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Though revelers stayed on the thoroughfares in major cities till the early hours of the New Year Day celebrating the arrival of 2013, India really entered the new year on a somber note, an undercurrent of despair, helplessness and gloom dominating the general mood. The year being kicked out had brought no cheer to the country and its people. It was marked by controversies galore, and groups led by Anna Hazare kept reminding the people at large and the government all through the year and day in and day out that corruption was the major ailment affecting the nation's health and well-being. With the economy in the doldrums in the wake of the global recession, with two-digit rate of inflation making living more expensive and with a government paralyzed by the formidable challenges it was clearly unable to cope with, there was very little for the citizen to be happy about. Indeed, in retrospect, it would seem that 2012 turned out to be one of the worst post-independence years, since it dampened the mood of virtually every section of the society from the rich to the poor, from the urban to the rural, from the corporates to the factories and plants. There was good reason to

look forward to the new year with hope and anticipation.

However, the second fortnight of December proved to be a particularly demoralizing one that left the entire country shell-shocked and driven to sustained self-introspection about the growing vulnerabilities faced by women in India. A single horrific episode involving a 23-year-old medical student from Uttar Pradesh brought home to the nation some realities of the ground situation concerning the safety and security of our women, who constitute half the country's population. The girl was raped, beaten up, brutalized and humiliated by six men in a moving bus in New Delhi and thrown out on the streets. Her boy friend was assaulted. The story would have had a customary ending but for the fortuitous coincidence of a police patrol vehicle passing by the spot where two helpless souls were in great agony and were taken care of immediately by shifting them to a hospital. The customary story would have been that the rape episode would not have been exposed but would have been buried by the victims, their parents and any others in the civil society who might have

Between the lines

come to know of it. In the event, the plight of the victims came to public notice, and the media did its duty by highlighting the tragic and unfortunate aspects of the victims. The rest, as they say, is history.

Seldom in the recent past has a single episode roused an entire nation and made them conscious of their guilt in allowing hundreds of rapists escape the law and hundreds of victims and their families enduring agonizing periods of trauma and shock. Seldom in the recent past has such a comprehensive, vast and multi-dimensional coverage given by the national media (of all languages and regions) to a single episode. Rarely, if ever, has the plight of a criminally assaulted girl has endeared herself to the entire nation, and never before have so many cursed so many targets (principally the police and other law-enforcing authorities) for inaction and irresponsibility, and never before has such extraordinary resolve on public display of readiness to take follow-up action on atrocities on women. In a sense, a young girl's courage and bravery, her sacrifice and her tragic death unified a nation and inspired one and all to ensure that her death would not go in vain.

Millions of words have been printed in the newspapers of India, and of the world, highlighting the need for rendering justice, through tight laws and stringent punishments, to rape victims and victims of all kinds of violence against women. The government has been flooded with advice, suggestions for action, and description of the concrete steps it could take to make it difficult for rapists and criminally minded men to assault women. The government has given the impression that it has remained sensitive to the public

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Youth comes of age

Kuldip Nayar

How heavenly to be alive when the youth is asserting itself. Even the sons and daughters from well-off families joined the protests. I recall the Quit India movement in 1942 when on the call of Mahatma Gandhi people came on to the streets to demand the British to quit. There was a spirit of sacrifice and dedication in their demonstration.

This time one felt his or her personal loss in the death of the 23-year-old after being gang raped. Young faces, lighted by the candles they carried, adumbrated the idea of India which knew of no caste, no religious identity. It was a united nation mourning the death of its proud daughter. It looks from protest marches and condolence meetings that the gang rape has awakened the nation to brutalities against women as well as non-functioning rulers. That the stir was peaceful despite lathi-charge and water canons shows the maturity of participants.

The rulers had no clue of why such defiance had taken place and what they should be doing. Initially, they did not want to come in the open to address the gatherings because there was no connect between them and the students. None in the ruling leadership had fathomed the anger. Then the government panicked and leaders like Delhi chief minister Sheila Dikshit wanted to interact with the students squatting at Jantar Mantar, India's Hyde Park, but she was refused entry to the place. Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde,

belatedly, asked the political parties to make proposals, indicating that the Manmohan Singh government was at a loss.

Hurriedly, it appointed a probe committee and a judicial commission to suggest new, harsher laws. Former Chief Justice of India J. C. Verma was appointed to head the commission. I wish this process had been gone through after a joint session of parliament as demanded by the opposition. Then suggestions made by MPs could have been incorporated in the proposed laws. The nitty-gritty of improving the legal apparatus is all right up to a point. But what the government fails to realise is that its thinking is out of date. It is still stuck in the status quo while the youth wants parivartan (change).

The system is too effete to restore confidence in the majesty of law and to ensure protection to all, particularly women. The government's own record is poor. It has done very little to combat corruption which dominated the debate until a few months ago. To inspire confidence, the least that New Delhi could have done is to have made the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) independent. The agency continues to function at the whim of the ruling party.

One thing which has come as a surprise to me from the current protests is that the youth wants to remain apolitical. No notice

was taken of the presence of Aam Aadmi Party, born out of Gandhian Anna Hazare's movement to have Lokpal (ombudsman) at the centre to combat corruption. The youth seems to prefer people's movement to a political party.

I find that there is some awakening in the political parties too. They appear to have started introspecting their own conduct. From the statements they have made, it is evident that they want to rise above party considerations on violence against women. This evokes hope that the government and the opposition will reach a consensus on the steps to stop even molestation and eve teasing. The problem is the male. Without changing his mindset, there can be no gender equality. He still treats women as a thing of pleasure. His chauvinism has not lessened over the years as the remarks by some people's representatives, MPs and MLAs, made after the gang rape, prove. The society is seething with anger and wants immediate justice for which neither the police nor the court is prepared.

The younger generation of politicians may cleanse the environment. And it is heartening to see that the baton in Pakistan has been passed on to Bilawal Bhutto who now heads the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bilawal's speech on the fifth death anniversary of Benazir Bhutto, his mother, shows maturity at the age of 24. I believe he wrote the speech himself and denounced terrorism as well as dictatorship, which have not allowed Pakistan to come of age. Whether his sister would have been better is of the same type of debate which raged in India when Rahul

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Violent Economic “Reforms” and Growing Violence against Women

Vandana Shiva

Today the brave and courageous survivor of the Delhi gang rape breathed her last. This blog is a tribute to her and other victims of violence against women.

Violence against women is as old as patriarchy. But it has intensified and become more pervasive in the recent past. It has taken on more brutal forms, like the murder of the Delhi gang rape victim and the suicide of the 17-year old rape victim in Chandigarh.

Rape cases and cases of violence against women have increased over the years. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported 10,068 rape cases in 1990 which increased to 16496 in 2000. With 24,206 cases in 2011, rape cases jumped to incredible increase of 873 percent from 1971 when NCRB started to record cases of rape. And Delhi has emerged as the rape capital of India, accounting for 25 percent cases.

The movement to stop this violence must be sustained till justice is done for every one of our daughters and sisters who has been violated.

And while we intensify our struggle for justice for women, we need to also ask why rape cases have increased 240 percent since 1990s when the New Economic policies were introduced. We need to examine the roots of the growing violence against women.

Could there be a connection between the growth of violent, undemocratically imposed, unjust and unfair, economic policies and the growth of crimes against women?

I believe there is.

Firstly, the economic model focusing myopically on “growth”, begins with violence against women by discounting their contribution to the economy.

The more the government talks ad nauseum about “inclusive growth” and “financial inclusion,” the more it excludes the contributions of women to the economy and society. According to patriarchal economic models, production for sustenance is counted as ‘non-production’. The transformation of value into disvalue, labour into non-labour, knowledge into non-knowledge, is achieved by the most powerful number that rules our lives, the patriarchal construct of GDP, Gross Domestic Product, which commentators have started to call the Gross Domestic Problem.

National accounting systems which are used for calculating growth as GDP are based on the assumption that if producers consume what they produce, they do not in fact produce at all, because they fall outside the production boundary.

The production boundary is a political creation that, in its workings,

excludes regenerative and renewable production cycles from the area of production. Hence, all women who produce for their families, children, community, society, are treated as ‘non-productive’ and ‘economically’ inactive. When economies are confined to the market place, economic self-sufficiency is perceived as economic deficiency. The devaluation of women’s work, and of work done in subsistence economies of the South, is the natural outcome of a production boundary constructed by capitalist patriarchy.

By restricting itself to the values of the market economy, as defined by capitalist patriarchy, the production boundary ignores economic value in the two vital economies which are necessary to ecological and human survival. They are the areas of nature’s economy, and sustenance economy. In nature’s economy and sustenance economy, economic value is a measure of how the earth’s life and human life are protected. Its currency is life giving processes, not cash or the market price.

Secondly, a model of capitalist patriarchy which excludes women’s work and wealth creation in the mind, deepens the violence by displacing women from their livelihoods and alienating them from the natural resources on which their livelihoods depend - their land, their forests, their water, their seeds and biodiversity. Economic reforms based on the idea of limitless growth in a limited world, can only be maintained by the powerful grabbing the resources of the vulnerable. The resource grab that is essential for “growth” creates a culture of rape –the rape of the earth, of local self reliant economies, the rape of women. The only way in which this

“growth” is “inclusive” is by its inclusion of ever larger numbers in its circle of violence.

I have repeatedly stressed that the rape of the Earth and rape of women are intimately linked, both metaphorically in shaping worldviews, and materially in shaping women’s everyday lives. The deepening economic vulnerability of women makes them more vulnerable to all forms of violence, including sexual assault, as we found out during a series of public hearings on the impact of economic reforms on women organized by the National Commission on Women and the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology.

Thirdly, economic reforms lead to the subversion of democracy and privatization of government. Economic systems influence political systems. The government talks of economic reforms as if they have nothing to do with politics and power. They talk of keeping politics out of economics, even while they impose an economic model shaped by the politics of a particular gender and class. Neoliberal reforms work against democracy. We have seen this recently in the government pushing through ‘reforms’ to bring in Walmart through FDI in retail. Corporate driven reforms create a convergence or economic and political power, deepening of inequalities, and a growing separation of the political class from the will of the people they are supposed to represent. This is at the root of the disconnect between politicians and the public which we experienced during the protests that have grown since the Delhi gang rape.

Worse, an alienated political class is afraid of its own citizens. This is

what explains the increasing use of police to crush non-violent citizen protests as we have witnessed in Delhi. Or, in the torture of Soni Sori in Bastar. Or, in the arrest of Dayamani Barla in Jharkhand. Or, the thousands of cases against the communities struggling against the nuclear power plant in Kudankulam. A privatized corporate state must rapidly become a police state.

This is why the politicians must surround themselves with ever increasing VIP security, diverting the police from their important duties to protect women and ordinary citizens.

Fourthly, the economic model shaped by capitalist patriarchy is based on the commodification of everything, including women. When we stopped the WTO Ministerial in Seattle, our slogan was “Our World is not for Sale”.

An economics of deregulation of commerce, of privatization and commodification of seeds and food, land and water, women and children unleashed by economic liberalization, degrades social values, deepens patriarchy and intensifies violence against women.

Economic systems influence culture and social values. An economics of commodification creates a culture of commodification, where everything has a price, and nothing has value.

The growing culture of rape is a social externality of economic reforms. We need to institutionalize social audits of the neo-liberal policies which are a central instrument of patriarchy in our times. If there was a social audit of corporatizing our seed sector, 270000 farmers would not have

been pushed to suicide in India since the new economic policies were introduced. If there was a social audit of the corporatization of our food and agriculture, we would not have every fourth Indian hungry, every third woman malnourished, and every second child wasted and stunted due to severe malnutrition. India today would not be Republic of Hunger that Dr Utsa Patnaik has written about.

The victim of the Delhi gang rape has triggered a social revolution. We must sustain it, deepen it, expand it. We must demand and get speedy and effective justice for women. We must call for fast track courts to convict those responsible for crimes against women. We must make sure laws are changed so justice is not elusive for victims of sexual violence. We must continue the demand for blacklisting of politicians with criminal records.

And while we do all this we need to change the ruling paradigm which is imposed on us in the name of "growth", and which is fuelling increasing crimes against women. Ending violence against women includes moving beyond the violent economy shaped by capitalist patriarchy to nonviolent peaceful, economies which give respect to women and the Earth.

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anger and helplessness. One can only hope that the government's commitment to bring justice to the victim will be translated into action soon. Let the first few months of 2013 reassure the people that the agony that they endured would be replaced by satisfaction that new laws are in place to ensure that no offence against women will go unpunished.

I witness-

Sangeeta Das

I am appalled at the lop-sided relay of events and incomplete images being telecast by some of the news channels on TV, regarding the incident that happened at India Gate yesterday at around 5:30 PM.

I was there. We were all on the other side of India Gate towards the Dhyani Chand Stadium.

I think I need to paint the correct picture for the nation. Except for CNN IBN and NEWS X, most other channels are not showing the peaceful gathering. Thus it gives out the wrong message to the nation, to the politicians, to other women that there was violence.

There was no violence, no provocation...The police attacked without any warning. I have been through section 144 earlier. At least there should have been one warning issued to us to get up and leave, peacefully, before they started hitting us.

Naina Kapur, of Vishakha Guidelines fame, was there with me. Smita Bharti of Saakshi, an NGO working on Sexual Harassment on women, was there. Nafisa Ali was standing behind us, Arvind Kejriwal was sitting just two rows in front of me, Arvind Gaur of Asmita Theater Group was there asking all the people to sit down and listen to the talks.

There were about 200-250 girls and equal or more number of men of all ages. There were young girls, some children, families and some elderly people along with hoards

of photographers, journalists and reporters.

We were all sitting on the road peacefully and listening to the painful account, of the mother of 'Kiran Negi', a 3 yr old who has been brutally raped and disfigured and killed, by her attackers. Even the sloganeering had stopped.

Many young and old men of Delhi were standing around us in a 3-4 layer human chain to protect us from any hooligans or nasty elements. It was like a Chakravayuh.

Members of the Asmita Theater Group, including Mr. Gaur, were constantly walking around the circle. Young boys and girls of his team were repeatedly requesting and talking to people to not resort to violence, not to panic or run or throw stones, not to damage public property, and not to hurt or abuse the female protesters.

There were many volunteers distributing biscuits and water to every protestor.

We were talking to the 'Aam Janata' of Delhi on how to tackle the violence on women and children starting from ourselves, our homes and communities.

We were simply talking.

I had just finished my packet of biscuit when the police, hundreds of them from Delhi Police and RAF, charged at us from behind, without any warning.

They first attacked the men from behind, breaking their Chakravayuh. I stood up to see what the commotion was about, and immediately fell as most girls didn't get enough time to stand up. I hugged Smitaji as we fell on each other and there was a stampede over us.

Some of the men from the circle ran for their lives, but most of them ran towards us and hugged us and fell on us and took the initial blows of the Lathi Charge.

I couldn't see anything; I just heard the two cracks of a split bamboo stick on my back, butt and thighs. Then I heard the police screaming, Harazadiyon, Randiyo, and then I saw a boot kicking my knees and shin.

They hit Smitaji on her lower-back and spine. The boys of ASMITA, and some more men pulled us all up and all of them formed protection girdles around the girls to push us out of the range of the water cannons and charging men in Khaki and Blue.

Visibility was poor due to fog and tear gas; many girls were hit; even when we were running away and saying, "Ham jaa rahen hain, hame mat mariye",.... they were hitting the boys rampantly, constantly spitting abuses on the girls. Many women reporters were also hit and chased, their vans attacked, equipments broken. Some girls still managed to pull a few lathis and gave it back to the men. I don't know what happened to the children in the group and how the aunties in saris managed to run. I just hope they are all well.

There was not a single ambulance in sight; the entire C- Hexagon of India Gate was empty, barring the police. We walked for almost 45 min, as there was no way out from

the outer circle. Finally we managed to duck behind press vans and escaped via Shahjahan Road.

Do I look like a hooligan? Was I armed? Was I provoking the police or creating a nuisance? Was I resorting to violence, by sitting there and listening to, or sharing our personal grievances of Sexual harassment and assault? You judge for yourself.

Agreed, that in such gatherings, some nasty elements do infiltrate and create a ruckus, but the police didn't seem to have the basic sensibility to differentiate between hooligans and some young girls, children, and elderly people.

If the Delhi Police and RAF lack the basic cognizance to recognize

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Gandhi was nominated in preference to his sister, Priyanka.

I wish Rahul Gandhi would tear a page from Bilawal's book. The latter is clear and categorical in spelling out his ideology based on the values of liberalism and democracy. His particular mention of minorities' rights is a departure from the past dominated by bigotry and extremism. It is not to suggest that Rahul is not liberal or democrat. But his five-minute speeches do not give a peep into his thinking or his ideas for the future. This is important because he is the Congress party's candidate for prime ministership in the 2014 parliamentary election.

Both Rahul and Bilawal should join hands to fight against the brutalities perpetrated on women in India and Pakistan. The public in both countries feels helpless against the goonda elements. A girl was raped

the good from bad, what protection can we expect from them? Instead I thank the men of Delhi, the boys of Delhi, who helped all the girls to escape from the wrath of the Police.

I request the PM and the Home Minister to believe that "I, the woman of India," am not violent or the 'Shame of the nation'... that we have to be ashamed that the world is watching. I was not offensive. But I will definitely stand up again to defend myself, my mother, my daughter and my kind. Let the world watch.

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/sangeeta-das/i-witness-the-good-people-of-delhi/10151383785584595>
Monday, 24 December 2012 at 13:13

and brutalised in India but the nation could not save the girl's life. Malala Yousufzai in Pakistan had to escape the country because of Taliban's determination to kill her. Education for women was her demand which goes against the Taliban ideology. I believe that Malala wanted to come to India for medical treatment but the government was scared to let her in. She had to fly to London.

The fight for women's equal rights is a long and arduous journey and requires patience, courage and sacrifice. The society wants the youth to lead it because it has found the political parties failing. It wants a movement to give equality to women. People have felt appalled over the gang rape of the girl at Delhi and the stoning of Malala in Pakistan. Do Rahul and Bilawal have the commitment to the principle that men and women are equal? As for support, they can depend on the youth which has come of age.

Guilt

- Why I am culpable - The day molten grief could not mask years of our collective

Sujan Dutta

I learnt at the barricades today that the personal is the political. So I am culpable. Culpable of the gang rape and murder of a co-citizen.

I am culpable because I am a man. Because I have encouraged lewd jokes, sexist jibes and dirty talk about women.

I am culpable because I don't dare to stop the flurry of bad language around me every day, in almost every gathering, that have to do with genitalia, of wanting to do this to someone's mother or someone's sister, knowing fully well that it is not for the motherhood or the sisterhood but in the full knowledge that whoever she is, she must be a woman.

