently available.

Invasion by Migrants

Movements against migrants have taken place in several states, including Karnataka, Punjab and Rajasthan, and several North

Eastern states, demanding reservation of jobs for the local population and that migrants return to their native states. In Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena have periodically organised agitations against migrants, especially from the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, because of which migrant workers in the state have been victims of xenophobia, prejudice and violence.

What most people do not know is that most of the migrants to the big cities of these states are not 'outsiders', but people from other regions from within the same state. This fact comes out from the data on migration available from the Census of India. The Census collects migration data of two types—migration by birth place and migration by place of last residence. The Census 2001 data shows that total number of migrants by place of last residence in the country as a whole was 314 million (30.6 percent of the population). Out of these migrants by last residence, 268 million (85 percent) were intra-state migrants (those who migrated from one area of the state to another), 41 million (13 percent) were inter-state migrants and 5.1 million (1.6 percent) migrated from outside the country. So far as migration by place of birth is concerned, Census 2001 data shows that there were about 307 million migrants (29.9 percent of the population) under this category, of which about 259 million (84.2 percent), migrated from one part of the state to another, 42 million (13.8 percent) were migrants from outside the state while 6.1 million migrated from outside the country.¹⁰ For the state of Maharashtra, a study based on NSSO data found that over 70 percent of migrants to the city of Mumbai come from rural or urban

areas within Maharashtra itself.¹¹

According to the 2011 Census, migrant population in India has been growing faster than the population growth in the country, because of which migrants constitute 37.8 per cent of India's 121.03 crore population.¹² In other words, every third Indian is a migrant. The reason why migration takes place is because of unequal development. In the development model being implemented in the country today, known as capitalism, the more developed parts tend to develop faster than the more backward parts, because industrialists and investors prefer to invest in the more developed areas as costs are lower and markets here are more developed. This results in more jobs being created in the more developed areas. Tragically, some of the most backward regions of India are also the most resource-rich regions of our country, such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand—yet these regions are backward because investors prefer to invest in the more developed areas of the country. If, therefore, more jobs are available in the more developed cities of the country such as Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, or the southern states and Punjab, it is not because those living in these areas are more capable or hardworking as compared to those living in the more backward areas, but is a result of the development model being implemented in the country. Therefore, the benefits of these jobs (in the more developed areas) should go not just to those living in these areas, those living in the more backward areas should also have an equal right to them.

False Propaganda

The real reason why dominant castes are fighting for reservations

in government jobs, or why men feel that women have taken over their jobs, or why people are demanding reservations for locals, is that while on the one hand, agriculture is in crisis and employment growth in agriculture has virtually slowed down to zero, and the youth are migrating to cities in search of jobs, on the other hand, there is an acute shortage of jobs in other sectors such as manufacturing and services sectors.

Roughly 13 million young people enter the Indian job market every year.¹³ During the decade 1999–2000 to 2009–10, a total of 130 million entered the job market. Of these, according to government data, only 63.5 million got any kind of jobs, of which only 14.4 million got formal sector jobs, that is, jobs with some kind of job security, minimum wages, and other legal rights.¹⁴ In other words, only 11 percent of those who joined the workforce during this decade got decent jobs; a majority of the others are all unemployed or underemployed, somehow eking out a living in the informal sector. Not realising that there are no jobs, they believe, or are made to believe, by duplicitous politicians that the 'others' have taken away their jobs, and so they attack migrants, or mobilise in lakhs demanding 'reservations'.

Rather than fight the 'others', we need to all unite and demand more jobs!

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Hindutva and History

Irfan Engineer

The controversial statement of the BJP legislator of UP State Sangeet Som denigrating Taj Mahal should not surprise us. 'History' propounded by the Hindu supremacists is stranger than fiction. It is a tool in the hands Hindutva to justify their ideology which considers Muslims and Christians, whose holy lands are outside India as foreign religions. Indian Constitution may consider Muslims and Christians as Indian citizens, but Hindutva political ideology (HPI) views them as foreigners to be gotten rid off or subdued to the status of non-citizens or second class citizens. Hindutva calls upon all Hindus to wage war on what they consider foreign religions.

Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar called upon Hindus to "Hinduise all politics and militarise Hindudom". Hinduising politics meant to establish political and cultural hegemony of upper-caste Hindus. For building militarised Hindudom, demonisation of Muslims and Christians was crucial. One of the instruments used to demonise Muslims and Christians was history. The political ideologues of Hindutva fictionalised history and historicised fiction without having any intention to respect the science of history.