So I will say today from the police barricades of New Delhi and from among the tens of hundreds who walked on, sat on and slept on the roads and sidewalks of Jantar Mantar, that I am culpable of nurturing the environment and climate in which such torment can be inflicted on a girl.

I am culpable because as a student in Calcutta's Jadavpur University, I once cracked a lewd joke on an eccentric teacher who was so deeply engaged in scholarship that she did not care what she wore and how she looked.

I am culpable because I have shouted at my mother during quarrels, more than once: "Why are Bengali women so difficult?"

I am culpable because I have girlfriends who have taken abuse in male company that I could not strike out against not only because I was scared but also because I thought it was the done thing to meld into the environment.

So today at Jantar Mantar, I walked around looking for answers. Most over there were looking for answers themselves. It did look like men had outnumbered women in the many huddles from the crossing at Parliament Street right up to Kerala House. The huddles were discussing what to do next. What do I do to myself?

The huddle I watched most closely was the most rumbustious. A group of young men mostly in their twenties.

They were shouting the loudest. Around four in the afternoon, as they gathered and accosted a police officer with abusive slogans, a bottle fell out from someone's bag and broke on the road.

The smell of cheap whisky wafted at that barricade and the protesters dispersed. Earlier in the afternoon, that same group had rigged up a loudspeaker and said it was going to Sushil Kumar Shinde's house to demand the home minister's resignation.

Most of the crowd ignored them, assuming that they were in Jantar Mantar to provoke trouble. These men were not looking for answers,

having resolved that they shared none of my sense of culpability.

At a huddle under a tree, Yogendra Yadav, social scientist and guide to the Aam Aadmi Party, talked of inviting suggestions for what is to be done. He told the men and women around him that it was important to stay networked and they debated forming a forum of the disparate groups.

Near the crossing with Parliament Street, members of the CPM's All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) held a black badge demonstration and Brinda Karat accused the government of hoodwinking the public.

Between this group of the Left and another, also of the Left, I met Nidhi, who came from Greater Kailash-I with her daughter who will be old enough to vote in 2013. She had tried to calm down the gang that dropped whisky on a mournful gathering.

"We really need a strong leader to find a way out because right now we are all directionless," she said.

A fellow-traveller herself who has hit the streets but does not know where to go. So I asked if she meant a strong leader like Narendra Modi?

"You see, it is really for them to decide" — and she pointed to her daughter. "We have never given her any reason to be communal but then she is from a different generation —

they do not know of the (demolition of) the Babri Masjid (1992) or of 2002 (the Gujarat riots). If she thinks Narendra Modi is the man to vote for, she will.”

In the largest of the huddles, mostly of members of the CPIML (Liberation)’s front, the All India Students Association, the boys and girls had kept up a steady sloganeering. The rhythmic chants to the beat of two tambourines was drawing a large crowd that I was scanning for a familiar face. A woman walking from huddle to huddle with a placard that read “shamed” hanging from her neck crossed my path again.

The discussion here was whether the students should break the police barricades and head to India Gate tomorrow. But the debate on the fallout and costs of taking on the police was going to be long.

Beyond them, near the television outdoor-broadcast vans, the men and women who had gathered were demanding a “funeral with full state honours” for the girl who died this morning far away from home in the Singapore hospital. But the streets here are fed up with the tokenism of symbolism. That is why Jantar Mantar is today such a venue.

The hypocrisy of the demand is too much to digest. For four days now, I have had an understanding of just how skewered the girl was. There was a Safdarjung Hospital doctor at a gathering I went to earlier this week who is the friend of a friend.

Even through the tragedies of personal and professional life — I have covered three wars — that have by now put so much iron into

Moment of Profound Grief

Uday Dandavate

It’s a moment of profound grief for India. The 23-year old victim of mass rape in Delhi passed away in a Singapore hospital on Saturday. The Times of India called her Nirbhaya, meaning fearless. Until her last breath Nirbhaya demonstrated a will to survive. She wanted to come back home and make sure that the perpetrators of the heinous crime are punished. From her hospital bed Nirbhaya gave a detailed statement to the police. With her passing away, every Indian hangs his/her head in shame.

The news of this barbaric behavior brought thousands of angry protesters to the gates of Presidential palace and turned Vijay Chowk - the square connecting the Prime Minister’s office, Presidential palace and the Parliament house into a - protest venue.

For a nation in search of a righteous path to modernization, the mass rape in Delhi is a reminder of the dark realities of Indian society. Popular Bollywood actor and producer Amir Khan, brought focus on the need for social reforms through his TV serial Satyameva Jayate. Premiered on May 6th, 2012, the show highlighted issues such as female feticides, child sexual abuse, dowry, medical malpractice, honor killings, insensitivity towards the physically disabled, domestic violence, overuse of pesticides leading to pesticide poisoning, alcoholism, untouchability, plight of senior citizens and water crisis. India is today faced with a moment of truth as the world watches the developments with horror.

Aristotle once said, “At his best, man is the noblest of all animals; separated from law and justice he is the worst”. The mass rape in Delhi is only a symptom of a decadent culture evolved alongside an environment thriving on political patronage, which has scant respect for the rule of law. Liberalized India, especially in the cities, has turned its back on a culture of sacrifice and simplicity, and embraced greed, indulgence and arrogance. The mass rape in Delhi is a wake up call.

Survival of the planet and future of a nation depends on responsible behavior by citizens. Today we are witnessing clear signs of citizens raising their voice against oppressors and the corrupt; the real need, at the same time, is to fight the enemy within each of us. We need to pay attention to the moments when we discriminate against and deny justice to others on the basis of their gender, religion, race, skin color, age or caste. We need to be conscious of the example we set for our children when we endorse denigration of a woman in the media. We need to be careful about responding favorably to chauvinistic rhetoric from political leaders. Politics of identify is increasingly making us intolerant of diversity and sowing seeds of hatred and violent thoughts in the community.

It is also high time that the protectors of law are held accountable. The rule of law must apply equally to everyone. In Nirbhaya’s case the protectors of law must be held responsible, and the perpetrators of the crime must now

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face punishment for manslaughter. It is estimated that 60 percent of police force in Delhi is deputed for VIP security. This misuse of law enforcement resources needs to be checked. The nexus between politicians and the criminals needs to be broken. We cannot allow criminals to wander around the streets unafraid of consequences.

Nirbhaya's death must lead to consequences- for the perpetrators of the crime, for those who failed to protect her and for the VIP's who are cornering limited resources available for providing security to common citizens.

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the soul, that narrative of the girl's torment sits on me like a heavy burden of guilt.

Among the lost faces of Jantar Mantar today I have been looking for one to share that burden with. In Jantar Mantar and on television, for three days now, a phrase that has been overused is "change the mindset". But it has to begin with me.

It might, indeed, save me — men-folk like me — from wallowing in the depravity that we make. It might save me because it will make me more equal and not the ogre that I feel I have become.

So, at dusk, I crossed a line I have set for myself in journalism. Be the interested observer, not the story. As the candle-lit procession silently set out from Jantar Mantar I joined in as one of them.

And then I saw her at the barricade in front of Parliament Street police station. She was among the silent protesters. We were together for years. No longer so. But I want to tell her most of all: yes, I am culpable.

Liberty and Gun Culture

K. S. Chalam

Liberty, equality and fraternity, the three noblest values that the humankind had specified to eternity were originated in the French Revolution. It was on 26th August 1789 that the National Constituent Assembly of France had adopted them as part of Rights of Man and Citizen. It had profound influence on the course of history in different parts of the world particularly after the end of colonialism. The Constituent Assembly of India had also adopted Justice and the three values as part of its preamble to the Constitution on 26th November 1949. The notion of liberty is liberally being used now by some libertarians to argue against the confiscation of guns in the USA as an infringement of liberty as suggested by some, after the recent Newton school incident in Connecticut, USA.

In fact, the three values are inseparable and it is difficult to think about one without visualizing the remaining two. They are so interconnected. The present United States of America as a colony of the European nations won independence in 1776, and the people of France presented the Liberty statue to USA in 1886 as a mark of respect. We need to understand this background in order to appreciate the significance of the notion of liberty about which not only the Americans but their friends all over eulogize the freedoms they enjoy including the 'Gun culture'. Some of our Indian libertarians who would like to emulate the American values should recognize the costs involved in sustaining the system.

The history of the world became curious with the verve bestowed

by the French Revolution and the Enlightenment in Europe. The nations that were engaged in free trade and colonial plunder made schoolmen to reflect on the human condition and the future of civilization. In the area of economics or political economy, Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations was considered as a landmark that discussed the merits of exchange as an intrinsic value of self-interest. He was critical about the Mercantilists (including East India Co.) who used state power for protecting their activities and therefore expanded the concept of liberty to restrict the functions of the state to few activities. In this context, he had explained how "the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest". Under the same paradigm, J. S. Mill explained the boundaries of liberty from a utilitarian perspective (On Liberty).

The issue of liberty that was intensely debated during the 1980s under the aegis of World Bank is being raised again now in the context of Sandy Honk Elementary School shoot out where 27 children were killed. Barak Obama is seen deeply moved by the incident and seems to consider bringing reforms to contain the menace. There are protagonists who argue that control of right to possess and keep arms is a road to curtail liberty as guaranteed in the US Constitution. But, the so-called universal right to bear arms in the USA is related to the Second Amendment in the 18th century when there was no professional army. Therefore, an amendment was brought in to create an armed

citizenry as “a well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed”.

Unfortunately, the background and the circumstances under which the provision was made have not been reflected upon while deliberating on the liberty to hold arms. The primary function of a fire arm is protection. The argument goes on, that if everyone is armed the massacre would not have taken place. The religious groups argue that ‘if we don’t uphold sanctity of life at every stage, why bother at any stage (policy of abortion). Some have even gone to the extent of quoting Luke “let him sell garments and buy sword” to substantiate the argument that everyone should possess arms. It is surprising to find on the Net that someone has cited the private letter sent by Thomas Jefferson to his nephew Peter, “to advise the gun. While this gives a moderate exercise to the body, it gives boldness, enterprise, and independence to the mind. Games played with the ball and others of that nature, are too violent for the body and stamp no character on the mind. Let your gun therefore be the constant companion of your walks”. It is really preposterous of libertarians to quote a letter written about two hundred years ago when there was no armed militia/police to protect the people, to a period when America has emerged as super power to abrogate the status of universal police. Further, it speaks very lowly about the competence of American law and order machinery and the state itself. Yet, USA has 54 guns per 1000 population one of the highest in the world (while 15.65 crore applications are pending).

The Social Contract theory has also appeared during the same period

as of the liberty principle. It was debated as to how individual liberties are to be subsumed to get protection under the state or even for the survival of a democratic state. Philosophers and scholars like Robert Nozick, Milton Friedman and others have argued for uncompromising priority for libertarian rights irrespective of the consequences. But, Karl Popper (Open Society fame) one of the defenders of liberty and the greatest philosophers of the 20th century has argued that society is a voluntary association of free individuals respecting each other’s rights and need to be governed by the framework of protection given by the state. Amartya Sen has addressed the issues raised by these scholars in his “Development as Freedom” to explain that expansion of freedom is both a primary end and also the principal means of development. In this context, he has drawn our attention to Marx’s insistence that rights cannot really precede the institution of state. Contesting the western view of Asian values as authoritarian, Sen has eminently illustrated how Ashoka was a universalist, Confucius did not recommend blind allegiance to the state and Gautam Buddha’s emphasis on ‘the middle path’ to tell the westerners that India as an ancient civilization had all these values absorbed (with some exceptions).

The paradigm of liberty seems to have originated in the Judaic conception of ‘sin’ and human dignity by birth with a colonial mindset of ‘white man’s burden of modernizing’ the non-whites. Scholars like Upendra Baxi opine that the invocation of rights as part of UNDHR is essentially Western. It has also some subtle arrogance to convey that they alone can liberate our minds and souls and in the process give us development. The social institutions

in the third world including the common property resources, family norms and values are useless, devoid of any merit to bring economic growth. Therefore, liberty as a value is necessary to strengthen the free market mechanism and property rights should be promoted to exploit the resources for our own benefit. Referring to late John Rawls, his friend at Harvard, Sen has joined issues with him on ‘priority of liberty’. Sen has stated that a persons’ ‘liberty should get just the same kind of importance (no more) that other types of personal advantages - incomes, utilities and so on -have’. The liberty and rights may have political significance and is possible to address them under procedural transgression. Therefore, one can think of the unfreedoms and deprivations even in advanced countries where health care, sanitary arrangements, clean water, functional education, gainful employment, social security etc led to movements like Occupy Wall Street in the recent period. Are the above issues really worthless to be considered as rights so that priority can be given to liberty and forget about the consequences?

The political and civil freedoms are constitutive elements of human freedom and are “a handicap in itself”. They are important to enrich human life through expansion of substantive freedoms that improve the elementary capabilities to avoid starvation, undernourishment, premature mortality etc. In fact Herbert Hart questioned the importance of personal liberties compared to economic needs of life and death. It is not the self-interest that guides the brewer, the baker or the butcher now but the persuasive mechanism of corporate market strategy. How can we think of giving priority of liberty to bear a gun that

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The rusted steel frame

Harsh Mander

In the early, relatively idealistic decades after freedom, there was significant public faith in the uprightness and political neutrality of the higher civil services. It was elite in social character, but considered sympathetic to minorities and the poor.

There was less engagement in development initiatives, but generally greater fairness in situations of communal violence, and some implementation of redistributive justice laws such as land reforms.

The image of the higher civil services plunged in the seventies, especially because of its supine submission to the injustices of the Emergency, but also because of the continuous erosion of its reputation for probity. The eighties saw its social base broadening, but also its far greater — and open — complicity in large communal and caste pogroms, and plummeting integrity. Since the 1990s, the expectation that loosening bureaucratic controls over industry and trade would curtail corruption is completely belied. Instead, the new commitment to globalised private markets has spawned an era of undisguised crony capitalism, and the ethic of public welfare has been abandoned as outdated and anachronistic.

In an important recent monograph by National Social Watch, scholar administrator NC Saxena, a public intellectual of great integrity and social conscience, diagnoses the maladies of India's higher civil services and suggests an imaginative range of possible prescriptions. Saxena worked for decades in

the trenches of public service as a civil servant, and applies to this experience the surgical insights of a razor-sharp mind.

Saxena is scathing in his assessment of the Indian bureaucracy today. It is “a troubled institution” riddled with “a lack of professionalism, the creation of redundant posts, unsatisfactory structures of reward and punishment, and an inability to deliver services adequately”. Postings are often “dictated by vested interest of mafia gangs, organised criminals, builders' lobby, contractors”. He observes that “over the years, whatever little virtues the civil services possessed — integrity, political neutrality, courage and high morale — are showing signs of decay”. Newer values emphasise “political loyalty, flexibility”, and several senior officials “have become a link between politicians and the business class”.

Today many civil servants in the course of their career “lose much of their dynamism and innovativeness, and end up as mere pen-pushers and cynics, with “stagnation in their intellectual capabilities”, “decline in self-esteem”, “disillusionment, pliability and corruption”. They have become agents of exploitation in a state structure which now (is)... authoritarian, brutal, directionless, and callous to the needs of the poor”. The Indian State is “being treated as a private property of those who are at the top, and this culture of using executive power for private gains has become the norm since then. So the Housing Minister thinks that all government houses and shops are her private property, and she can allot them to any one she liked, often for a

price. The Petroleum Minister thinks that he can distribute any number of petrol and kerosene depots at his discretion. An impression exists that the State of India is an open treasury that can be looted at will.”

Strong words, but Saxena is not alone in his withering assessment. Even the official Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008) is no less caustic: “the state apparatus is ... tardy, inefficient and unresponsive” with “most functionaries serving no useful purpose.... Corruption is all-pervasive, eating into the vitals of our system, undermining economic growth, distorting competition and disproportionately hurting the poor and marginalised citizens. Criminalisation of politics continues unchecked, with money and muscle power playing a large role in elections. ... Abuse of authority at all levels in all organs of state has become the bane of our democracy.”

Another official paper in 2009 brought out by the Department of Administrative Reforms in 2009 agrees, again with remarkable candour, that “the state and its apparatus, including the bureaucracy are treated not so much as a means of generating public goods but as a means of generating benefits for the particular group that controls the state”.

Saxena lays blame also on the people, who “have unfortunately accepted the position as fait accompli and resigned themselves to their fate. They too tend to seek short cuts and exploit the system by breaking rules or approaching mafia gangs

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Communal Riots Riots -2012

Asghar Ali Engineer

Like other years in the post-Gujarat era, this year too witnessed several riots and riot-free India remained just a dream. India is too vast and complex a country and one cannot expect uniform development all over the country. North, Central and Western India is far too sensitive to communal politics. South, it must be said, is less prone to communal violence though Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are more communally sensitive than Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

This year, as we will see, Assam witnessed a major communal violence between Bodos and Bengali speaking Muslims in Kokrajhar and other districts. After Gujarat it was indeed a major outburst of communal violence. Assam has certainly developed communally sensitive politics since AASU movement and Nelli massacre of 1983. U.P. too witnessed six riots after Akhilesh Yadav, son of Samajvadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav, took over after elections in U.P. in May 2012.

Only Bihar remained almost riot-free thanks to a new pattern of politics introduced by Lalu Prasad Yadav and continued by Nitish Kumar. Both need to be congratulated for making Bihar almost riot-free for a period of 20 long years. It is no mean achievement. They have carefully balanced caste and communal forces. One wishes Congress could learn a lesson from Bihar as the Congress Governments have never given us riot-free governance in the entire post-independence period. And of course BJP is the main culprit in promoting communal

politics in our country.

Maharashtra, which was governed throughout by the Congress except in 1995-2000 when it was ruled by Shiv Sena-BJP Government, has always been communally very sensitive state. This year too i.e. in 2012 the first reported riot took place in Maharashtra in Pachora on 22nd March though it was a minor one. Police reportedly displayed its usual bias and arrested mostly Muslim youth. It started with dispute between two fish traders, a Hindu and a Muslim and quite a few Muslim properties were burnt down.

Some disturbances occurred in Gaya (Bihar) when there was incident of stoning on *Ramnavmi* procession 2nd April 2012 but were immediately controlled by the district administration by lathi charging the crowd and firing in the air. Not much damage was done. This again shows that if administration is alert and state government has given proper instructions a riot can be easily controlled or prevented.

Sangareddy district of A. P. came under spell of communal violence on 29th March. Some Muslims were demonstrating outside the police station against image of Ka'ba having been desecrated. Police did not pay much attention to the Muslim demand and instead asked them to disperse. Hearing about the Muslim protest, it is alleged that members of RSS gathered together and started attacking Muslims, looting their shops, etc. The police, it is alleged remained mute spectator and took no action against the culprits. They neither protected Muslims and

their properties nor did they allow Muslims to protect themselves. The properties so damaged are estimated to be worth Rs.two cores.