It is because it is fictionalised history that different Hindutva ideologues take different stances on the Taj Mahal. Yogi Adityanath once said Taj Mahal had no connection with India's culture or heritage (Manish and Sanyal 2017) and

omitted it from the booklet of tourism department of UP. Sangeet Som, BJP MLA called it a cultural blot on India and which was built by traitors (Sharma 2017). BJP MP Vinay Katiyar opined that Taj Mahal was originally a Shiv Temple (PTI 2017). Following a big furore in the media, Adityanath later called it pride of India and stated that sweat and toil of Indian people had built it, and even visited the Taj Mahal.

'History' propounded by HPI has basically borrowed from the colonial historiography of James Stuart Mill and his book *History of British India*. Henry Miers Elliot and John Dowson, both British civil servants, also wrote 8 volumes on history of India and published it as *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians*. James Mill, Elliot and Dowson periodised Indian past according to the religion of the rulers, and labelled these as Hindu period and Muslim period. Though Eliot and Dowson periodised pre-Islamic history as Hindu period supposedly on the basis of religion of the rulers, the then rulers did not see themselves as followers of Hindu religion. The word 'Hindu' was used more to denote inhabitants of the geographical region on the Eastern bank of river Sindhu. The Persians pronounced Sindhu as 'Hindu'. "*Our word 'Hindu' originates in the geographical feature of the Indus River. It comes from a word for 'river' (Sindhu) that Herodotus (in the fifth century BCE), the Persians (in the fourth century BCE), and the Arabs (after the*

eight century CE) used to refer to everyone who lived beyond the great river of the northwest of the subcontinent, still known locally as the Sindhu and in Europe as the Indus." (Doniger 2013, 6-7)

It is thus the outsiders who referred to all the inhabitants of this region as Hindus; the rulers of this region before the so-called Muslim rule did not identify their religion as Hinduism. It is the British colonial masters who used the geographical term 'Hindu' to mean religion. Besides the fact that many historians would question periodisation of history on the basis of religion of the ruler, Elliot and Dowson called 'pre-Muslim period' as Hindu period, even though the different rulers followed diverse religious faith including Jainism and Buddhism. The Britishers in their census enumeration used Hinduism to denote religion of those who were neither Muslims, Christians or other known religions.

Without critiquing the colonial historiography of Eliot and Dowson, HPI endorsed it and built upon it. HPI glorifies the Hindu period as being the golden period of Indian history, and considers the Muslim period as a period during which there was a decline. Communal Muslims or Muslim nationalists glorify the Muslim period. Both view history from their respective ideological perspective to determine their future. Romila Thapar writes that historical interpretation can become a two-way process, where the needs of the

present are read into the past, and where the image of the past is sought to be imposed upon the present; and the image of the past is the historian's contribution to the future (1993; pp. 1). E H Carr reaches same conclusion and writes, "*When we attempt to answer the question 'What is history?' our answer, consciously or unconsciously, reflects our own position in time, and forms part of our answer to the broader question what view we take of the society in which we live.*" (Carr 1987).

The HPI view of history is that the golden period of 'Hindu' history was over after invasion by the Muslim aggressors from the Northwest. Thereafter the social structure crumbled and 'Hindus' and 'Hindu' culture were suppressed which caused their economic decline. The Muslim aggressors were despotic and their religious fanaticism required them to destroy every symbol of 'Hindu' culture and forcibly impose 'Islamic' culture and convert all 'Hindus' to Islam. 'Hindus' resisted the aggression which led to permanent war between the two communities or two nations – Muslim and 'Hindu'. The Muslim community through their Emperors enslaved and humiliated the Hindus with the intention of completely destroying their culture. Muslims demolished their temples and constructed their mosques over it. The HPI claims that there were 3,000 such temples which were destroyed by Muslim rulers and mosques built over them, including the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, and the mosques in Mathura and Varanasi. However, it has never presented a full list of all these 3,000 temples which they claim were destroyed and mosques constructed in their place.