It is also alleged that earlier a Muslim candidate was defeated by using communal and Reddy card in Mahboobnagar and the same is being used for Sangareddy also. With still more damages the total loss came to 3.2 crores. The oldest and biggest hotel of Sangareddy is Grand Hotel, pan shop and bakery. The owner Ishtiaqur Rehman, told the investigators that their establishment was looted while police officers watched silently. The police even beat up his brother and broke his leg. Mr. Rehman clearly mentioned the names of those who looted his hotel, the people belonged to the BJP and yet no action was taken.

Hyderabad, in A.P. witnessed rioting from 8th to 12th April. Needless to say Hyderabad Charminar area is extremely sensitive area and witnesses communal violence regularly. Both Ittihadul Muslimin and BJP compete with each other for Muslim and Hindu votes and their politics is communally oriented.

It all began with the priest of a temple noticing green colour sprayed on the wall of the temple and leg pieces of cow placed on the grill. The priest informed the local BJP corporator by about 7 a.m. and by 7-30 a.m. a crowd of locals gathered and the crowd swelled to 200 by the time police arrived with its dog squad. The crowd of agitated people started pelting stones at Muslim shops and houses in the area. Inmates had already left fearing for their lives. Violence continued and

spread to other areas as well. Two motor cycles were burnt and several buses were damaged.

There was lot of tension in the Charminar area and it became a national news. Also even as the situation in Saidabad-Kurmaguda-Madannapet areas was brought under control on 8th April, reports started coming of desecration of 6 more places of worship in different areas of Hyderabad – 4 Masjids and 2 temples between 9th and 12th April pointing to a clear and obvious conspiracy to foment communal violence by instigating religious sentiments of both Hindu and Muslim communities.

What was heartening was that religious leaders and elders of both communities condemned such misuse of religion and timely police action prevented major disaster waiting to happen. The fact that general elections and A.P. Assembly elections are going to take place just two years hence (2014) also played its own part. The Muslim grievance is that police had arrested more than 14 Muslim youth and only 4 Hindu and shown 28 Hindu youth absconding. The police maintained that still investigations were going on and these figures were not final. But certainly it shows the trend.

Next major riot took place in Kosi Kalan in Mathura District of U.P. This happened immediately after the victory of Mualayam Sing Yadav's party in U.P. Everybody was surprised that though SP had won with overwhelming Muslim support communal violence started no sooner than the Chief Minister was sworn in. Muslims thought they would be more secure and better protected under SP rule but something quite opposite was happening.

Everyone was greatly shocked by a major riot right at the beginning of SP's term. Some thought that

it was some kind of conspiracy either by those who were not given tickets or by those who lost power. Anyway it was a major riot and no explanation is forthcoming as to who was involved. Mr. Azamkhan visited the place and apologized for what happened and assured that those involved would be punished.

The riot started by a very petty incident. It was Friday and a drum filled with cold drinking water was kept outside the door of the Jami' Masjid. A Hindu came and put his hand in the drum and took water from it. It was on 2nd June just before Friday prayer. A Muslim from the mosque objected and an argument started and soon others got involved and rioting began in all its fury. Four persons died in this rioting. Of them one was Hindu and one Muslim and two unidentified charred bodies were recovered.

The fury of rioting was such that Additional Director General of Police Shri Yadav observed that "We have seen some riots, but I am seeing a whole locality rioting for the first time. This is why we think that someone was instigating them. We cannot rule out that this communal tension was created keeping in view the local body elections." Well whether it was due to local body elections or some much wider conspiracy the very beginning of the SP regime was marked by communal violence. Muslims were certainly disillusioned.

Among most sensitive cities in Gujarat is Baroda (Vadodra). Even very minor incident can cause major rioting in the city. On 11th June a minor incident of road accident brought two communities face to face and they started pelting stones and other missiles. The police rushed to the site lobbed teargas shells and resorted to lathi charge. Six policemen were injured and more

than 15 civilians were also injured. Several vehicles were set afire.

On 14th June Damnagar in Amreli, Saurashtra district got affected by communal violence when a piece of land was at the centre of controversy on which a temple was being built and Muslims claimed that it was land belonging to a cemetery (Qabrastan). They came face to face and fought each other. The two groups were armed with sticks, pipes and swords. Two rounds of private firing were also reported. Ten persons were injured four of whom were injured seriously and four shops were gutted.

On 24th June Pratapgarh, U.P. witnessed fury of communal violence between Dalits and Muslims took. A Dalit girl was gang raped though it is not clear by whom. This incident was too close to Kosi incident of early June for SP to be comfortable with. The Dalits of Pratabgarh collected near the Muslim locality and set fire to their houses. These Muslims are mostly weavers (Ansaris) and many men from this community work in Bhivandi. Many women and children would have died but for the fact that it was marriage season and many men had come from Bhivandi to attend marriages and they could save old men and women.

These men complained that the police just looked on and took no action against the rioters. The Circle Officer V. S. Rana was suspended for his partial role.

On 29th June Buldhana in Maharashtra came under volley of communal violence when some dispute in Sakher Kheda village behind the Dargah of Hazrat Dawoodshah Baba resulted in attack on two Muslims of which one died and the other was severely wounded. The person who died – Sheikh Taj – had objected to a stone being put in the small drain opposite the

Dargah. He was attacked by a crowd with sharp weapon and killed and near the Dargah there is a Hindu cemetery and often tension builds up and communal hatred is spread. Buldana is a sensitive district in Maharashtra. It is ridiculous that communal violence can break out on such petty issue. It shows how communal propaganda is doing damage to inter-group relations.

Next was the turn of Sahibabad in Ghaziabad district of U.P. On 8th July again a small incident of two motorcycles clashing with each other and some argument between Hindu and Muslim riders took serious form of communal clash in which one person was killed and several others injured, The Hindus belonged to Tyagi community and Tyagis entered into a Muslim locality and began attacking Muslim shops and houses. In this melee someone fired and one Tyagi boy was injured and died while being taken to Delhi. This further invited wrath of Tyagis and they took full liberty to attack and burn Muslim properties. Property worth crores of rupees was destroyed. If police had taken prompt action after initial events, things would not have taken such a serious turn.

On 13th July members of Tablighi Jamat from Delhi were visiting Sitapur in U.P. and were passing through the lanes and bye-lanes of Sitapur when the son of a Samajwadi party happened to pass that way and was riding on motorcycle. He had to wait because of crowd and began abusing Imam who was leading the Tablighi people. The crowd became violent and set fire to the house of Chandrakumar Singh, the S.P. activist; it is alleged the crowd set fire to some 13 motor cycles also. The S.P. activist also alleged that the violent crowd took away seven lakhs cash besides jewelry, T.V. set, etc. that were looted. Many Muslims

were named in the complaint.

In July itself Assam witnessed a major communal clash between Bodos and Muslims of Bengali origin. It began around 19th July though skirmishes between them were going on for several days. I have already written in detail about it when communal violence began on its causes etc. Suffice it may to say here that it was one of the most major riots in post-Gujarat riots of 2002. The difference is that in Gujarat about 2000 people were killed and Modi-led BJP Government was actively involved in committing the massacre but in Assam about 100 people were killed and Assam Government was not directly involved but was responsible by way of slow action.

Another significant difference was by way of number of refugees. In Gujarat loss of life was much higher but number of refugees was not as high as in Assam. It is estimated that in all there were four and half lakh refugees, both Bodos and Muslims but Muslims far outnumbered the Bodos. It was indeed a massive problem. Also they remained in some make-do refugee camps in very pitiable condition for more than three months. These refugees lost everything except clothes on their bodies.

The Assam communal violence made Indian Muslims once again very insecure like the Gujarat riots and in Mumbai during the month of Ramadan they took out a huge procession consisting of some 45 thousand people which resulted in violence on the streets of Mumbai in South Mumbai. Once again the atmosphere was charged with communal tension.

On 24th July Bareilly in U.P. witnessed another communal riot in which one person was

killed thanks to Kanorias (*Shivbhagtas* carrying *Gangajal* to Shiv Temple) when they insisted passing through a Muslim locality of Bareilly. Bareilly is a sensitive town. It is also a centre of Baareilly Muslims and there is also mausoleum of Hazrat Yusuf Razakhan, the founder of Bareilly School of Muslims. It had witnessed communal riots a few years ago which persisted for several days on the occasion of Prophet's birth day. Though no one was killed more than 20 persons were injured.

Next riot took place again in U.P. in Bijnor on 22nd September. The provocation came from a Panchayat which took place in Basta of Chandpur area of Bijnor district. The bars were completely closed after communal violence broke out. The police controlled the situation. Three persons were arrested for provocation from amongst the Panchayat members. It is said that a few days before communal clashes broke out some Muslim youth had beaten up son of Chandpur block Pramukh Surendra Kaur. She was former chief of Panchayat. A Panchayat was held in Basta and provocative speeches were made and then communal violence followed.

Next Ghaziabad again witnessed communal violence in which seven Muslim youth were killed on 15th September. These disturbances took place because some torn pages of Qur'an were found scattered. The protesting Muslim mob went to police station and it is alleged that they indulged in breaking furniture and setting fire. The police resorted to firing in which seven persons were killed.

The Qur'anic pages were found scattered on railway line and some objectionable things were written on these pages along with a mobile number. When someone rang on that number the person started

abusing and using vulgar language. And when the mob went to police station to take action, police did not act promptly and violence followed.

The Government has adopted tough attitude towards miscreants and has also announced Rs. 5 lakh for each of the dead. Action is being taken against guilty police officers also especially those who directly fired on Muslim youth and killed them.

We had minor communal riot in Raver and Jalgaon in Maharashtra too on the occasion of Ganesh festival when Hindus insisted on taking the Ganesh procession from a Muslim locality and Muslims took objection. The police did not allow procession to be taken out from there. Four houses were set to fire. Police has arrested 39 from one community and 41 from the other and thus controlled situation.

Akot in Maharashtra witnessed riots on 25th October when someone allegedly Muslims attacked Durga procession. Four persons were killed and Over 17 houses and 16 shops were and 10 vehicles were burnt. Burnt Muslims localities were very badly affected as various miscreants entered these localities and burnt houses and attacked people. A house caught fire by electrical malfunctioning according to the police authority and rumour spread that house was burnt the police intervened and Durga procession continued and idols were immersed. However, disturbances started again on Wednesday and Muslims suffered most. Many of them lost roof over their heads.

Next it was turn of Faizabad where communal violence broke out on 25th October. It was alleged that someone had broken the arm of a Durga idol. Obviously it was a deliberate conspiracy to start

communal violence there. Faizabad has a special place due to Ayodhya being very close. In fact Ayodhya and Faizabad are twin cities. Faizabad was on fire and it is said police deliberately came late. Even Fire brigade is reported to have delayed its arrival causing much more damage.

Even Bhadrassa, 18 kms. from Faizabad experienced communal disturbances. Eyewitnesses said even security forces became part of mob. Police role was very very partial and this too in SP regime in U.P. The *Indian Express* dated 10th November gave details of video footage showing the police in very bad and doubtful role. It was openly partisan. Radoli, otherwise a peaceful place near Faizabad also came under spell of communal violence. But in Radouli 10 policemen stood in rioters' way. Thus there are some policemen who are true to their salt.

From above account it would be seen that as usual most of the riots started on petty and sometimes personal quarrel and soon assumed communal shape. This is effect of constant communal propaganda. Secondly, with few honourable exceptions the role of police is very partisan and often they become part of the mob and even indulge in looting and plunder. It takes neither proper preventive measure nor does it control once riots break out

U.P. was very badly affected. Nine riots took place in eight months after Mulayam Singh Party came to power. Muslims were badly shaken that they voted for Mulayam Singh and Mulayam Singh hardly took any effective measures to control communal violence and made Muslims feel much more insecure. Mulayam Singh is strong on rhetoric and very weak in delivery.

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and politicians for favours". But solutions also lie potentially with the people: a "free press, judicial activism, and civil society action has emerged as a big corrective factor on the arbitrary use of executive power". In a later column, I will review some of Saxena's suggestions for reforming the civil service.

But how fair is his comprehensive indictment of the civil services today? My work on hunger, homelessness and mass communal violence takes me to distant corners of the country, where I have encountered many idealistic young officers, braving great odds in impoverished regions, often racked by conflict, trying to make a difference. There are among them unknown unsung heroes, sometimes courageously standing up for justice against their own governments who are complicit in communal massacres, corruption or forceful dispossession of poor communities. But still there is justice in Saxena's overall despair about the corrosion of India's steel frame, and its betrayal of its duties to the people of India and the Constitution. If it does not reclaim its mantle of defending the public good with courage, impartiality and integrity, its decline may be terminal.

—The Hindu

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lead to unintended consequences like killing hapless children? Is individual liberty superior to human life? Has human civilization not demonstrated in its long history the intrinsic worth of 'kindnesses as against animal brutality' (even they operate within their boundary)? Are we incapable of surrendering our little freedoms, being members of a society, to make our fellow humans comfortable and to reinforce the line between human and animal kingdom?



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The best and the worst

S. Viswam

A national, societal or a domestic crisis, they say, brings out the best and the worst in human beings. The December 16 gangrape of a young girl on board a running bus in New Delhi by six men proved to be a good reference point to test the saying. Hundreds of young men and women, and number of older citizens, deeply moved by the episode, are still to come to terms with it. This can be seen in the attendance at the India Gate venue in New Delhi of a large number of people daily. Many of them come with flowers to offer to the memory of the brutalised woman, many of them in rage over the incident, but all of them airing the view in public that the sacrifice of the woman should not go in vain. For the first time, a tragic event, none too flattering to the self-esteem of the citizenry, has served to unite the entire country in support of a common cause, namely, the ensuring of the safety and security of our womenfolk and girls. This development represents the surfacing of the best in human beings at the time of a crisis. Surprisingly, the government, usually distant and detached from public opinion, is moving speedily to strengthen the laws against rape, violence and abuse of women. At the

same time, another surprise, a court has already begun the trial of the six accused, one of them in the juvenile court since he is a minor. So keen is the public interest in the trial that the court could not accommodate the large number of visitors and had to evict them, and order the proceedings to be held in camera out of the view of the media.

That there is an urgent necessity for putting tough laws on the statute book is not disputed. Nor are there any wide differences over the common understanding and assessment that even the laws already in force and available to the law enforcing authorities are not being implemented. There is, to no one's surprise, wide consensus over the assessment that the police, all through the country, and in rural India in particular, are not sincere in using the law to punish the guilty. On the contrary, the police are known to collude with criminals, and more often than not, become criminals themselves. It is partly because of police indifference and its failure to protect the victims that the families of victims do not feel enthused about registering rape complaints. When the police refuse to accept FIRs, and instead, bully the

victims to stop pursuing the cases, what are the citizens supposed to do?

Between the lines

Communalism legitimized

Kuldip Nayar

Leave this aside. Another unfortunate aspect of the implementation of laws is the politician-police nexus which is a hard reality one witnesses in all parts of the country. The politician and those he supports get away with even major offences because the protection he offers the police, who in turn make the innocent the scapegoats and impose hardships on them. Several commissions have been appointed to look into the police functioning, but the reforms suggested by each of them are in cold storage. Now that the government says that it is alive to the problems that have been thrown up by the gangrape, one can only hope that the issue will be dealt with comprehensively and the nation will not have to agonise again as it did during the last few weeks.

Now, let us turn our attention to another development directly falling out of the horrendous episode of December 16. There have been a spate of statements and comments and reactions from a wide spectrum of the population. Put together, they represent the surfacing of the worst in our ranks. It is all the more unfortunate that many of those who have pontificated on the subject of women, crime against women, rape and violence against women happen to hold responsible positions or even public office. The RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, for example, incredibly enough said that rape is an occurrence only in India (urban) and not in Bharat (rural). He is among those who hold the view that women provoke rapes by venturing out of their houses scantily clad and emulating western dress habits.

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No doubt, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) is less rhetorical than before in its references to Muslims. There can be two reasons for this. One, the party has its eyes fixed on the scenario after the parliamentary elections in early 2014. It would need the support of secular parties to have a majority in the Lok Sabha, the lower house. Any adverse remark against the Muslims may cost the party and endanger its chances of constituting a viable coalition.

Two, the BJP feels that it can afford to give the impression of being liberal at a time when soft Hindutva has engulfed even the leftist parties. The Congress is seen steadily losing its secular credentials in the past few years. If any proof is needed, the Gujarat assembly elections gave it amply because the party never touched in its poll campaigns the ethnic cleansing which the state chief minister Narendra Modi had attempted in 2002 with the help of the BJP cadres and the police force. The Congress thought that it might alienate the Hindu vote by talking about the killing of Muslims during the election campaign.

This must have come as a shock to the Muslims throughout the country because they vote, by and large, in favour of the Congress. Yet, it must be the biggest dilemma of the Muslim community to find out which party is liberal. The radicalization of the community is not the answer, as it is happening. This would be used as an evidence to stigmatize the

community. Muslim terrorism has no chance against Hindu terrorism simply because of the numbers.

I realize that some Muslims out of desperation have taken to violence. But this is the path Hindu militant organizations like the Bajrag Dal, Ram Sena and Vishwa Hindu Parishad want the community to take. The guilt of these organisations has been proved from the bomb blasts at Malegaon, Ajmer and Hyderabad. Initially, the suspicion was on Muslims—as is the police practice—and the Muslim youth was picked up. At Hyderabad, they were beaten by the police. But a detailed investigation revealed a Hindu hand.

In fact, the random arrests of Muslim youth are the biggest worry of the community. A delegation, including Hindus, has met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to seek remedy. His promise to take action has lessened the number of Muslim youth's detention, but the community is far from satisfied. Many Muslim young men are still rotting in jail, awaiting their cases to be posted for hearing. Worst is the loss of their years which could have been utilized in pursuing higher studies or doing some useful work.

Had there been accountability, such chauvinist deeds by the police would not have taken place. Young men have been released when law courts have found that there is no evidence against them. Who made the mistake? Who is responsible

for illegal arrests? He should be punished if the impression that the Muslim youth was picked up without any rhyme or reason is to be removed.

I am more worried about the increasing distance between Hindus and Muslims. True, they have no social contact with one another. But the give-and-take attitude is languishing. The only redeeming factor is that there has been no major riot after the Gujarat carnage. This does not mean that the country has managed to curb communalism. Assam is a recent example.

I was recently in Kerala. I found even the leftists contaminated. This is one state where Christians are spreading their arms as the Hindus and Muslims are doing at the expense of amity. Strange, the best of economic ideology fails when the feeling of religious superiority takes over. In our backyard, Uttar Pradesh, small communal riots have taken place in hundreds. The media has not given them any publicity. In fact, it does not talk about communal riots unless they are really big ones.

On one hand is the example of Delhi where students of all castes and religions came together to protest against the gang rape of a 23-year-old girl and showed that when it was the question of resisting tyranny, all were together. On the other, a procession through a "wrong" route brings out swords from sheaths.

I really believed, like the Congress leaders Abul Kalam Azad and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, that communalism was the creation of the British and it would go after they had quit. But I have been proved wrong. The same type of madness which I

saw before partition is just below the surface even now. The political parties bring that frenzy to the fore if and when they find it advantageous to them in elections or some other occasions. Even after 65 years of independence, secularism has not taken roots. What it boils down to is that the spirit of accommodation is drying up.

One way to give secularism a chance is to punish those who in any way harm it. The destructors of the Babri masjid are yet to be punished. In the same way, Modi has not been touched for the killing of 3000 Muslims. Convenience or pragmatism comes in the way and the guilty go scot-free. But imagine the effect it has on the Muslims. The BJP chides the Congress for its complicity in the 1984 killings of Sikhs and the Congress gives it back to the BJP by spelling out what happened in Gujarat. As debating points, the two happenings carry weight. But, what about secularism, India's ethos?

I have an uncomfortable feeling that communalism is getting legitimacy. More and more people are turning fanatics. Even the police or the other security forces have not escaped contamination. Little do they realise that democracy has no meaning if pluralism is not there. Hatred and bias have to be eliminated from body politics, if democracy has to survive.

I am amazed that Akhruddin Owasi in Hyderabad could dare to give a virulent speech to communalize the atmosphere. I am equally astonished that the crowd cheered him. He has no place in a country like India because such people are striking at the very roots of secularism. Whatever the

limitations, India is determined to walk the path of secularism. There cannot be any compromise on the basics.

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Vibha Rao, head of Chhattisgarh's state women commission, has said that women invite men's attention by their dress and boldness and hence they must be held as responsible for the offence as the rapist. The worst comment is, wonder of wonders, from Asaram Bapu, a spiritual guru with a large following, making wild statements bordering on the absurd and shocking. For instance, this gentleman would want women about to be raped or otherwise humiliated, to catch the feet of the rapists and call them her brothers instead of trying to protect themselves as effectively as they can. There have been many other equally absurd and bizarre comments from those who should know better. They all reflect an antediluvian and anachronistic mindset that has no place in modern India of the 21st century. More than changing laws, changing the thinking of our netas seems more necessary and urgent.

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By

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How to address a social evil?

K. S. Chalam

The recent appalling incident of gang rape in Delhi has shaken the conscience of the whole nation. Though Delhi has witnessed several such incidents in the past including the brutal Geeta and Sanjay Chopra kidnapping, raping and killing in 1978, the present episode has happened in a capital city of a country that is projected as the so-called future power house of the world. The news of the incident spread like wild fire and there were wide ranging protests from different quarters of the social spectrum. The influence of electronic media on the impulsive reactions of people in the urban areas on sensitive issues like this now is different from the 1980s. It needs to be dispassionately discussed and solutions for a permanent eradication of the evil are to be sought by everyone. There is no doubt Indian legal frame work has been subjected to change and reform time and again on the basis of public demand and on its own introspection. There are several structures which are in place including the Law Commission, Women's Commission and so on. But, the present incident is to be reckoned under the growing awareness of the people about the Human Rights and the vigilant civil society activists and the role of netizens.

The incidences of rape are much higher in countries like South Africa, USA and elsewhere in terms of the number, but the Indian situation appears to be different from them not only in terms of levels of literacy and cultural differences but also the social phenomena of

otherworldliness and the belief system that the perpetrator would meet his "karma-fala" subsequently. Along with this fatalistic attitude to life, the social division of society as castes or communities and within each group as ruling and ruled (or servitude groups) has made many perpetrators of crimes of rape as casual and relaxed.

Rape or gang rape is a social issue as it involves several actors in the process as seen in the Delhi episode. The subtle belief that certain groups are meant for the pleasure and service of the dominant groups or individuals has further complicated the matter. Those who are not familiar with the rural and tribal life and society do not understand this phenomenon and fail to appreciate why this is also happening in the cities. It is a known fact that majority of the migrants are from the rural areas carrying with them not only their physical bodies but also the mindset that was insensitive to such incidents as they are almost universal against certain groups in the villages from where they migrate. The issue of Khairlanji in rural Maharashtra of Bharat is a well known case about which the so-called civil society never bothered except the dalits. This is not to cite the social institutions like Devadasi system which may be a social contract to protect them for the service rendered to the dominant. This should not be confused between the private contract of a male and female agreeing to live together as wife and husband sometimes in a patriarchic bond. In fact, the perpetuation of

crimes against women, particularly against some of some social groups either in the villages or in cities (the present Delhi case may be an exception) are a fall out of the belief system and the believers in such institutions. The Indian state has done lot of introspection and brought several legal instruments to deal with the aberrations of a bygone era. Yet, we see today there is no change in the crime against women if we go through the statistics maintained by the department of Home. Therefore, the creation of new laws or reform of existing ones, relating to rape in the Indian context, need to be examined from a holistic perspective rather than a momentary reaction to a genuine emotional outburst.

Keeping the above issues in mind, we may discuss the following for a meaningful consensus to arrive at on the proposed changes.

Some Suggestions

1. The IPC 375 has defined rape and it has been further elaborated with new concepts and ideas like custodial rape, marital rape and sexual intercourse. The women's organizations are not happy in the use of terms like "Eve Teasing" rather they wanted to use terms like sexual abuse or crime in such incidents. This may be considered as important input since it is loaded with important messages.
2. In most of the cases, the investigative agencies are not in a position to obtain concrete evidence as per procedures

and precedents that results in prolonged litigation leading to exasperation of the victim. It is therefore, necessary to strengthen the infrastructure like forensic labs that deal with cases of this kind and may be split to have units exclusively to deal with cases of this nature so that immediate disposal of the cases can be made possible. There is explosion of technology and it is possible to find out from the experts particularly from biotechnology and related fields to devise methods to find out techniques to nab the culprit instantaneously.

3. As of now, the victim is supposed to go to the police station to report and it is almost a torture for the victim to narrate such incidents if a lady constable is not present. Is it not possible to take the investigating team to the place of incident or to the victim along with the electronic gadgets to record and communicate the same to the station if necessary instantaneously to snitch the culprit?
4. The Law and Order enforcement agency can also think of a special team consisting of only women from the local community representing different caste groups so that the victim can directly go to them and report. The group should be given a statutory status to produce their evidence as legal.
5. As in the advanced countries like USA, student volunteers are to be named and equipped to deal with such cases not only on the campuses but also elsewhere

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Say No to Nuclear Energy

Neeraj Jain

The plain truth about nuclear energy is – it is not safe, clean and green. On the contrary, it is, to use a phrase in the Bhagwad Gita, a ‘Destroyer of Worlds’. Nuclear energy is generated in a nuclear reactor when nuclear fuel (uranium 235) kept in the reactor core is split up, releasing huge amounts of heat. This heat is used to produce steam, which in turn is used to drive a turbine to generate electricity.

During this fission process, more than 200 types of new, highly radioactive elements are created. The reactor core of a 1000 MW nuclear power plant contains an amount of long-lived radiation equivalent to that released by 1000 Hiroshima bombs! Many of these radioactive elements will continue to emit radiation for thousands of years. The impact of this radiation on the human body is deathly: it causes cancer, infertility, premature aging, kidney problems, and several other diseases, and also mutates the reproductive genes – causing all kinds of diseases and birth deformities in future generations.

Even if nuclear reactors operate normally, their environmental costs are terrible. People living near the reactors are inevitably exposed to radiation leakages: the diabolical elements created in the fission reaction leak out of the reactor into the environment through a number of ways. The consequence: they will continue to suffer from cancer and other deathly diseases and children will continue to be born with mental and physical deformities

for thousands of years!

An even more monstrous problem is the problem of waste disposal. Each 1000 MW nuclear power plant generates 30 tons of radioactive waste annually. This waste contains elements like Plutonium and Technetium, and is intensely radioactive and remains so for more than 2 lakh years! There is no safe way of storing these deadly wastes; they are generally stored in temporary storage sites near the reactors. Everywhere, the waste is leaking, leaching, seeping through the soil into aquifers, rivers and seas, to ultimately enter the bodies of plants, fish, animals and humans. Its consequences are going to be with us for the rest of time!

Accident-prone

Finally, because of the complex nature of nuclear technology, nuclear reactors are inherently prone to accidents. No amount of safety devices can prevent them. This was eloquently brought out in a report by some of the world’s most distinguished scientists presented to the European Parliament in 2007 which examined the safety records of nuclear plants in several countries. They came to the stunning conclusion that “since Chernobyl, catastrophe has, on several occasions, only narrowly been avoided.” In other words, sooner or later, a catastrophic nuclear accident was bound to happen, and it happened in Fukushima. An accident needs a reason; the earthquake and tsunami happened to be it. Even after Fukushima, if we still do pay heed

and do not shut down each and every nuclear reactor all over the world, sooner or later, another catastrophic accident is bound to happen again, in one of the world's 430 operating reactors.

Sun Setting on Nuclear Energy

Because of these terrible effects, most countries around the world have stopped building nuclear plants. The US has not ordered a new plant for nearly 40 years now, since October 1973, and Canada since 1978. A majority of countries of Western Europe have banned nuclear power plants. After Fukushima, countries which had nuclear plants, like Germany and Switzerland, have decided to close down their existing nuclear reactors too.

Three months after the Fukushima accident, on July 13, the Japanese Prime Minister, in a television address to the nation, stated that Japan should learn from the disaster and called for a complete phase-out of nuclear power. He stated: "Through my experience of the March 11 accident, I came to realise the risk of nuclear energy is too high. It involves technology that cannot be controlled according to our conventional concept of safety."

But Not in India!

The huge scale of the Fukushima disaster has however left the Indian government and nuclear establishment unfazed. It is determined to implement its ambitious plans for a quantum jump in nuclear power generation, from 4780 MW at present to 63,000 MW by 2032. Two Russian-built 1000 MW reactors are nearing completion in Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu; a powerful people's movement has prevented them from getting commissioned. At Jaitapur, in

Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra, the government is proposing to import six giant-sized, 1650 MW, reactors from France. It is also planning to set up massive nuclear power parks in the coastal areas of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. Six to eight reactors, of 1000-1650 MW, will be installed at each nuclear park.

To prove the safety of India's nuclear program despite the massive tragedy in Japan which has brought out in grim detail the dangers of nuclear energy, India's nucleophiles are making the most outrageous statements. For instance, they are claiming that India's reactors are of superior design and our safety record is better than Japan's! The truth is that India's Department of Atomic Energy and its subsidiary, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India, are notoriously inefficient and completely untrustworthy. They have built and operated their much smaller 220 MW reactors so carelessly that nuclear experts worldwide have labelled them the "least efficient" and the "most dangerous in the world". There have been hundreds of accidents at India's reactors! Some of these, like the accident at Narora in UP in 1993, very nearly led to a Chernobyl-like meltdown. And now we are entrusting these organisations with the responsibility of supervising the construction and subsequently of operating imported reactors five to seven times bigger than the reactors presently installed in the country!

To make matters worse, bowing to pressure from its foreign nuclear plant suppliers, the government of India has passed a Nuclear Liability Law, indemnifying foreign equipment suppliers of all liabilities in case of an accident in a reactor supplied by them!! If indeed nuclear

energy is as safe as the government and the nuclear industry is claiming it to be, why this law?

Combine all this, and it is obvious that we are heading for a huge catastrophe. If an accident were to happen at Madban, in the minimum entire Western Maharashtra, including Pune, would be contaminated; and if it happens at Kudankulam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu would have to be evacuated! Are we going to allow this?

Alternative Solution

As the people of Japan are now learning through bitter experience, how can a technology which can be so devastating be called sustainable? The genuinely safe, and actually the only environmentally sustainable solution, to the country's energy crisis and our future growth needs is: maximizing energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources. Through measures such as increasing generation, transmission and end-use efficiency, it is possible to reduce electricity demand by a whopping 30-40 percent! That would not only wipe out the entire power sector deficit in the country which is less than 20 percent, there would be no need to build new power plants for the next few years!! But just taking efficiency improvement measures would not be enough, as efficiency improvement often leads to an increase in demand. Therefore, along with improving efficiency, it would also be necessary to curb demand by imposing curbs on luxurious and wasteful consumption of electricity. In that case, our future growth needs can easily be met from renewable energy sources. Even the government admits their potential to be: Wind Energy - 48,500 MW; Small Hydro Power - 15,000 MW; Biomass Energy - 21,000 MW; and at

least 50,000 MW from Solar Energy. The actual potential is much much more. Furthermore, while nuclear electricity costs are rising, renewable energy costs are rapidly falling: wind energy is already cheaper than conventional electricity; solar photovoltaic energy costs are rapidly coming down, are already much cheaper than nuclear electricity, and are expected to become cheaper than grid electricity costs by 2015-20. Even if construction begins now, it would take at least 10 years to build a nuclear power plant. By then, it would have become unviable.

The Real Reason for Nuclear Push

Why then are India's rulers indulging in this madness of constructing nuclear power plants? One important reason: to provide foreign corporations and big Indian corporations another opportunity to make huge profits. Ever since 1991, when the government began the globalisation of India, successive governments have been running the Indian economy solely for maximising the profits of giant foreign and Indian business houses – through schemes like SEZs, privatisation of public sector corporations and financial institutions at throwaway prices, allowing them to plunder mountains, forests and rivers for their immense mineral wealth displacing lakhs of people, allowing them to take over education, health and other essential services and mint super profits, and so on. With nuclear power on decline in the West, the global nuclear industry is looking to Asia, especially China and India, for markets. And so the Manmohan Singh government has decided to promote nuclear energy in India. This is expected to provide foreign nuclear corporations and their Indian collaborators a \$150 billion business

opportunity. India's rulers have sold their souls to the devil for a price that would have shamed Faust!

Friends,

At each and every place in the country where the government is proposing to set up nuclear plants – Kudankulam in south Tamil Nadu, Jaitapur in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, Gorakhpur in Haryana, Chutka in Madhya Pradesh, Kovvada in Andhra Pradesh and Mithivirdi in Gujarat – people are waging determined struggles. These peoples' struggles are not for getting a better compensation package from the government. The people of these regions are actually fighting for all of us, for the people of the entire country. They are demanding that the nuclear plants be scrapped. They realise that if the government of India continues with its diabolical

nuclear program, sooner or later, a major nuclear accident is bound to take place in one of our nuclear reactors. And if that happens, its costs are going to be so huge that it will destroy India.

We must support these struggles. Young and old, students and teachers, working people, all of us must join these struggles and demand of the government of India:

1. Scrap the Kudankulam and Jaitapur nuclear power projects! Scrap all new nuclear power plants.
2. Phase out all existing nuclear plants at the earliest.
3. Invest massively in energy saving and development of renewable technologies.

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when a report or information is received.

6. It is not only the perpetrators of sexual abuse but also the abettors are responsible for the increase of rapes and crimes against females of different age groups in India. We cannot overlook the terrible impact of the cinema, media and social norms and institutions that promote directly and indirectly such anti-social impulses among youth. We need to devise mechanisms to deal with the increasing menace emanating from them
7. There seem to be some discussion about the age of the juvenile offender. If the boy is competent and potent to commit rape, is it not a sufficient condition to declare him as adult and all the provisions of law should be made

equally applicable to him. An amendment to the rape law or juvenile law can be brought in accordingly

8. There is a need to look at the curriculum of schools not only to sensitize the students but, more than students, the teachers and their training to convert them as the mentors and guardians of students while they are in the school or college. The punishment for any criminal activity on the part of the teacher should be no less than removal from service through a due process of investigation.
9. Are we not aware of the fact that most of the newly emerging evils in our society are a byproduct of the policies that we have adopted in recent times? Can we do something about it or feel helpless?

An Equal Society

D. K. Giri

Equality between human beings, irrespective of their differences in social, political, cultural, physical, or economic conditions is the key value for a Democratic Socialist, for any progressive person in public life. It is also the main guiding principle for building a just, fair and harmonious society. Inequality in societies have been accepted and interpreted by many thinkers as “given”. To quote a few, Darwin suggested that “it is the survival of the mightiest or fittest”; Karl Marx said, “man exploits man”, in societies that are known by different classes and inevitable struggles between them.

Some would say, people are born unequal, so one cannot treat them all equally. So how do we understand and adopt the concept of “equality” as the key organising principle for a society? What do the people think about equality and what should we do about it.

Inequalities and Conflicts

It is beyond doubt that treating people unequally or exploiting the inequalities created or inherent in societies leads to conflict, then to violence, which destroys peace and harmony, retards growth and development. All conflicts in societies arise out of inequalities when some people treat other people as inferior, outsider, not one-among-them and so on. Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Jews treat each other as enemies; men treat women as weaker sex and exploit them, so the conflicts occur between social groups, ethnic categories and economic groups called classes,

regional entities and so on. If we wish to avoid conflicts, we must treat fellow human beings as equals despite difference in sex, abilities, rank and status, etc. Some thinkers argue that when people are inherently unequal, one cannot treat everyone equally. There is a point in this; in equal treatment, rich or powerful will be privileged and the weak and poor will be deprived. So it is said, “if you treat everyone equally, you are treating some people unequally.” That is why we have preferential treatment for the weak, marginalised and vulnerable; that is why there is preferential quotas in jobs, economic support by the state, in order to create equal conditions for people to pursue their aspirations, and avail the life chances; to create the level playing fields. This begs another strategic question on equality, which is: equality of what?

Conditions or Outcomes

Orthodox Socialists would argue that we can have a just society only when we have equality of outcomes. This means people have same income, same services in health, education, housing and other infrastructure. The entrepreneurship, differentiated skills of individuals will have opportunity to flower, but will not be rewarded by economic gains but will generate social goods for common use. Society will be richer, healthier and will grow collectively, where citizens individually will enjoy the same benefits. Others would contest this strategy as untenable, too idealistic to achieve. This will also kill initiative, entrepreneurship and growth, they

say, arguing that unless people are rewarded for their extra-work, creativity, they will not strive for more. This is where Marx’s unique concept of ‘economic determinism’ comes into play. We cannot ignore the drivers, mainly economic ones, for people’s activities for growth, of course the fruits of that growth can be redistributed for creating equal conditions in the society, and looking after those who cannot manage by themselves due to inherent inabilities. One could divide people into at least four categories in their attitudes to inequality and policies to mitigate it. Traditional equalitarians who support measures to tackle inequality at all levels; traditional free-marketeers, who oppose measures to tackle inequality at any level, both at the top and the bottom; the middle class, will support in a limited way taxing the rich, but not really alleviating the poor, and finally the progressives, who will support at all levels, I would call them Democratic Socialists, who support measures to tax the rich, they have more positive attitude towards those at the top than the traditional equalitarians, without having negative attitudes towards those in poverty or being opposed to tackling inequality at the bottom.