The objective of writing such a history is primarily to stigmatise the entire Muslim community and represent them as oppressors against whom all Hindus should unite and wage a war to seek revenge of historical wrongs done to them. The Hindus being a caste based hierarchically structured society, uniting them implies that those on the lower rungs of the structure accept the birth based social privileges of those on upper rungs, despite having suffered inhuman oppression from the upper castes since centuries. Therefore, uniting the Hindus is not easy. One of the strategies used by HPI to achieve unity of Hindus is to demonise other communities, historicise conflicts with them, present these threats as continuing till today, and call upon all Hindus to unite against them.

The second objective of distorting history is to reclaim, own and control the land, institutions and structures owned by the 'enemy' communities. If you can't build it, grab it from others. The third objective is to create a case for expansionism. HPI calls for Akhand Bharat, which means capturing not only Pakistan and Bangladesh, but also South China in the North, Myanmar in the East and Sri Lanka in the South. The fourth objective is to construct an image of a glorious past in which all technological and scientific achievements that we see today had already been achieved by the 'Hindus' thousands of years ago, during the Vedic period. These include the aircraft (pushpak viman), plastic surgery (implanting Elephant head on to a human body), advanced nuclear tipped missiles that were used during the Mahabharat war, genetic engineering, etc. The aim of creating such a false pride in the past is not only to unite the Hindu

community but also claim it to be superior to all other communities, which therefore gives it the right to rule the world and creates justification for building a militarised and authoritarian state to achieve that objective.

Purushottam Nagesh Oak was a prominent HP Ideologue who established the 'Institute for Rewriting Indian History' and wrote several books. The historical wisdom of HPI is largely informed by Oak's writing. Broadly and briefly, Oak's claims are as under:

1. Islam and Christianity derived from Vedic Religion. Christianity was Krishna nitee. Vatican is corruption of 'Vatika Nagri' and Papacy was originally Vedic priesthood. 'Abraham' comes from Brahma; 'church' is corruption of Sanskrit word 'vichar-vimarsh'; Jesus or Yahveh was a Rig Vedic God. The word disciple is derived from Sanskrit word 'dikshapal'. Krishna puja was prevalent in the whole world.
2. Arabia had a Vedic past and Kabaa was a Hindu Temple – a Shiv Ling based on an inscription mentioning Indian King Vikramaditya is in a dish found inside the Kabaa. Mohammad was Hindu and Arabs worshiped Mahadev and performed their pilgrimage to Kashi and Haridwar. Allah was a Hindu God.
3. The foreign Muslims have been wrongly given the credit for constructing Indian monuments. Muslims were destroyers of Indian monuments and not constructors. Amongst the monuments wrongly attributed to 'foreign' Muslims include the Red

Fort, Qutub Minar, Humayun Ka Maqbara, Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and many others. These were all 'Hindu' structures misappropriated by the then Muslim rulers. The evidence for such a claim can be so flimsy as some carving on a wall which was not of Muslim origin, or some similar sounding Sanskrit name. For example, according to Oak, Taj Mahal was an ancient Shiva Temple Tejo Mahalaya which was commandeered by Emperor Shajahan from the Maharaja of Jaipur. Oak argues that the words 'Taj' and 'Mahal' are both of Sanskrit origin. Mahal means mansion and Taj is corruption of the word 'Tej' which means splendour. Oak gives such facile explanations for all his claims.

4. His other sweeping claims include that one should not believe in medieval records; Mughal arts and art of Mughal gardens is a myth; development of Indian music during Mughal period is a myth; all the monuments built by Mughals (which Oak describes as 'jihadi') and the narratives behind the monuments are false; the narrative that the Medieval period (when 'foreigners' ruled) was a golden age is a myth; Indian king Porus did not lose to Alexander in the battle of Hydaspes fought in 326 BC; Indian borders extended from Bali to Baltic Sea and from Kerala to Kaba; Sanskrit was the world language in ancient times; etc.

These assertions would be and should be normally questioned by not only students of history but also people with ordinary intelligence. Hindutva's historical wisdoms are doled out to their cadres and followers who have been mobilised

and recruited by touching their religious sentiments and made amenable to the building of a strong unitary collective that would act as their support network and give them a sense of belonging. The strong unitary collective is built around a shared common objective and common hatred of those whom they call foreigners. Hindutva 'history' is an ideological tool to deepen the conviction of the mobilised cadres and imagine a past where the enemy 'foreigners' were oppressors even in the past. It fills them with hatred of the 'foreigner' and motivates them to exorcise the agony of having suffered atrocities in the past by inflicting the worst crimes on the 'foreigners' around them.