Attitudes to Equality

What are some of the popular attitudes to the question of equality? It will be useful, in formulating an ideological platform, to conduct a survey on people’s attitude towards inequalities. On the basis of secondary data, one could somewhat map ‘the moods on high salary,

super-rich, income gap, progressive tax and benefit system, low-incomes, quality of life for all, and living with some inequalities. Most people support high salaries in general as they tend to believe that these are “deserved inequalities”, meaning people earn, these on the basis of ability, effort, performance, etc. The egalitarians and the austere would say people do not deserve such high salaries and they do not need it. However, the argument in favour of high salary remains that it is a reward for excellence and entrepreneurship. Although people may support salary differentials, people support tax and benefit system and other redistributive policies on the ground of fairness and equality. People will support distributive policies based on ‘progressive universalism, where the coverage of benefit is wider. But, when it comes to unequal life chances due to historical conditions, people support targeted interventions to improve life chances for disadvantaged population. In order to build a consensus on tackling income equality, there has to be explicit admission of the fact that some inequalities will exist. And attempts must be made to improve quality of life in general. While tackling the negative effects of inequalities like crime, terrorism, instability, improvement in quality of life for all should be the goal through egalitarianism. The quality life calls for debate about the social and economic values that guide and direct a society, not just materialism and consumerism we experience today.

Equality of Life

If there is enough feeling of solidarity for redistribution for progressive taxation, why there is so much inequality to-day? Why are we in a situation, when we

blame people who do not achieve in a world of infinite possibilities? We tend to emulate those who achieve. We do not stand up for the poor because he is a loser. By taking economic criterion alone we cannot possibly bring about the quality of life. This is where Marx failed. We need to see life in many other dimensions, sociability or social capital, cultural expression, freedom of thought, expression and belief, the freedom to be different and so on. That is how we can measure peoples’ well being. The newest dimension is environmental security. Having clean environment cannot be compensated by economic prosperity. So, the equality of life can be secured by redefining the quality of life.

Equality and Diversities

Equality is often confused with uniformity which militates against diversities. This is a debatable point, especially in countries like India where diversities are seen as an impediment to equality. A lower caste, a person of other religion, or region is treated inferiorly. For historical reasons, in India lower castes are also the poor class, hence the caste is synonymous with class. That is how Indian policy makers have sought to create equality by adopting affirmative action for the lower castes/class. This has, while providing distributive justice to certain castes, made ‘caste’ a category for political mobilisation. This also has brought other diversities into conflict with the notion of equality. Concepts and practices of secularism or multiculturalism have not helped the process of equality building. The way out of this is to separate citizenship and identity. These two distinct concepts are confused in India in our desperation for national integration. For policy

making and governance, these need to be separated. One could have multiple identities on the basis of language, religion, region, etc. but has single citizenship. In dealing with an individual, citizenship should override all other identities. Such strategy will preserve secularism, nationalism (on the basis of citizenship) and multiculturalism. Any social-cultural identity should be respected, preserved unless it conflicts with citizenship values and responsibilities. Indian society is not only diversified – it is also hierarchical and communalised. An individual is perceived, and reacts only in relation to his or her community. Communitarianism cuts both ways, it fosters intra-community solidarity, but at the same time, it suppresses individualism and independent action by citizens. Therefore a balance needs to be maintained between individual and the community.

Conclusion

Most of the positions taken by Indian policy makers are a balance, compromise or conciliation between two contrasting views. Life is not seen in terms of binary opposites, but a middle path. This is understandable and desirable, as there is room for many options, not only black and white. But how to draw this balance and who does it is critical. The integrity of persons maintaining this balance is often questioned as the scale seems to be fitted to one side or the other. Therefore, in addition to maintaining the balancing act, a clear understanding, definition of political categories (citizens) and social-cultural categories (identities) is important. While making policies, utmost care needs to be taken to see whether such policies promote or

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Death of Congress in Andhra

Y.V.Reddy

YSR Congress party has come up recently after the sad demise of Y.S Rajashekar Reddy. He was the Congress Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh (AP) from March 2004 to September 2009. He was killed in a helicopter crash in September 2009. His son, Jagan Mohan Reddy, Jagan for short, a new member of parliament by then, in his late thirties, more a budding industrialist at that time wanted two things. One was that he aspired to step into the shoes of his father as AP's CM. Two, he wished to visit the families of those who died of shock at the unusual death of his father. It is true that YSR won the hearts of the common people, the poor, the downtrodden, through several welfare measures by which they were touched as never before. Even if the Congress high command turned down the first on account of his being a greenhorn in administration, they couldn't have objected to the second as it impacted the family sentiment. The high command, is incidentally, neither high-minded nor in command of the situation. The issue was thoroughly mishandled. Jagan, his mother and sister were deeply hurt after the *tete-a-tete* they had and felt spurned by Sonia Gandhi at her residence in Delhi. The situation could still have been saved, if the sensible Veerappa Moily, the then in-charge of AP affairs, had been left free to handle the situation. He tried to assuage their feelings by giving a formal nod to the 'Odarpu Yatra', to which Jagan felt an unstoppable surge, in fulfillment of the pledge he took at the place where his father's remains were found. It was Ahmed Patel

that queered the pitch for Moily by complaining to Sonia who promptly put her foot down on the Yatra. If only she had heeded Moily, their man on the spot, Jagan could still have continued in the Congress, though waiting in the wings for an opportune moment to be anointed CM.

The state government is directionless, swaying to the mood of the day ever since YSR died. However urgent the problem, the state government left the whole business of thinking to their masters in Delhi at 10 Janpath. The state rulers behaved as if their business is "not to reason why...but to do or die." The result was that the Congress in the state was rendered bereft of any value or dignity in the eyes of the electorate. Contingents of MPs, Ministers, and MLAs had dawn only jeers and suppressed smiles.

Those dealing with the problems of the state from Delhi were only shooting themselves in the foot. The response to KCR's fast for a separate Telengana, for instance, was Home Minister, Chidambaram's mid-night declaration in parliament, conceding the demand which infuriated other parts of the state. Srikrishna Commission was a wise decision but its report was left on the shelf. The vacuum created in the party by the death of YSR and the exit of his son Jagan was sought to be filled by luring Chiru and his party into the congress, on the daft assumption that the 15 percent vote that his party polled in the 2009 general election would automatically shift

with him to the Congress party. It is an over-simplification of the caste calculus that had prompted them to woo Chiranjeevi and his flock. The central managers also did not have a proper idea of YSR's hold on certain segments of the public in the state which incidentally included the traditional vote banks of the Congress. To equate Chiranjeevi in politics with YSR is an egregious blunder. And that Jagan is not just a pushover must have dawned on them by now. Last but not least, the Janpath's bosses' response to the Jagan's increasing popularity in the by-polls was to unleash the CBI on the young man and shut him down in jail, for as long as possible, spinning out charge sheet after charge sheet in the all-encompassing "disproportionate assets case." Indeed legal troubles have a way of morphing into political gains. The fact is, the Congress will have to meet the Jagan challenge politically and not through the "disproportionate use of investigative assets." The Congress high command's responses had thus produced the opposite effect of what was intended besides showcasing the state government as an utterly helpless and useless appendage incapable of doing anything on its own.

Otherwise, the state government would have objected to the arrest of Jagan during election time. The CM could also have protested the arrest of one of his colleagues by the CBI for signing a GO that benefitted an investor in Jagan's companies, when he was a minister in the YSR cabinet. Having been in the loop

during YSR's time a Chief Whip and later, as Speaker, the CM shouldn't have allowed the CBI to inquire into the whole gamut of the YSR regime, which means questioning the very basis of the Congress rule in the state, for the entire period from 2004 to 2009. It doesn't lie in one and the same party, group, or person to rule the state for as long as six years, and question the same rule in the court of law, in cahoots with the opposition, while yet continuing to rule the state. It is tantamount to playing a double game, practicing duplicity of the worst order, while at the same time, fooling the public for having elected them, twice, in 2004 and 2009, and also fooling their own party, implying it was complicit in ruling the state. It should have occurred to them that during election time, the media ought not to be touched, and instead they had issued GO's for almost closing down the daily newspaper and TV news channel belonging to Jagan, which the high court had of course disallowed.

When the CBI had questioned the 26 GOs issued by the same cabinet under YSR, which presumably benefitted Jagan's companies, as his successor, the incumbent CM could have filed a counter; instead, he exposed as many as six of his senior ministers to CBI action and handed over a minister to CBI custody. The principle of collective responsibility was tossed out of the window. It seemed as though the Congress high command has set the CBI into the cabinet like the cat among the pigeons, throwing the Congress party in the state in utter disarray and no Congressman had the heart to work for its success. Sonia's cabal had thus cut off its nose to spite its face in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Ingratitude

YSR delivered, on a golden platter, 29 and 33 Look Sabha seats, from Andhra Pradesh, for UPA I and UPA II, in 2004 and 2009 respectively, which were crucial to the Congress under Sonia, for coming to power, on both the occasions. While they are still enjoying the fruits of power, YSR, after his death, is being depicted as a villain in the vain hope that he would soon be forgotten, and that Sonia and her son Rahul – soon to become the Prime Minister - would replace him in the minds of the people of Andhra Pradesh. But to their utter dismay, it turned out that their credibility was soon on the line, and that YSR dead is far more powerful than YSR alive. The Congress high command, in other words, had shot its bolt to erase the YSR mystique from the minds of the AP electorate, but in the process, it appears to have shot itself in the foot. What Macbeth, the helpless victim of vaulting ambition, thought of King Duncan, before doing away with him, can be applied to YSR while in power. "...Besides, this Duncan hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been so clear in his great office, that his virtues will plead like angels, trumpet tongued, against the deep damnation of his taking off;" The Congress high command is joined in this operation by Chandra Baby, Chiranjeevi, Lagadapati, Undavalli, etc to drive away his spirit from AP, but it refuses to go and only looms larger and larger, threatening to eclipse them all, politically, as the day of reckoning approaches in 2014.

Ever since Jagan launched his own YSR Congress Party (YSR CP) on March 12, 2011, plans were afoot, to throw him into the snake-pit of litigation, so that he would

be left to stew in his own juice and become a spent force, answering legal calls, coming and going to jails, besides being branded an oddball of corruption and a stark power seeker. Along this road to 2014 when the next election comes, the young leader, the new party and the YSR mystique would have paled into insignificance to the extent that the small group of supporters that remain, will anyway, crave to return, like prodigals, to Congress, as the only way to survive.

With some such well-laid scheming in mind, the high-command set off to clinically implement the plan: A Congress MLA, P. Shankar Rao was chosen to file a PIL in the High court for a probe into the disproportionate assets of Jagan, to which the TDP leaders "impleaded." So, it was joint effort on part of the Congress and the TDP that influenced the high court to set the CBI on Jagan. Shankar Rao was made a minister as a reward, in ten days. But what defies any sense of public morality is that the Chief Justice of the High Court who ordered investigation by the CBI and ED into Jagan's assets, was made the chairman of the AP Human Rights Council, as soon as he retired.

The very next day the High Court ordered the CBI enquiry, 28 batches were searching the houses and offices of Jagan, his relatives and friends, while 700 of the CBI had raided the Saakshi daily office. In Chandra Babu's assets case, the CBI waited until he got the stay order from the division bench. "Why dint they search Sonia's house in the Bofors case, Botsa's in the Volkswagen case, Rosiah's in the EMR case, and of all the 6 ministers for issuing those 26 GO's" asked

Vijayamma, Jagan's mother, on the stage, and the audience echoed with her .

In this context, Chief Minister, Kiran, had fired a broadside that Jagan was spreading lies that Sonia was responsible for his arrest. Are we so naïve to believe that all this hurly-burly about Jagan took place behind her back, and that she was kept in the dark by her close confidants – Gulab Nabi Azad and Vayalar Ravi? The central leadership has grown blind to the sensitivities of the public. The party in AP is in power because YSR did take his administration to the doorstep of the downtrodden, despite its many defects, as never before. Notwithstanding that, everything is being done by the same party, after his death, to malign his name and erase his memory.

“Doctor, heal thyself”

The funny thing is that the critics who make charges of corruption are themselves corrupt. And so, their charges, however seriously made, are not taken seriously by the public. A columnist, for example, has written thus: “Chandra Babu talks as if he is Andhra Anna Hazare, but the people know him as a master manipulator who can manage legal cases against him to come up before judges of his choice.” When, in a tit-for-tat, Jagan's mother filed a petition in the High Court asking for a similar probe into his assets, a single bench ordered an enquiry. But he saw to it, that the probe was quashed in a division bench by bringing in Mukesh Ambani of Reliance who sought his own inclusion as a party, which was just a ruse to divert the main case from the Chief Justice Lokur who held some shares with the Reliance, by

(Continued on Page 13)

Shivnath Prasad passes away

Shivnath Prasad, a source of strength to the socialists and social activists of West Bengal and Bihar passed away on December 13, 2012, in Calcutta at the ripe age of 95. His father Brajkishore Prasad was a very senior Congress leader of Bihar and a devoted Gandhian from the days of Champaran Satyagraha till his death. Shivnathbabu, however, did not choose to be a political activist. Once he said to this reporter that what he disliked was the discrepancy between the professions and practices of some political leaders and workers around him during his early days. However, being a younger brother of Prabhavati Devi and brother-in-law of JP, he could not keep any distance from them. As and when JP and Prabhadi came to Calcutta, Shivnathbabu's residence of 6C Short Street became their home. In fact, it would be difficult to find any political leader of any party, not to speak of socialists and Gandhians, who had not visited 6C Short Street. Many internal meetings of the socialists also took place there. At the time of the beginning of Bangladesh liberation struggle Prof. Samar Guha and this reporter had occasions to discuss the issue with JP at this place. On the eve of the Emergency, besides the Navnirman Samiti meetings, joint meetings with the non-Congress parties (except the CPI) with JP took place at this address. Shivnathbabu's hospitality on all such occasions was pleasing.

Shivnath Prasad formed a trust in the name of his father, Brajkishore Prasad which is involved in many philanthropic activities. When JP became very ill, he transferred all his responsibilities of Mahila Charkha Samiti and other organizations

centering Kadamkuan in Patna to him. During JP's prison days at Chandigarh, Shivnathbabu was the only person who used to keep on regularly visiting him. In an article incorporated in the JP centenary volume published by JP centenary committee, West Bengal and Mittal publications, Delhi, Shivnathbabu had narrated his experiences of JP's prison days, particularly the mishandling of JP's treatment. Shivnath Prasad was associated with West Bengal based JP Antodaya Nidhi as a trustee.

With Shivnathbabu's sad demise, the socialists and JP admirers have lost a friend in need and deed.

– Sandip Das

(Continued from Page 9)

hamper equality. For Democratic Socialists, equality is the watchword, but it is observed interdependently with its other core values – liberty, justice and solidarity. Like Marxists, Democratic Socialists will not barter liberty for equality or vice versa. A just, fair society is built on all the four principles of Democratic Socialism, although equality admittedly, is the most compelling of all.

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Initial Setback to Opposition Unity

Efforts for consolidating all opposition forces to present a viable alternative against the disastrous policies of the Congress and the BJP, got a severe setback when Mulayam Singh Yadav, President of the Samajwadi Party, the main force behind the effort, absented himself from the crucial meeting held in Delhi on 8th January, the memory day of late Madhu Limaye.

Although the letter inviting all leaders outside the UPA and NDA was written by Mulayam Singh, he had to miss the date, due to 150th anniversary of UP Assembly, which was to be addressed by the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee.

The meeting was held as follow up of the resolution passed in previous meeting held on October 27, 2012, on the occasion of release function of Dr. Lohia's debates in parliament, which was addressed by Sarvashri Sudhakar Reddy, General Secretary of CPI, AB Bardhan, veteran leader of CPI, Deb Brat Biswas, President of Forward Bloc, Abani Roy, President of RSP, Sharad Yadav, President of JD(U), Nama Nageshwar Rao, TDP leader, Pappy Reddy, veteran Socialist of Andhra Pradesh, Joseph Toppo, Representative of AGP, Dr. Udit Raj, President of Indian Justice Party and Mulayam Singh Yadav. The meeting had decided to set up a coordination committee under the convenorship of AB Bardhan.

The meeting of 8th January, 2013 was attended by about 150 persons. It was presided by Sharad Yadav and addressed by veteran journalist, Kuldeep Nayar, in addition to Mastram Kapoor socialist writer, Atul Anjan of CPI, Raghu Thakur,

President of Loktantric Samajwadi Party, Vijay Pratap, Dr. Bhagwan Singh, Ram Gopal Sisodia, Dr. Udit Raj, Raj Kumar Jain and Satya Prakash Malviya, Socialist leaders, Prof. Ishwari Prasad, Thampan Thomas, Vice President of Hind Mazdoor Sabha.

The meeting decided to set up a forum of All India Socialist and Democratic Forces to pursue the efforts to build an alternative of Non-Congress-Non-BJP political parties and various people's movements.

Atul Anjan For AB Bardhan, Convenor, Coordination Committee

(Continued from Page 12)

invoking a dubious convention "not before", which ultimately landed the main case before a division bench rather favorable to him. Sussex University's Institute of Development studies conducted a survey on Naidu's rule during 2002-04 for an affiliate of the World Bank, which had its operations in AP at that time. The survey stated that the CM Naidu had very close links with the Chief Justice of the AP high court through a couple of advocates who enjoyed the confidence of both the CM and the Chief Justice. These two lawyers later became judges. It was an open secret that Chiranjeevi made a lot of money while distributing tickets to contest in the 2009 elections to young aspirants on behalf of his newly started "Praja Rajyam Party". Recently a few days before the by-elections, currency of rupees forty crore worth was seized in his daughter's house in Chennai. As for Lagadapati, this highly ambitious Congress MP had a vaulting growth from a commoner to a leading power magnate and realtor in the state,

The alternative political agenda suggested includes programmes such as: opposition to FDI and privatization of water, electricity, food and fuel; ban on projects which cause mass displacement and destruction of environment; employment based development; strong machinery to control corruption and crimes against women and other weaker sections; use of Indian languages in administration; electoral reforms to free election from money and crime influence and firm commitment to social justice.

thanks to the patronage extended by the TDP and YSR governments. The list of the new rich, spawned under the TDP and YSR dispensations in conditions of crony capitalism, is a long one, and Jagan probably is one of them.

1. The Hindu editorial Dt 29.5.12
2. The Hindu editorial Dt 29.5.12
3. Mopidevi Venkataramana, the excise minister in the cabinet until recently. He was also minister in-charge of infrastructure in the YSR cabinet. He is charged by the CBI as having signed a GO benefitting N i m m a g a d d a n P r a s a d o f VANPIC who is one of the investors in Jagan's companies.
4. Act 1, Scene 7, Macbeth
5. Vijayamma's stump speech at Anapur and Rayadurgam, Saakshi Telugu daily Dt 6.6.2012
6. A.B.K Prasad, Saakshi Telugu daily Dt 4.12.2011
7. Ibid

This new politics

Yogendra Yadav

Our reactions to the current protests triggered by the gangrape in the capital reveal a paradoxical state of mind. We welcome the spontaneous nature of these protests, underline the fact that most of the ordinary women and men who joined these protests were not mobilised by any organisation and caution against the entry of “political elements”. At the same time, we criticise the protesters for the lack of a clear agenda, we blame the movement for allowing miscreants in, and bemoan the lack of clear leadership. We applaud the cause but regret the consequence. This could be seen as collective hypocrisy: we want politics, but not from the front door. Or, it could be read as a quest for a new kind of politics that doesn’t look like politics in the conventional sense.

This is a subtle but crucial difference that leads to two opposite but partial readings of these protests. Those who celebrate these protests welcome the arrival of a new citizen-activist — conscious, determined and very angry — who will now hold political power accountable. They name this new actor according to their own taste — aspirational or egalitarian — and hope that this new citizen is going to usher in an India of their dreams. This romantic picture invites the critics to point out, rightly so, that many of these protesters are in the urban areas if not in the metros, they are mostly middle classes and overwhelmingly men, even on this issue. They do not forget to remind us that these protests are not quite

spontaneous, they are invariably preceded by an intense media gaze and accompanied by live television coverage. Both these readings have an element of truth, but both of them miss the real point.

Urban street protests, first against corruption and now against the violence that targets women, are the beginning of a new kind of politics that has come up to fill a gap in our democratic functioning, that articulates pent-up grievances that have no redress in our system. The new citizen-activist has a narrow social profile, but not necessarily a narrow social vision. Product of our situation, this politics does not follow a prescribed script. This development institutes a new kind of uncertainty in our democratic life. It offers resources to deepen our democracy, yet it carries the seeds of destabilising the system. Like all democracies, it depends on how political forces handle or mishandle the situation.

We must learn to place this new citizen-activist outside our comfortable binaries. These are not a bunch of urban well-off netizens out to secure their self-interest at the expense of the rest of society. Despite superficial resemblance, these protests are profoundly different from the anti-Mandal agitation backed by the same social group. These protesters seek something beyond their own self, they seek to connect their own lives and problems with the rest of society. At the same time, theirs is not the selfless renunciation of the

Gandhian or the Naxalite type that turned its back on the middle class comfort zone in a quest to connect to the real, if remote, India. The new citizen-activist is engaged in the politics of an extended self whose limits are not pre-determined.

This new politics does not speak the formatted language of 20th century ideologies. Familiar slogans like “we want justice” barely conceal the new message; the “justice” they want is neither a liberal order nor a socialist or feminist ideal. Therefore, any attempt to judge these protests and their demands from the certitudes of the received ideologies is not very helpful. At the same time, these protests are not merely about negating. The anti-corruption and anti-gender violence protests seek an alternative, even if in a warped language, such as the demand for capital punishment. They seek alternatives here and now. Theirs is a politics of feasible good.

This politics also invites us to think beyond the binaries of individual or collectivity. These protesters do not carry the obvious markers of caste or community that tend to dominate our public life. Nor do they enter as members of the established political organisations, parties or their mass fronts. Their desire to keep “politics” out is clearly a quest for freedom from the stifling frames of traditional political organisations. At the same time, these protesters are not free of all identities; the affirmation of gender identities is symbolic of the acceptance of other identities.

Theirs is not an anarchist desire to keep away from all forms of organisation. This new politics is waiting for a new political form and seeks a radical amendment to the existing form of party politics.

We do not know as yet if that is going to happen. Indeed, this new phenomenon carries negative possibilities as well. It would not be real if it did not. Camera-happy crowds out on the streets demanding instant gratification is not exactly a recipe for good governance. Such protests can be hijacked by authoritarian leaders. They can turn inwards, in terms of articulating the narrow interests of the protesters. They can push the governments into hasty populist measures that achieve very little for the objectives that the protesters set for themselves. And chaotic protests can simply die without leaving a legacy, making life more difficult for future crusaders.

As of now, this new, as yet inchoate, and partially visible politics is playing the role of a much-needed corrective in the system. It has already begun to disturb settled and cosy equations of power and create moments of accountability, though not structures of responsiveness. Anna Hazare's fast had our government and parties bending backwards, at least for some time, in a way that bigger mass movements could not do. Exposés by Arvind Kejriwal and Prashant Bhushan made the political establishment more nervous than any parliamentary debate. Similarly, the present protests against the violence perpetrated on women have made the police and their political masters answerable in a way that decades of painstaking work by women's and human rights

movements could not. Perhaps, the poverty of political judgement in our ruling establishment has prematurely inflated the power of this movement. Their long-term staying power, their force, and indeed their direction is as yet unclear. It would depend on how

swiftly and how well this new energy gets to shape the core of party political contestation in our democracy. But one thing is quite certain: democratic politics has to contend with a new animal now, someone our political establishment cannot call back at its will.

—The Indian Express



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Jaw-Jaw not War-War

S. Viswam

Blood at the border
Kuldip Nayar

**A New Course for
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D. K. Giri

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Ploughing a Lonely Furrow
B N Uniyal

My Pakistan trip
Ram Puniyani

Status of women in India

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Whichever way one views the current disturbing crisis in India-Pakistan bilateral relations, maximum restraint, patience and tact seem to be the factors that must be given the highest priority in dealing with it. War is an option, undoubtedly, but it is one that wisdom demands should be exercised when all alternatives are exhausted. Neither country can afford a war. Especially a war that could assume nuclear dimensions with or without cause or provocation. Given the brutality of the Pakistani Army's action along the Line of Control, it is only to be expected that tempers will run high in India and that the government will come under maximum pressure to take action. The past record suggests, and Pakistan's latest offensive confirms that Islamabad and the Army resort to military steps to divert attention from domestic problems. It cannot be purely coincidental that Pakistan should be enmeshed in a serious political crisis domestically which may well see phenomenal changes in the government set-up. These are testing times for both the neighbours. The attack on Indian positions that resulted in the merciless killing of two Indian soldiers, one of whom was beheaded was horrendous and beyond the pale of civilized conduct. India

is rightly incensed over the action. Nonetheless, both sides should avoid provoking the other into extreme steps which will have only negative implications for bilateral stability and peace. It is always better, even if exasperating, to jaw-jaw than war-war.

This advice applies equally to the hotheads in the two countries who start pressuring the respective governments to attack the other the moment there is an incident. We have witnessed this phenomenon in our country. The first to lose her cool was the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Sushma Swaraj, who demanded ten Pakistan heads for the one head the Indian army lost. Wiser counsels prevailed after the Prime Minister's much-delayed statement that after the barbaric act along the LoC, there cannot be business as usual with Pakistan. Those responsible will have to be brought to book, he said. It makes no sense that Pakistan should continue to deny the incident. As much is at stake for Pakistan as there is for India in the maintenance of good neighbourly relations.

It is unfortunate, and that is putting it very mildly, that cross-border provocation should have

Between the lines

Blood at the border

Kuldip Nayar

been attempted at a time when the bilateral atmosphere had vastly improved and when progress was noticeable on many fronts. Trade was getting a good chance of being the instrument to promote relations, and a visa regime was being put in place. Now, the trade talks have suffered a setback, and the visa-on-arrival scheme has been deferred by India, hopefully only till the present crisis blows over. It has taken some time for the restoration of normalcy. Now, things are on the brink of slipping back. Much good work has been lost, and both sides have begun blaming each other. India too cannot be entirely blameless, but delicate situations need to be handled delicately.

Even at the risk of facing domestic flak, especially from the main opposition party, the BJP, the Prime Minister has persisted with a policy of engaging Pakistan in peace negotiations. Public opinion in India is clearly divided on the Prime Minister's policy. Some sections feel that Pakistan cannot be trusted. Some feel that as the bigger country and the more powerful neighbour India should be tolerant. There is much merit in the Prime Minister's stand. After all, as has often been said, India and Pakistan are neighbours, whether one likes it or not. One can change history but not geography.

India has put Pakistan on test. The message that has gone out is that provocation can be tolerated only up to a point. In this context the reaction of our army chief Gen. Bikram Singh is noteworthy for its studied restraint. He has warned that if Pakistan does not respond to India's appeals, there will be retaliation but at a place and time

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It is an unfortunate coincidence that the border clashes and ceasefire violations between India and Pakistan have been at a time of the anniversary of the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri signing the Tashkent Declaration some 37 years ago to bind the two countries into a peace pact. He consecrated it with his death. Yet the Declaration could not avert the 1971 war, nor the subsequent skirmishes.

Strange, there was not even a mention of the Declaration either by the media or by the political leadership. It appears that the two countries have remained jingoistic. One incident happens and the entire accumulated bias comes out.

Beheading soldiers is nothing new. The army on both sides has indulged in it before. What is annoying is Pakistan's flat denial of the incident. The brigadier at the flag-march meeting came with a prepared text and returned to Pakistan after reading the brief. There was no regret, no grief.

The UN probe to verify facts could have been a possibility. But since New Delhi stopped the International Court at The Hague from taking up a Pakistan complaint against India on the plea that the two countries settle their disputes bilaterally, it could not bring in a third party.

However, the incident is too serious to be left at that. India should make the evidence public, particularly when it is alleged that Hafiz Saeed, the Lashkar-e-Toiba

chief, was at the border before the clashes. Pakistan on its part should order a probe. Maybe, it is the doing of irregulars who, regrettably, seem to constitute part of Pakistani's combative force. The country is already experiencing violence from within. The Taliban are daily killing 20 to 25 Pakistanis and there is no place which is beyond the range of their guns.

When there is unabated domestic violence and when Pakistan is fighting against the Taliban in the Federal Administrative Area, it is not understandable why it should open a front with India. In fact, Islamabad has withdrawn some forces from the Indian border to fight on the west. Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) has declared publicly that it would concentrate on the threat posed by internal forces instead of engaging India. Therefore, there is no question of unnecessary hype.

New Delhi should realise that Pakistan is its front state. If it ever goes under, India would be directly threatened by the Taliban and face the danger of destabilisation. The policy should be how to retrieve Pakistan from the hopeless situation it is in. A weak Pakistan is a threat to India, however powerful.

Any escalation of tension or a suitable retaliation at an appropriate time would only aggravate the situation. The dialogue is the only way to improve and it should never be suspended or downgraded. There is no option to talks. Pakistan

foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar, otherwise irresponsible in her statements, has said emphatically that the dialogue between the countries should not be affected by skirmishes at the border.

Indian foreign minister Salman Khurshid has shown restraint and maturity in his response. But the government's decision to keep the new positive visa policy on hold will only lessen people-to-people contact which is essential for better understanding. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's statement that business with Pakistan cannot be as usual is understandable when the BJP is demanding a harsh reply. Yet my experience shows that Islamabad resiles from its rigid stand if and when New Delhi steps back and reflects. We have to learn how to live with intransigent Pakistan. Director General of Trade, Ismail Khan, in Pakistan occupied Kashmir said that trade and travel across the ceasefire line would remain suspended until the skirmishes subsided. This is an unwise step which will hurt Pakistan as much as India.

For some reasons, former military officers on both sides have turned out to be more hawkish in their comments. I was shocked to hear Admiral Iqbal of the Pakistan Navy reminding India about the Muslim rule in the country for 1,000 years. Equally jingoistic was the suggestion by a retired army major general that the solution to India's problems with Pakistan was through a military action. Both should realise that the engagement of the two countries would not be a street brawl. They have nuclear weapons and the worst can happen.

Civil society in both the countries has proved to be disappointing.

Instead of analyzing the situation dispassionately, they have supported the stand of their country. Regretfully, civil society is always on the side of the establishment whenever there is a clash on the border or when a dispute assumes dangerous proportions. Were the two civil societies to put their weight behind peace and call a spade a spade, their voice would matter.

New Delhi's estimate that the ceasefire violations were meant to give cover to terrorists to sneak

into Kashmir may be true. But the security forces in the valley are strong enough to chastise them. The fallout of tension affects the people in Kashmir. They feel more insecure. The killing of elected panchayat members has made 30 others to resign.

On the other hand, the image of the Hurriyat leaders gets more tarnished. Most Indians link their visit to Pakistan last month to

(Continued on Page 9)

Gandhi Memorabilia

Kamal Morarka, who had bought the memorabilia at an auction in London last year, received them at the airport after, they were held up in customs for eight days, on January 8. 'I am proud to have brought this back. But, I am saddened that the Indian government did not try to recover them and also put down strict conditions on the use of the memorabilia to waive off custom duty', said Morarka, who reportedly paid around 2 crore to buy the items and Rs. 22 lakhs as custom duty. The bloodstained soil from where Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated and his iconic charkha were part of the 29 items brought back to India on Tuesday,

'I have decided to hand them over to Anna Hazare and Chauthi Duniya Publications who will take it across India,' he said.

At a ceremony to honour the memorabilia, Hazare said: 'Gandhiji's items are very significant to Indians, and it will inspire us to bring about a change in the country. We have planned to take it around the nation to promote his values.' On Martyr's

day, the items will be taken to Bihar's Gandhi Maidan, as part of the campaign.

Other than the soil and charkha, the memorabilia includes Gandhi's spectacles, his hand written letters, a prayer book and a record disc. As described by the auctioneers, the soil and grass blades, stained with Gandhi's blood when he was assassinated in Delhi in 1948, were collected by one P. P. Nambiar who then gave it to someone named Antony in 1996, who in turn directed them to the auction.

'Tests are also conducted on the soil to confirm the authenticity,' said an official from Chauthi Duniya Publication.

Gandhi's granddaughter Usha Gokani, who is the chairperson of Gandhi Memorial Trust, however, was not aware of the belongings returning to India. 'Gandhi belonged to the world and his belongings should not be kept with one person. It should be kept in National Museum so that they stay safe,' said Gokani.

—Mughda Variyar

My Pakistan trip

Ram Puniyani

The invitation to attend the seminar on South Asian Minorities in Islamabad, Pakistan and other meetings in Karachi, promised to be an exciting affair, as apart from other things it might have been an opportunity to see the 'enemy country' in person. I thought of combining the visit to Islamabad and Karachi with a trip to Jhang, the place where I was born, slightly before the tragedy of partition. I realized VISA to Pakistan is quite a difficult task as VISA for each city is to be obtained separately so I dropped the idea of going to Jhang and restricting my visit to Islamabad and Karachi for which I had the invitations. The discussion about the proposed trip to Pakistan with friends and relatives had a standard response: Ohh... you are going to Pakistaaaaaan... be careful! The impression being given was not only that it is Pakistan, which is masterminding all the terror operations in India, not only that it's a country with terrorists strolling the street and killing people at will but also that it is an 'enemy country' due to its wars against India, its meddling in the issues of India and it harboring the terror dens by the dozen.

Islamabad

Islamabad sounded like an exclusive 'Capital city' with non-Government employees being a small fraction of the population in the city. We could see the Raval Lake, from the nearby beautiful hill. The lake separates this capital city from the nearby Ravalpindi. What came as a pleasant surprise was the feeling of being at home in the city, the language spoken, the people, the

warmth and affection and the food all gave the pleasant feeling of being very much at home. While one learnt that the plight of minorities is dismal in most of the South Asian countries on which the papers were presented in the seminar, one also realized that the human rights activists in Pakistan are very vocal and are keeping the torch of democratic values aflame with great courage and sincerity.

The banquet hosted by organizers was an occasion to interact with the well known names in Human Rights movements from Pakistan, like I.A. Rahman. I could lay my hands on Rahman's booklet, 'Pakistan: Neither A State nor a Nation' which gives a very accurate understanding of the state which came into being more due to the machinations of colonial powers than for the aspirations of average Muslims. Incidentally majority of Muslims and particularly the poorer lot, the artisans, farmers stood against the idea of Pakistan.

The banquet dinner was a surprise for another reason also. In the middle of the lovely food and equally engrossing conversation, I had been so lost in the homeliness of milieu and the accompanying songs from my favorite old Hindi films that I had to tell myself oh I am not in India but am in Pakistan. The singing troupe playing the music was very good and the choice of songs from old Hindi films was a real treat of the day.

India's Soft Power

Staying in Karachi was a different ball game. Here one was in the middle

of different communities staying in different localities. The segregation of communities along geographical lines is a bit different than what is the phenomenon of ghettotization of Muslim community in many a cities in India. Karachi with its broad roads and slow traffic reminded me of our own Mumbai nearly five decades ago. Conversation with taxi drivers' is so much revealing about the things in a city. My driver was a young man from Peshawar. He had to come to Karachi due to the Taliban nuisance. Taliban, in a true fundamentalist fashion, are imposing dress-beard code on the people and are killing people for any slight disobedience. This young man told me that they used to organize, music and dance, week long celebrations at the wedding times. Now Taliban has put a sort of ban on that. The Taliban intimidation is forcing large segments of population to shift from Peshawar to Karachi, in particular. He also informed about what many Indian writers are calling as soft power of India, the Bollywood. For this young man, three Khans of our Bollywood are semi gods, like he celebrated when Shah Rukh Khan's team won in IPL and he sported Mangal Pandey moustache and kept the hairs like Mangal Pandey as depicted in the film. It's no secret that Hindi films and Indian music are a craze there.

Malyalee Comrade in Karachi I happened to meet innumerable friends who are struggling it out not only to strengthen democracy but also to build bridges with India.

(Continued on Page 15)

People's Commission

Ghar Bachao ghar Banao Andolan withdrew its 10 days long agitation on January 10, after having received certain concrete decisions and directions for further process on the issues related to housing rights and land scam with corruption in Mumbai.

The State Government has agreed to enquiry by the Principal Secretary, Housing into SRA projects in 6 localities- Golibar, Ambedkar Nagar, Mulud, Ramnagar-Ghatkopar, Chandivali, Sion-koliwada and Indira-nagar Jogeshwari, defining the modus operandis involving all stakeholders and holding public hearings.