The cadre convinced of such an imagined past is rarely able to stand up to rational scrutiny of his/her belief. They keep repeating their belief. They follow their leader who too keeps repeating his/her belief of what the past was and hopes that it would be accepted as unassailable truth if enough number of people repeat it enough number of times. It is through this prism that Tipu Sultan is also looked from. Notwithstanding the fact that Tipu Sultan died fighting the Britishers, Tipu being a 'foreigner' should necessarily mean he was oppressor of 'Hindus'.

Mobilized cadres of HPI need empathy and help to restore their rationality and humanity. However, they have demonstrated their destructive potential once by demolishing Babri Masjid. Other historical heritage of the country needs to be protected. Our education system should be strengthened to inculcate human values and equip students to explore the past in order to understand it and learn lessons of history to shape our future.

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Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration for 2015-16:

T.M. Krishna's Speech

I stand before you to accept an award for having contributed to national integration. But before I bask in its glory, I need to place on record the unevenness or shall I say the un-integratedness of my own citizenship. I would like to believe that I am just another ordinary Indian. But I am not, certainly not. I am born into a privileged caste and class. I am English speaking and a culturally empowered citizen of this country. Whether I realise it or not and even if I am unable to accept its realness, this is a fact. And being a singer, in a tradition that is steeped in all these qualifications I become an emblem of what is being touted today as 'Indian Culture'. I am a preferred-citizen. I may try to understand but will never, in my within, experience what it means to be a Dalit, Muslim or a tribal and will never be just another person on the street.

But my art, Carnatik music, has given me a gift. A gift of experience, a gift of empathy, a gift to sense life beyond my limitations. This experience made me realise that my art, my way of life, my beliefs, religion, practices, rituals and everything else that makes me who I am is just one dot in the grand universe of India.

It is art's generosity that brings me here today.

The human being is a complex creature, one part of which is designed to own, control, subjugate, discipline and dictate. But there is another beautiful side to us, the sensitive, empathetic and

compassionate one. Right through our lives we vacillate between the two, with each side winning a few bouts. But at a much deeper level, the environment we have created for ourselves moulds our intrinsic humanness. And it is in this context that democracy becomes a vital, non-negotiable instrument—the instrument of humanity. Democracy lives in its spirit of intention—which is to make us all better human beings. It demands humanity from every citizen, community and government, and hence has not been and will never be easy. We have gone through times when we placed democracy under siege. Born in January 1976, I am a child of one of those difficult times.

But we did move ahead and beyond.

The goal of national integration

As I grew up in the 1980s and early '90s, national integration was a significant part of my vocabulary. Leaders from across the political spectrum spoke about this with great vigour re-enforcing its centrality to India. In spite of the terrible violence that erupted at various times in different parts of the country, we seemed to recover and an inner consciousness in our civil society kept reiterating our togetherness. And in this context I must mention Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's apology for the 1984 riots. This was a reflective and essential statement. Some detractors may say 'it does not change anything'. It cannot change the past but definitely changes the future.

A leader who does not have the humility to apologise for genocide under his watch does not integrate.

But I say with regret that as we entered a new millennium this idea of national integration lost its sheen, it did not attract anyone's attention, it did not matter anymore. It is also possible that we became over-confident, arrogant about the unpenetrability of our syncretic culture. We spoke much about development and soon national-integration became passé. In spite of socially equalising legislations such as the Right for Information Act of 2005 and NREGA, we somehow forgot that if we do not remain caring of our people and vigilant of the dangers that lurked behind the scenes, we will enter times when who we are as a nation will be under serious threat.

And here we are today.

Ugly jingoism

We live in times when national integration has been replaced by an ugly form of nationalism—jingoism. We are being told what to eat, wear, say, think and be. One monolithic order is being forced on us as Indian culture. As a person of and in culture let me say this unequivocally, there is no one Indian culture—there are Indian cultures—the plurality is the signifier of integration. Uniformity breeds homogeneity, unity through national integration cradles respect.

We are facing one of the greatest challenges posed to our democracy, constitution, plurality, citizenship and socialism. These cornerstones of India are being subverted,

dismantled, maligned and morphed right before our eyes. The methods being used are not secretive anymore, dissenters have been killed and all of us who resist are being warned of what is coming.

If there is anytime that national integration needs to be brought back into public thought, it is today and there is no time to waste. And this integration is not just about religious minorities; it is as much about Dalits, tribals, ethnic and linguistic minorities. The basic fabric of India is its cultures and if we allow that to be poisoned, we would have placed on the sacrificial altar our entire civilisational consciousness. The battle will be lost and we just cannot let that happen.

Questioning, resisting, learning and discovering

I will continue this journey of questioning, resisting, learning and discovering. And in accepting this award, I am just a conduit to creating more discourses on who we are as a country and where we want to be. I thank all those who have travelled this path and continue to inspire and mentor me in my seekings. In essence I am merely continuing in the tradition of India's democratic thinkers, who believed in our goodness.

Before I end I would like to render a few verses from a hymn that is part of Gandhiji's Ashram songs. I hope we can keep these words in our hearts and expand its horizons.

Om tat sat, Shri Narayana tu
Siddhabuddhi tu,
Skanda vinayaka savita pavaka tu
Brahma mazda tu, Yahva shakti tu
Ishu pita prabhu tu, Rudra vishnu tu
Ramakrishna tu, Raheem ta O tu
Vishvarupa tu, Advitiya tu
Akala nirbhaya atma linga tu,
Om tat sat.

The Growing Burden of Inequalities

Bharat Dogra

Economic inequalities are not only a big hindrance in the path of justice and meeting basic needs of all people, in addition they are also a threat to long-term broad-based economic progress as well as to democracy. It is therefore highly unfortunate that considerations relating to promotion of economic equality and checking economic inequalities have been increasingly neglected in India in recent decades, particularly from the 1980s and even more so from the 1990s.

Several aspects of accentuating inequalities have been becoming increasingly clear in recent years, but if any further proof of the worsening trends was needed, we can refer to the recent widely discussed working paper titled *Indian Income Inequality 1922-24: From British Raj to Billionaire Raj*, written by Thomas Piketty and Lucas Chancel.

This paper presents strong statistical evidence of the rapidly increasing income inequality in India. The share of the top 1 percent part of the population in national income increased from 6.2 percent in 1982-83 to 21.7 percent in 2013-14 (the highest ever recorded share of the top 1 percent in India). Income of the top 0.01 percent of the country's population during the period 1980-2014 grew by 1,834 percent, and the income of the top 0.001 percent grew by 2,726 percent. In sharp contrast, the income of the bottom 50 percent of the population grew by only 89 percent (containing all adults above

20 years of age) during this period.

During 1980-2014, the top 10 percent of the population was able to capture about two-thirds of the total increase of income during this period, while the bottom 90 percent of the population had to be content with only one-third of it.

Thus, it is clear that income inequalities have been increasing at unacceptably high rates in recent years. This, moreover, is only one aspect of increasing economic inequalities. In rural areas land redistribution progress has been almost entirely given up during the last 35 years; on the other hand, land has been taken from farmers for private industrialists, miners and real estate developers on a more massive scale than ever before. In urban areas increasing inequalities are even more visible than in rural areas. Huge loans taken by some of the richest persons or business concerns related to them have not been paid back to such a massive extent that it has created a big crisis—the crisis of NPAs in the country's banking system.

These trends of increasing inequalities lead to denial of resources for the most important tasks of fighting poverty and hunger while also retarding broad-based, sustainable economic progress in various ways. Hence one of our most important priorities is to check this increasing drift towards higher economic inequalities with a firm hand.

Press Release

Kisan Mukti Yatra Gets Rousing Reception in Bengal

- Accuses Prime Minister and Bengal Chief Minister of Betraying Farmers
- Demands that TMC Govt Procure Paddy at Rs 2,300/quintal like under Kerala LDF Govt
- Demands Liberation from Debt for all Kisans in Bengal

The Eastern leg of the Kisan Mukti Yatra began from Bhargor in Bengal on October 28, 2017 by paying tributes to martyrs Mofizul Khan and Alamgir Mollah, killed in police firing while protesting against forcible land acquisition for power grid. The Yatra reached Jhargram District (part of erstwhile Paschim Midnapore District) on October 29, 2017 to a massive reception by peasants, agricultural workers, Adivasis and Dalits with different organisations representing them present in solidarity. Hundreds of representatives of the Bengal Platform of Mass Organisations, a platform that includes 118 organisations and which is on a State-wide Padayatra covering more than 40,000 villages in the State against communal BJP-RSS as well as the Narendra Modi-led BJP Government, corrupt and anti-people TMC and against neo-liberal economic policies, were also present in a show of solidarity. The public meeting at the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Chowk saw enthusiastic participation and began with cultural programmes and revolutionary songs.