On the 10th hundreds of women and men from various slums reached Mantralaya. They insisted and made their way into Mantralaya and at least 500 people filed their individual applications for Rajiv Awas.

The State has also taken and conveyed a firm decision to take RAY ahead and Mandala RAY project proposal to the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai.

The Municipal Corporation of Mumbai through the Commissioner, has agreed to provide all amenities in slums we have listed from eastern and western suburbs as per 5- A of Slum Act, a review for the same will be carried in next 7 days.

It's promised by MCGM to look into the violations of law, if any in Sion Koliwada and Jeevannapar redevelopment projects as well as wherever public amenities are destroyed before people getting shifted out.

MCGM has promised to hold meeting of officials and consider our recommendations to hold public hearings at level of community / unit of 3000 families, during development planning process- Existing and Planned Land Use.

With all the issues responded to, the Andolan decided to step back and out of Azad Maidan but with a warning that if all decisions are implemented and promises not fulfilled, we will march straight to Mantralaya with intensified struggle.

10 days long battle converted Azad Maidan into a battleground, but with much creative activities beginning with prayer in the morning and spirited songs till late night. Young activists burnt candles at night and returned with mashaals to their homes, only to return back early in the morning. Food came from different communities in slums as well as from supporter organisations.

National Alliance of People's Movements - Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan have decided to form a People's Commission of enquiry into the massive corruption and repression in projects of slum rehabilitation and re-development in Mumbai.

NAPM with its mass-based organisation has brought forth corruption in SRA in the form of fraudulent documents and fake house-sale in many cases.

It is our firm belief that it is because of such a flawed scheme like SRA, the truly equitable housing schemes through self-development projects are not being implemented.

That is why Rajiv Gandhi Awas Yojana has not yet taken off!

We, 1200 persons, sat on hunger strike for nine days in May 2011 in Golibar- Mumbai and the State Government through Chief Minister and Chief Secretary gave written promise and notified two enquiry committees to investigate into SRA related complaints. However, with false reasons those were shelved and High Powered Committee was asked to investigate. Nothing has happened even after one and a half year. And when we declared a long march and indefinite action in the last week of December, the SRA forwarded those to HPC. Its now, in January, during our mass action that the CM has admitted an enquiry through the Principal Secretary, Housing with same modus operandi and a guarantee that if illegality/irregularities are proved, action will be taken against the builder/s. We have accepted this.

However, in order to facilitate and for further investigation, it is necessary to have a People's Commission that will hear the people and give its verdict. Their work will certainly not overlap with but compliment the official enquiry.

The People's Commission will have Justice (Retd) H Suresh as its Chairman with Sudhakar Suradkar, former IG, Chandrashekar, architect, Amita Bhide-TISS and Simpreet Singh-social activist as members.

Terms of Reference of the Commission are: 1. To investigate (in a participatory and transparent manner) into illegalities and irregularities in SRA and redevelopment schemes in Mumbai,

beginning with a priority list. 2. To assess the documents and draw conclusions on the fraud and the resultant impact of the scheme, on the benefits and beneficiaries, loss to people, and loss to the state exchanger. 3. To estimate the magnitude of corruption and any officials, politicians, developers and others, responsible for the same. 4. To suggest and plan action against the accused, identified through investigation. 5. To identify the flaws and anti-poor clauses/provisions in the housing policy, laws and rules. 6. To suggest any alternative housing scheme/s and/or amend SRA Schemes. 7. To recommend any change in the planning pattern, process and laws and rules related to housing for the urban poor and middle class people of Mumbai. 8. To publish and release a detailed report on the enquiry and take it to the communities as well as the Government authorities.

The Commission will complete investigation within one month through 1) conducting public hearing, 2) analysing/inspecting documents, 3) interviewing government officials and citizen groups, NGOs, 4) photography, structural analysis, etc. and any other tools decided by the Commission.

The Commission's expenses will be met through voluntary donations. Report of the Commission will be submitted to the Government of Maharashtra and Government of India and will be released to the Civil Society and all slum communities in Mumbai.

**–Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao
Andolan, Janta Jagruti Manch,
Shahar Vikas Manch, Ramabai
Ambedkar Nagar Bachao Samiti,
Nagari Niwara Haq Samiti, Waghini
Sangathan, SRA Sangharsh Samiti,
Bruhanmumbai Niwara Samanvaya
Samiti**

A New Course for European Union

D. K. Giri

The European Union once hailed as the best regional integration project, and recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, is, in fact, groping for survival and rejuvenation. The ominous signs are: the bankruptcy of the State in Greece, the galloping unemployment rate in most countries (Spain leading with 40 per cent), Britain considering even rethinking its membership of EU as the Prime Minister, David Cameron just promised to do so in 2015 if he returned to power. Will the European Union fall apart? Can it be revived? There are efforts made at various levels to steer European Union out of the present crisis. The Foundation of European Progressive Studies, a Brussels-based Think Tank of Social Democrats in Europe is engaged in exploring options for EU's revival. They are organizing series of seminars to do so. It got together three Social Democratic Party Think Tanks of the three founder Member States of the EU – France, Italy and Germany – Fondation Jean Jaures, Italian Europei, and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung respectively, to generate creative ideas to address the crisis in Europe. They invited 100 academics from EU and US to a seminar in Paris on the theme of “Renaissance for Europe”. Parallel to the seminar, the leadership from the three countries and EU officials addressed an audience of over 2000 in Paris reiterating their commitment to uphold EU integration. This was a unique event as the progressive leaders from these countries pledged to re-Europeanize the politics in their respective countries. Following the success of this event in Paris, FEPS

and its three partners have decided to have a follow-up meeting in Turin, Italy in February, this year. The Paris meeting focused on economic issues, and in Turin, the agenda is the political union of EU.

The strategies on which a “New course for Europe” is being charted are “growth, solidarity and democracy”. Before we discuss these new approaches some reflections on why European Union is on the back foot now after over 50 years of its birth is in order.

Underemphasizing the Political Union

Way back in 1973, Johan Galtung, had predicted, in his famous book, “European Community: A Super Power in the Making”, that Europe would emerge as a super power. His predictions were based on Europe's attitude to USA, then called the First World, USSR, the Second World, the rest of the countries, the Third World and Europe's own logic of internal integration. Professor Galtung thought that the European part of NATO would grow autonomously and coincide with the Western European Union, with support of the United States. The US would have liked to reorganize NATO so as to give more prominence and profile to Europeans with a European Secretary General, and a European Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. US would have liked to leave the highly intractable European problems to the noisy and quarrelsome Europeans rather than having to solve them. NATO would have emerged with two distinct pillars. In relation to the

Second World, it would have been a continuation of Western European pattern of dominance, increasingly with political-military rather than economic. Relative to the Third World, it is a direct continuation of European colonialism, with economic rather than military means like in the past. Within European Community, Franco-German alliance would have driven the integration and growth of Europe to a big power. Although Paris-Bonn axis was largely responsible for the birth of European Community out of a synergy between Germany's economic and France's political interests. However, on international politics, it was not obvious that Paris-Bonn axis was that firm. As a commentator said, "France's negative obsession with Germany, and the German suspicion of French, must be overcome, before a truly independent Europe, with a truly independent defense can be realized." However, Europe is far from an emerging super power, so Professor Galtung's logic of thinking may have been right then, but his predictions have not come true.

There is another aspect of politics that EU de-emphasised in its integration process, which is the political values it promised to uphold. European Union began as a messenger and agent of peace and harmony, it sought to promote democracy, pluralism, decentralization, human rights and good governance. As a Union of 27 countries, upholding of these values would have demonstrated to the world, the values of unity and collaboration. But European Union became preoccupied with economic issues at the cost of political values, which undermined its freshness in international politics. For example; European Union was doing brisk

business with China when the latter was rolling its tanks over the students protesting in Tiananmen Square for civil liberties and political rights. Such disconnect between political values and trade confirmed India's first Prime Minister Nehru's suspicion that European Community was an "exclusive rich man's club". When I asked the EC officials during my studies on relations between India and European Union, they were ambivalent and had no convincing answers.

A Democratic Europe

The progressive politicians from the three countries emphasized democratic governance to be the main pillar of a new course. They released a manifesto at the Paris meeting, which reads "Europe is our shared heritage; it is our duty to strive to build a more united, democratic Europe." They lamented that "the lack of effective, democratic European economic governance clearly threatens to drag Europe into recession". European Union is ignoring the fights against poverty and inequalities, lacks policies which promote jobs and growth. They argue that the economic policies should lead to solidarity and equality in Europe. The economic policies need to be aligned with the realities of each member country, and have to reflect European Union values. More important, the policies have to be implemented as per the rules of new shared European sovereignty.

European democracies supposed to be old and developed, fail to meet the social and economic aspirations of the people. It is more established through its institutions, rather than in people's consciousness and activism, a vibrant democratic discourse. The complacency needs to give way to greater activism by

the civil society and the market. As the political parties become weak, greater cooperation between market, civil societies and the governments is what is called for at present in European Union. With rapid growth in migration, and intra-European mobility, a new social texture of diversities is being more visible in the hitherto mono-cultural societies. This development calls for dialogue between different communities, and new rules engagement by the states.

A Growth Economy

It is difficult to analyse and plan growth policies for the whole of European Union, which has wide variations among the economies of the member states. There are some problem areas though which are common to most of them. First, the public private sector debt has reached an unsustainable level in many countries. Second, the public sector participation in the economy is quite high affecting innovation and competitiveness. Thirdly, the public and private saving rate is quite low affecting the pool of investment capital. Fourthly, the business funding model is too reliant on debt financing, increasing the risks and instability in the economy. Therefore, in order to rebuild the economy for sustained growth, these four problems have to be addressed by the policy makers. The EU economic model has been a combination of Keynesian economics and post-war social democratic traditions. The new economic model must combine phenomenal powers of individuals and private sector with social democratic values, which, in actual terms, mean decentralized governance, promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship. The approach is best explained by Freidman when he said, "the greatest advances of civilization,

whether in architecture, or painting, in science and literature, in industry or agriculture, have never come from centralized governments". In order to boost economic growth, European Union needs to restructure its industries focusing on environmental transformation. The EU should promote industries based on technological excellence and low-carbon. The aim is to provide highly skilled and lasting jobs. The challenges of climate change could also be addressed by promotion of green technologies.

Solidarity at the Centre Stage

In order to ensure the stability of the Euro, observance of solidarity is necessary by the Member States. European Central Bank was allowed to play a major role in combating the financial crisis as the leadership failed to come up with right policies. This is high time that the Budget Treaty is supported by measures focusing on growth, employment, equity and solidarity. Furthermore, financial regulation needs to be tightened so that the finances serve the real economy. The decision making process needs to be revised in Europe. Inter-governmentalism alone does not lead to good decisions. All the institutions of European Union must work interdependently with greater scope for co-decision making.

To be fair, European Union has been a unique and innovative experiment in regional integration. But it has rapidly grown in numbers and seems to be incoherent. It started with 6 countries in 1951, became 9 in 1973, then 10 in 1981, 12 in 1986, 15 in 1995, 25 in 2004 and 27 in 2007 with Romania and Bulgaria joining the EU. There has been a debate for years in EU on 'widening' and 'deepening' of the integration

process. It is now obvious that both these strategies – widening and deepening - have not gone concurrently. Member countries were added without bringing them in alignment with existing members in terms of economic, social and even political conditions. The imbalance has caused instability, mainly economic, as was witnessed recently. Therefore, for EU to bounce back to meet its economic and political aspirations, it needs to

Expenditure for whom?

Bapu Heddurshetti has said (*Janata*, December 30, 2012) that if at least 50 per cent of the development expenditure be made on agriculture because 66 per cent of our population is dependent on agriculture (as suggested by me in an article in *Janata* (December 16, 2012), then hardly one per cent expenditure be made on education and health because teachers and doctors constitute less than one per cent of our population.

In the first place, the argument that at least half of the development expenditure be made on agriculture is based on the fact that agriculture is suffering from adverse terms of trade. According priority to agriculture in development expenditure will help uplift the standard of living of the farmers and agricultural labourers as also it will stimulate all-round economic activity of the nation because it is the base of our economy.

It is ridiculous to suggest that expenditure on education and health be made in proportion to the numbers of teachers and doctors. Those services are to be provided, not to teachers and doctors, but to a very large section of our population who are needy.

Well, may I appeal to Bapu

set a new course with new ideas. The Social Democratic actors seem to be deeply engaged with the process of restructuring European Union. One wishes them well, because the success of EU should inspire greater integration across the world in the interest of greater good. Also, when the world is torn by conflicts and competition, European Union signals hope and confidence in building a harmonious world.

Heddurshetti to give up the habit of trying to score debating points over an opponent and engage in creative dialogue so that vulnerable sections of our country receive fair deal at the hands of the policy-makers.

—Pannalal Surana

(Continued from Page 2)

of India's choosing. This is a sober reaction which testifies to the fact that India is trying hard to diffuse the tension and not play with fire by forcing a war on the two nations. India-Pakistan relations need a continued stretch of peace to firm up and get consolidated. We should not sacrifice long-term objective for short-term gains, political or military.

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Postal Woes

S. N. Sharma

The *Janata* (December 23) has done a great service to the common man by publishing Niranjana Halder's article on Destruction of the Indian Postal System. Most of our countrymen are, like the writer of these lines, computer literate. They do not possess a computer and if they manage to have one, they are unable to operate it. The postal system is, therefore, of immense importance to them. I will like to refer to some of the problems faced by the people.

To begin with, the postal authorities often issue brief advertisements advising the people to write the Pin Code number after the name of the town or village where the letter has to go. In April, 2009, I went to an important post office in Goregaon West to purchase a copy of all India Pin Code Directory. On payment of Rs. 40/-, the sub-postmaster gave me 2000 edition of the directory which had become obsolete following the creation of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand as well as change in the names of Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore and many other places. The directory cost me Rs. 40/-. I am told that a new edition of updated directory has been published and it costs 'only' Rs. 300/-. A 300-page all-India Railway Time Table at a glance with a lot of information costs Rs. 35/-, but the postal administration wants a customer to pay Rs. 300/- for a Pin Code Directory.

The postal authorities have introduced a single side writing space post card for those who want to convey a short message. The other side is available for advertisements and address. The issue of this sort of post card was a good idea but you will not be able to purchase this post

card in large post office. What to say of the village and small post offices!

As Halder has pointed out, the delivery of postal articles has become chaotic and it is seldom that one is able to receive a letter within ten days of its posting. The *Janata* is the worst sufferer, to quote an example. Though it is posted in a central place, like GPO it takes more than ten days to be delivered in Goregaon West.

The Goregaon post office close to the Goregaon (West) railway station and the busy Aarey Road, is visited by a large number of customers. I must appreciate the efforts of the SPM for managing the functioning of the post office in a space which is around 200 sq. feet. I think the post office is situated there since the times when it was serving less than 25 percent of people it is serving today. I wonder if the PMG of Mumbai has ever visited the place to ascertain the difficulties of the people all the year round. There is no question of the existence of a urinal in the area.

There is not a single letter box on the road from the Goregaon Telephone Exchange to the Bata centre, and the letter box which used to be at the intersection of S. V. Road with Piramal Nagar was removed more than four years ago for technical reasons.

The Inland Letter Card, like post cards, is not meant for commercial purposes. But the scores of corporate bodies are for some years using it as a means of communication to the share-holders which must be stopped. (Incidentally, the letter card is known as Antardeshiya

Patra Card in Hindi which means international. It should be renamed Antarpradeshiya Patra Card.

I hope this practice of throwing light on the working of an organization meant for the service of the general public will continue. The telephone set-up is under the Ministry of Communications and I will like to take up the issue for this purpose.

(Continued from Page 3)

renewed ceasefire violations. They are held responsible for requesting Pakistan to internationalize the Kashmir problem. Such moves by the Hurriyat alienates in India even the liberals who want a solution that respects the special status given to Kashmir in the Indian constitution.

What the ceasefire violations have done is a blow to relations between India and Pakistan. They have been improving for the last few years and would have been strengthened after the resumption of trade and the new visa policy. The clashes on the border have pushed the two countries to the starting point. There should be a way to go forward. Hockey and cricket players should not be barred from playing.

I wish the two sides to consider the ceasefire line sacred. This was converted into the Line of Control (LoC) through Shimla Agreement. The then Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, hailed it as the "line of peace" in an interview to me. And it has been seldom violated for the last two decades. Blood at the border has scotched even a limited hope.

Crime and Punishment

Rajindar Sachar

The gang rape of the young girl who is rightly to be remembered as Nirbhaya has at last shaken collective conscience of the nation. For this, the credit must be given to the youth, students who took the fight to the streets. They rightly shooed the politicians because many of the political parties have within them legislators not only as accused but facing cases of rape.

Of course to fight this evil of rape we must stop commoditizing the women and treat them as equal, individual personality of their own.

There has been a public demand that the punishment for the rapist which at present is life imprisonment should be substituted by capital punishment. I can understand the anger of the public but both on practical ground and from human rights aspect, capital punishment is now banned in 178 countries of the world. Above all we have the hallowed and persuasive views of three greatest Indians: Gandhiji, Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Ambedkar who were strongly against capital punishment. I respectfully follow them.

Even as a practical measure it is not correct to assume that the capital punishment will reduce the rapes. A survey conducted by United Nation concluded that research has failed to provide any evidence that death penalty would have a greater deterrent effect than life imprisonment.

The suggestion for death penalty is mostly advocated on a misapprehension that the life imprisonment means only for

14 years. The Supreme Court has categorically held that life imprisonment means for life. Amended law can further clarify this and also provide that no remission will be given by the state and also no parole will be given earlier than 30 years, and then also for a short period. I feel that life imprisonment in fact is a greater punishment because the accused will feel the mortal hurt throughout his life.

There is anomaly that though the law provides for life imprisonment, it also creates an exception which permits a court to award sentence of minimum of 7 years or 10 years for some special reasons – this is unacceptable. I cannot understand why if once a rape is proved there can be any reason for the Court not to sentence the accused for the life imprisonment. There can be no extenuating factors once a rape is proved – it is the most abhorrent crime.

Incidentally, the Central Government which is talking on making law stronger against the rapist needs to explain as to what was the special or secret reason which made P. Chidambaram, the then Home Minister, recommend to President Patil to commute the sentence to life imprisonment of a person who was convicted of rape and murder.

Some have suggested chemical castration. This is more out of justified anger but is neither effective or in consonance with civilized laws. This is on a parity with a theme of punishing for theft by cutting the accused's hands as it was in the middle ages. Even according to

medical opinion this castration is not of permanent effect. It also requires close regular personal supervision of the accused which is difficult – it is also recoverable. This alternative is not acceptable to our civilized nation.