Addressing the meeting, Vijoo

Krishnan, Joint Secretary of All India Kisan Sabha, paid tributes to the hundreds of martyrs in the district killed by TMC-Maoist goons and said that the struggle of the people of Jhargram despite extreme repression is an inspiration for all. He attacked the corrupt TMC Government citing how even mythological figures Narada and Sarada in Bengal have become synonymous with corruption. Abhishek Banerji is competing with Jay Shah for unprecedented increase in wealth, which needs to be investigated. He pointed out that while the MSP of paddy was Rs 1,550/quintal, in Bengal farmers were not getting even Rs 900/quintal and there was no government procurement. In contrast to this, the Left Democratic Front Government in Kerala was procuring paddy for a record Rs 2,300/quintal. The Tripura Left Front Government is providing up to 92 days of work under MGNREGA, but the BJP Government is not allocating funds. In Bengal, MGNREGA is functioning dismally under the TMC Government. Even the Adivasis in Bengal have not got Forest Rights despite more than a decade after the Forest rights Act. Food security has been compromised and for the first time farmers in Bengal were forced to commit suicide as they are not getting proper price for paddy, jute, potato and other crops. After coming to power in the name of Maa, Maati and Maanush, TMC was looting resources and unleashing untold repression on the people. He pointed to the victories of the peasantry in Rajasthan and Maharashtra and also

the resistance built against land acquisition under the Bhoomi Adhikar Andolan banner, and expressed confidence that the united resistance built will defeat the conspiracy of BJP and TMC to divide the people and finally emerge victorious.

Dr Sunilam of NAPM explained the formation of the AIKSCC after the killing of 6 farmers in Mandsaur and how more than 180 organisations across the country had come together to demand liberation from debts and remunerative MSP according to the Swaminathan Commission recommendations i.e. at least 50 percent above the cost of production. He congratulated the people for defying the atmosphere of terror in the region under TMC rule and attending the programme in large numbers. Lambasting the Narendra Modi-led BJP Government, he said that it was the most anti-farmer government ever in India and the Prime Minister had betrayed the farmers by making fake promises. He also criticised the untold suffering imposed on the people in the name of demonetisation and GST, while the corporates were being given huge concessions.

Amiya Patra, Secretary, Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Union (AIAWU), Pulin Behari Baskey (Ex-MP and Secretary of Adivasi Adhikar Rashtriya Manch), Tapan Batabyal (All India Kisan Maha Sabha), Santosh Rana (AIKS), Dhenga Hansda (All India Samyukt Kisan Sabha), Bablu Banerji (Paschim Banga Khet Majur

Sanghati Samiti), Sukhchand Soren (All India Krantikari Kisan Sabha), Ashok Rana (Sramik Krishak Union), Panchanan Pradhan (All India Kisan Khet Mazdoor

Sanghatan) and Ashok Banerji (All India Atragami Kisan Sabha) also addressed the meeting. Dibakar Hansda, District Secretary of AIKS, presided over the meeting.

The Kisan Mukti Yatra will leave tomorrow to Bhubaneswar and proceed from there to Jharkhand and Bihar.

Kisan Mukti Yatra Enters Jharkhand

- Accuses PM & Jharkhand CM of Promoting Corporate Interests & Land Grab
- Will Defeat Land Acquisition Act, 2017 and Efforts to Tamper with Land & Forest Rights
- Condemns Move to Amend CNT & SPT Acts
- Demands Liberation from Debt for all Kisans in Jharkhand and MSP at 50% above Cost of Production

The eastern leg of the Kisan Mukti Yatra entered Jharkhand on October 31, 2017 after passing through Bengal and Odisha. It was received at Ranchi by several organisations representing hundreds of peasants, agricultural workers, Adivasis and Dalits. A public meeting was held opposite the Raj Bhavan in Ranchi.

Addressing the meeting Hannan Mollah, General Secretary of All India Kisan Sabha, attacked the Narendra Modi led BJP Government for betraying farmers and imposing burdens on them. He accused the government of facilitating loot of land, forest and mineral resources, and pointed out that the united struggle of people had defeated the move to amend the CNT Act and SPT Act. He said that the unity built in the form of the AIKSCC was unprecedented and will defeat the anti-people economic policies and divisive politics of the BJP-led

Central Government.

Dr. Sunilam of NAPM said that more than 180 organisations had come together to demand liberation from debts and remunerative MSP according to the Swaminathan Commission recommendations i.e. at least 50 percent above the cost of production. He said the Raghubar Das led BJP Government in the State was working in favour of the land mafia and the move to pass Land Acquisition Act of 2017 was a step in that direction. The BJP Government has allowed corporates to loot Jal, Jungle and Zameen, as well as mineral resources and encouraged land grab. He further said that the programme 'Mining Momentum of Jharkhand' is a license to loot.

Rajaram Singh of AIKMS called upon people to unite against the communal forces and neo-liberal economic policies. He said farmers' suicides and hunger deaths were increasing in Jharkhand under BJP rule. He called upon all sections to take part in the Kisan Sansad at Delhi from November 20, 2017 in large numbers.

Avik Saha, Jai Kisan Andolan, said that the promises of the Narendra Modi-led BJP Government like better prices and doubling of farm incomes were fake. He specifically pointed out that the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana had transferred thousands of crores to private

insurance companies while the farmers had not got any compensation for their losses.

Social activist Dayamani Barla said people of Jharkhand are united to defeat corporate loot and defend their rights. She warned that the government will face the wrath of the people.

AIKS Joint Secretary Vijoo Krishnan, Prem Singh Gehlawat and Purushottam Sharma of AIKMS, Prahlad Ingole of Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatan, AIKMS leader from Telangana Chandrasekhar, Kamalendra Pratap of Jai Kisan Andolan, Surjit Sinha, Secretary, Jharkhand Kisan Sabha, Shyam Sundar Mahto (Joint Secretary) and Puran Mahto (General Secretary) of AIKMS, Mahendra Pathak, General Secretary, AIKS (Ajoy Bhavan), Jharkhand, Suresh Munda, President, DYFI, Jharkhand, Rangowati Devi, Joint Secretary, AIDWA, Parasuram Mahto, Jharkhand Kisan Sabha, Ramlal Mahto, President, Jharkhand AIKMS and several others also spoke at the well attended public meeting. Rajendra Singh Munda, President of Jharkhand Kisan Sabha, presided over the meeting.

The Kisan Mukti Yatra will leave travel Jharkhand tomorrow and travel in Bihar till November 5.

Released By Dr Sunilam on behalf of AIKSCC

Sufi Amba Prasad

Sufi Amba Prasad (1858-1917) was one of our greatest freedom fighters and editors. His inspiring role was not confined to India alone but also spilled over to Iran. This year his 100th death anniversary is being observed in both these countries.

What we really need to learn from the very inspiring life of Sufi Amba Prasad is that courage and determination can help to overcome all obstacles if there is clarity about aims and strong will-power to pursue these aims in our life. Sufi Ji was born with only one arm. At a relatively early age for his work relating to journalism he was jailed twice, tortured, denied medicare and

his ancestral property was confiscated. Yet he did not budge even once from the path of fighting for the freedom of his country, turning away with great contempt all offers to compromise his position by offering him a good salary or a palatial house.

Secondly what we need to learn from him in the present day troubled times is his great commitment to the harmony and unity of all religions. Although Sufi Ji was respected as a Muslim scholar he worked in the closest collaboration with friends from other religions to such an extent that any religious differences were not even visible. His closest

collaborator and friend was Sardar Ajit Singh, the elder uncle of Shahid Bhagat Singh and they together escaped to Iran when their arrest appeared to be on cards.

Sufi Ji continued his valiant efforts even from Iran. He even managed to start a newspaper there. However the British were on the lookout for him and finally found and arrested but not before he offered very valiant resistance, fighting with a revolver in his left hand. He was imprisoned in Sheeraj and died in his prison cell there.

Bharat Dogra

(Continued from Page 2)

years ago we came together and we shared innumerable experiences together in the dust and heat of the struggle for independence and in the long silence of prison life where we spent—I forget now—four or five years together at various places, and inevitably got to know each other intimately; and so, for many of us, it is a grievous loss and a grievous blow, even as it is a grievous loss for our country. There is the public sense of loss and there is the private sense of loss and a feeling that somebody of rare distinction has gone and it will be very difficult to find his like again.”

Remembering Acharya on his 127th birth anniversary, one regrets the state of political-intellectual scenario of today’s India. Our leaders, who were engaged in the freedom struggle were in comparison incomparably inspirational, and so insightful

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