In my view though the setting up of fast track court is welcome that I am of the view that the directive from the High Court to the lower courts to hear the matter day to day unlike the present practice where there are series of adjournments will itself serve the purpose immediately. Of course this requires the prosecution to mandatorily file the charge sheet within 10 or 15 days of the arrest of the accused. This will result in the trial to be concluded within the outside limit of two months.

All political parties are shouting and purporting to show their concern for the women. May I in all humility suggest that if this high sounding attitude is genuine, let them pass the Women Reservation Bill which is pending for years as a first item in the next Parliament Session. This will be a fitting tribute to the memory of Nirbhaya.

Madhu Dandavate

By

B. Vivekanandan

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Mumbai 400 007.

Status of women in India.

India is experiencing an awakening of conscience, triggered by the barbaric gang rape of “Nirbhaya”, a 23-year-old college student in Delhi. Angry protesters are demanding that the government act quickly to punish the perpetrators of this heinous crime. Candle light vigils are taking place all over the country. College students are pushing for the passing of new laws to ensure harshest possible punishment for crimes against women. Social media and traditional media are buzzing with debates to identify appropriate approaches for eradicating violence against women. India is going through a cathartic moment. During this time of reflection I remember my mother, late Pramila Dandavate, who championed the cause of oppressed women of India. She passed away in Delhi on January 1st, 2002. A decade after her death, crimes against women continue to occupy the center stage of national discourse.

Pramila Dandavate championed women’s cause at various levels. She took a lead in mobilizing and educating women around the need for social justice through Samajwadi Mahila Sabha; she focused on the importance of bringing dignity to women by providing them opportunities for economic independence. With this objective in mind she set up Sunanda Sahakar, a women’s cooperative. She also realized the importance of non-violent resistance against perpetrators of social, economic and political injustice as a means of protecting women. Along with Mrinal Gore, Mangla Parikh and many other women socialists, she founded the Mahila Dakshata Samiti to advocate for women’s causes and consumer rights by providing legal aid and counseling to underserved women. As a Member of Parliament, she was instrumental in introducing private member’s bills that included Dowry Prohibition Act Amendment bill, Registration of Marriage Act, and Amendment to the Representation of People Act. She led a national campaign for a Constitutional amendment for reserving 33 percent seats in the Parliament for women. She also campaigned for and achieved the establishment of a National Commission of Women for India.

*This article presents **Pramila Dandavate’s** ideas on the status of women in India, expressed through a compilation from her published works and presented in the form of a fictitious interview.*

–Uday Dandavate with editorial inputs by Rohini and Isha Dandavate

Tell us a bit about what inspired you to work for women’s emancipation.

My association and participation in the Rights of men and women is as old as fifty years when I joined Rashtra Seva Dal, a voluntary organization established by S. M. Joshi, N.G. Goray and Madhu Limaye, to counteract [the] communal influence of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and to inculcate values of democracy, socialism and secularism.

In 1961 I was invited to join a committee formed by the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, then headed by Maniben Kara; [the committee] wrote a charter of Rights of Modern Indian Women. This early exposure to systemic approach to solving women’s issues made me realize

that women’s issues need to be addressed at different levels.

What is at the root of violence against women in India?

Revival of fundamentalism in our society is one of the key causes of increased crime against women. There is an urgency to liberate the Indian mind from a discriminatory attitude towards women. In early nomadic stages of human civilization, men looked up to women with awe as only women could produce another human being. Women were worshipped as goddesses and enjoyed equal freedom with higher status in the society. After settling down as an agricultural society, a slow change started affecting women’s status and role. Concepts of ownership of land and property were developed. Desire to control woman’s fertility

and establish ownership over her reproductive power and her womb was a logical corollary. With decline in the status of women in family and society matriarchal society was replaced by patriarchal. A reference to the story of Shwetaketu in the Hindu mythology would not be impertinent. Shwetaketu prevented his mother from going out with another man. He was the first person to prescribe moral codes for women. He invented the institution of marriage, which has been the foundation of family since then. In the patriarchal family women were confined to the four walls of home and their status declined to a secondary position.

Later religions, which were established by men, strengthened patriarchal values and gave religious

sanction to the subjugation of women. To justify the discriminatory code of behavior, all religions have condemned women as inferior human beings who were created by god for men's service and entertainment. Hindu scriptures consider her as a seductress, Christianity consider her as the sinner who tempted Adam to eat the forbidden fruit and according to Islam, she is the earth in which man sows his seed hence she is the property of man who needs protection but no freedom.

In the popular scripture Ram Charit Manas, Tulsidas says, "Dhol.. ganwar...sudra...pashu...nari sakal tadan ke adhikari", which literally means "Drums, the illiterate, lower caste, animals and women deserve to be beaten up" in order to get them to perform to their maximum capacities. We need to think about how vast majority of illiterate India that draws much of their wisdom from the scriptures can be liberated from such attitudes towards women. Economic inequality, oppression, social division like castes, class, communal, ethnic or religious separatism have always affected women more than men. But the recent revival of fundamentalism is pushing women to more subjugation and oppression. These forces are against the basic concept of equality. Politicians have not hesitated to sacrifice women's human rights for electoral gains. They surrender to the communal forces. Shaha Bano case is an example.

What are your views on the status of a woman in the family?

To make women accept their inferior status and subjugation without protest, all religions have glorified motherhood and put mother on the pedestal of goddess. However in the process, cunning men deprived them of all economic and property

rights rendering them powerless and dependent on men for their very survival. Conditioned under patriarchal values of accepting a secondary status in the family, women cherished qualities of self-sacrifices, silent submission to male domination and invisibility. Hence stability of family for generations has depended on the sacrifices of its female members. Stability of family will remain illusory as long as it rests on the total sacrifices and subordination of one partner in the family. Strength of family will depend on the concept of equality, mutual respect and democratic functioning of the family.

The best indicator of women's status in society is their ratio to [the] male population. In most of the countries the number of women is less than men. In the Indian continent the decline of female population is alarming. There is continuous decline in the female population since 1901, with the exception of a little rise in 1981. Female infanticide and neglect of those who survive has contributed to this phenomenon.

What is government's role in improving the status of women in India?

The first assessment of the status of women in India after independence was made by the Committee on Status of Women in India (CSWI) in 1975, the International Women's Year. The committee arrived at the conclusion that the status of women in India had declined after independence. The decade following publication of this report, witnessed an alarming rate of increase in crimes against women and at the same time in mobilization of women against crimes. There was an increased emphasis placed on including women, not just as

recipient of welfare programs, but as partners in development planning. Fourteen years after the first report of the CSWI, two more reports, Shramshakti, a report of the national commission on self employed women and women in formal sector, under the chairmanship of Ela Bhatt and the National Plan perspective for the 8th Plan - both admitted that there was not significant change in the lives of Indian women. The National Plan Perspective launched by Late Rajiv Gandhi, termed women the largest group of "Backward citizens".

Some of the key statistics from the National Plan Perspective speak for themselves.

- *75 percent of the women are illiterate*
- *90 percent women work in unorganized sector*
- *51 Lakh matriculate women are registered unemployed*
- *64 percent pregnant women suffer from anemia*
- *One out of every 18 women runs the risk of dying during pregnancy*

In contrast, it is important to see the contribution of Indian women. Indian women contribute 50 percent to the agricultural production. [Their] tireless labor of providing basic amenities to the family like food, water, rearing and bearing children on which depends the survival of the family is not recognized. Women and [their] labor remain invaluable and this labor is never evaluated in economic terms. Her income is considered to be supplementary. However, different studies reveal a totally different picture. Thirty five percent of the families in India are headed by women, which depend solely on the income of the women. Out of the 65 percent of the remaining

families, women's contribution is 50 percent to the family income. Ninety percent of the women who constitute unorganized sector have always remained outside the ambit of the labor laws. However, Equal Remuneration Act, Factory Act Minimum Wage Act, which were created to protect women have actually affected them adversely. Women labor became costlier leading to employers retrenching women. Modernization of agriculture and industry has also rendered traditional skills of women redundant. More and more women cultivators have turned into agricultural laborers. Coir and Tobacco industries, which were employing women have thrown out thousands of women after modernization. Also, structural adjustment programs imposed by international financial institutions have affected a number of social services including education, health, and aggravation of illiteracy and maternal mortality of poor women. Women [already] constitute 73 percent of the [world's] 1.3 billion poor. The structural adjustment program is driving them [further] into impoverishment.

So how do we empower women?

Literacy and education are most powerful instruments of empowerment of women. An educated and employed woman stands a greater chance of getting respect and equal status in a family. Real credit for bringing common women into mainstream of politics goes to Mahatma Gandhi. Transformation and empowerment of women through their participation in Satyagraha movement under the leadership of Gandhiji was acclaimed by Late Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya in following words, "Mahatma Gandhi could achieve in a day what social reformers could not for hundred years of social

reformist movement, gender justice and equality was one of the major thrusts of Gandhiji's philosophy. His influence on the political leaders of immediate post independence period was instrumental in the incorporation of the Articles 14-15 and 16 of the constitution guaranteeing equality, forbidding discrimination and extension of special privileges for advancement of backwards, irrespective of caste, religion and sex" When the issue of reservation of seats for women in the legislatures was discussed, women members of the constituent assembly opposed it at [the] assembly and parliament level but favored it at [the] Panchayat and Zilla Parishad level. Similar views were held by women politicians till mid-seventies. However a shift in their stand became clearer with the declining number of women in both the state and the central legislatures Demand for 33 percent reservation for women at all levels started gaining ground. A murmur for this demand became a thunder by the time Panchayat Raj Bill 1992 became effective. Participation of women in decision making process-right from the family to the highest level is essential for democracy. This demand still remains a dream.

What are your recommendations for enhancing the status of women in a family?

- *Men must be encouraged to share domestic work with women to enable them to participate in activities outside of their homes so as to widen their horizons,*
- *By guaranteeing property rights to daughters and wives. Women must be made economically independent.*
- *Domestic labor of women should be considered as their contribution to the family income.*

- *Concepts of women's rights in the decision making process in the family and society must be materialized.*
- *Population policy should be linked up with the status of women and they should have final authority in deciding about the number of children they should have.*
- *Men must be made aware of their responsibility towards reproductive health of women.*
- *Atmosphere in the family should be democratic, In which all members can express themselves freely to develop mutual respect and concern.*

Through her sacrifice, Nirbhaya, the 23-year old college student has stirred the nation's conscience. It is a perfect opportunity to address what each one of us can do to rise above our inherent biases ingrained from centuries of discrimination against women and commit ourselves to a future where Indian women live life with respect, security and dignity.

This article has extracts from following published works by Pramila Dandavate:

1. Empowerment of Women
2. The Family today – Strengths and weaknesses
3. Role of women in national development
4. Challenges of Gender equality before the Asia pacific region. (Seminar organized by IUSY Asia Pacific region)
5. Text of the memorandum presented to the President of India
6. Janata Dal Memorandum for the 81 constitutional amendment bill, 1996.

Ploughing a Lonely Furrow

B N Uniyal

Of all his contemporary politicians in Uttar Pradesh, Chaudhary Charan Singh is the only one who stands out to the eye as a character. Compared to him, his contemporaries like Chandra Bhan Gupta, Kamalapat Tripathi and Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna were at best mere politicians. Two others of the time come to mind: socialist leader Dr. Rammanohar Lohia and his maverick follower, Raj Narain. Each of them was a character in his own right but, of the two of them, while the first was a national leader and in every way a class apart from Charan Singh, the second was, though remarkable, in a totally different category.

Measured by his political mission, Charan Singh was largely a success but, measured by his political ambition, he was an utter failure. Thrice opportunity came his way and he even grasped it but then failed dismally to hold on to it. Twice, in 1967 and 1970, he became chief minister and once, in 1979, he ascended even to the office of the prime minister but all the three times he fell flat on his face in a matter of months. His first term as chief minister lasted 11 months and the second just eight. As prime minister, he lasted in office for a mere 170 days between July 28 and January 14, 1979 and then slipped off the high chair rather disgracefully becoming the first and the only prime minister so far who never faced parliament. Even a greater ambition of his was to sit in the chair, his hero, Sardar Patel, had

once adorned as the Union Home Minister, but there too his tenure was fleeting: just four months.

Every time he fell from office, Charan Singh blamed his fall on the machinations of his factional rivals. Sometimes, he bemoaned that he had fallen because he was the only straight man in the midst of so many crooks. His disappointed followers blamed his unbending nature. Political correspondents close to him said that it was all due to his failure to build a faction of his own in the party. His opponents blamed his casteist image which they said had narrowed him down to being a mere Jat leader. There is some truth in every one of these statements. At the end, it was basically his plain inability to make friends. He was too much of a moralist and disciplinarian, too stern, too cut and dry, too stubborn and too demanding of his followers, utterly lacking in the dirty of politics. He was, therefore, never able to create a substantial following or build a faction in the party or outside for himself. Most of his life, he was, therefore, forced to plough a lonely furrow.

Charan Singh was born in a reasonably well off Jat peasant family in 1902 in a village in the Meerut district of western UP, studied law, practiced as an advocate at the local district court, joined the Indian National Congress in 1927, participated in the freedom movement, went to jail on several occasions like everybody else of his

generation and finally won a seat in the UP assembly in the first election held before independence in 1937. There was nothing remarkable about him until then. He was one of the many such emerging leaders thrown up in the mass movement for freedom under Mahatma Gandhi. He first came to notice when he introduced a bill in the assembly in 1939 to protect farmers from the sharp practices of foodgrain dealers or arhtis. That bill drew the contours of his lifelong concerns and causes he would espouse and despise. Paul Brass has dealt with these concerns in good detail, drawing up a vivid and by and large a fair and unhesitant portrait of Charan Singh as a vigorous champion of all peasant causes of his time.

I must use this opportunity to admit that I owe a debt of gratitude to Paul Brass. It was his *Factional Politics in an Indian State*, first published in 1965, that first gave me a glimpse into the intricacies of the many sided and complex politics of UP where I began my career as a political correspondent in the late 1960s and the early years of the next decade. I used his book as a primer in politics and learnt much from it. This latest work of his is in a way a continuation of that first book on UP politics. The book tracks Charan Singh's career up to 1961 and is only the first part of a multi-volume project on politics of northern India. As far as Charan Singh is concerned, a second volume will take the readers through the remaining years of his career up to 1987. I am sure

those interested in UP and national politics of these years and Charan Singh's role in those tumultuous events will wait anxiously for the promised second volume.

Paul Brass's portrayal of Charan Singh is sympathetic, even appreciative, but never over the board. He has himself admitted his admiration for his subject. He has, however, made no attempt to gloss over Charan Singh's failings or shortcomings or his lack of sufficient concern for the landless agricultural labourers and caste groups placed lower in the social hierarchy than the landowning backward peasant castes whose causes he championed all through his life. In that respect his portrayal in the book is honest, if nothing else. Although during his entire life time, Charan Singh was portrayed as a kulak and casteist leader, he was really not a champion of rich or large farmers. Nor was he a casteist. The charge of a casteism was thrust upon him by the Leftists. At the most, he may be called a reluctant caste leader. At the end he became one against his best wishes. He strongly resented being called a Jat leader. "How can you say that," he would often rail, "I am a champion of all peasants and of no particular caste." He has, no doubt, much to show for his championship of peasant causes like his role in zamindari abolition, consolidation of land holdings.

Charan Singh had an abiding interest in the welfare of the tiller peasants. He was a Gandhian in the tradition of Sardar Patel, strongly opposed to almost everything that Jawaharlal Nehru represented ideologically—capital intensive big industry, cooperative farming, westernized English-speaking urban middle class, Muslim appeasement and Sanatani Hinduism. He was against caste too and suggested

several measures to eliminate caste from public life. He stood for simplicity, honesty and sobriety in personal life, integrity and probity in public sphere, Hindu Arya Samaj values, stringent enforcement of law and order, and a strong but highly disciplined bureaucracy in administration. He was strong in his advocacy of the causes and equally strong in his criticism of what he despised, such as, the moneylenders, foodgrain dealers and lower level babus in government, especially, those connected with revenue administration like tahsildars and patwaris. What did him in at the end was his intolerance of those who disagreed with him and his total lack of understanding of modern currents in science and technology.

An Indian Political Life: Charan Singh and Congress Politics, 1937 to 1961, Paul R. Brass, Pp. 575, 2011, Sage; available at Bahri Sons, New Delhi.

(Continued from Page 4)

One remarkable Comrade from our Kerala, B.M. Kutty is a very popular figure in Karachi. Kutty Sahib, as he is generally addressed there is part of most of the progressive campaigns and movements, shaping and guiding the younger lot into the values needed for a democratic society and secular state. This Malayalee doyen is there from last six decades and his autobiography is aptly titled, 'Six Decades of exile: No regrets'. Other friends and comrades from media, trade unions and Karachi University were not only warm but also expressed how much they long for the state of affairs where military can be packed off to the barracks and civilian society is able to have its say through the democratic government.

The very concept of Islamic state also meets its nemesis in the form

of Mohajir Qaumi Movement, supported by many Muslims who left for Pakistan from India. They could not get due rights in Pakistan and are now organized enough to get represented in Pakistan Senate and corporations. The legendary Karachi press club has been able to maintain its independence, despite the pressure of military and it keeps inviting the diverse speakers to speak about their views on matters controversial, on the lines which may be against the ideas of ruling cliques. One of the favorite themes of talks there was, 'Shared heritage: Common aspirations', where the commonality of our cultural past was highlighted and a need for broad cooperation between these two so called 'enemy nations' is articulated in a very positive manner.

Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist



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Little to choose

S. Viswam

Shinde spoils Rahul's launch
Kuldip Nayar

On Latehar Incident

**Right to Food: Nutritional
and Social Dimensions**
K. S. Chalam

Anarchy sans Rebellion
Karan Kharb

Deprived Children
Arun Chavan

Rape Rage
Nandana Reddy

Relay Fast at Mumbai

Fishworkers' Demands

In the broader picture against the context of finding durable solutions to India's myriad problems, assumption of power at the Centre either by the Congress or the Bharatiya Janata Party has little or no relevance. There is very little to choose between the two. An alternative to either, in the form of a Third Front, is a theme all regional parties love to talk about from time to time, but no political leader or grouping is committed to the cause or has genuine interest in it. Experience tells us that political parties struggle for and seize power ostensibly to promote national interests but in reality their own. Again, experience tells us that this is not a cynical view but is well-grounded. So much could have been done to take India really forward by the Congress and other parties which have enjoyed power at the Centre and in the states in the last six post-independence decades. Yet, so little has really been done. The rich have grown richer, the poor poorer, and the political class has flourished and thrived. This may sound simplistic, but nonetheless it is an assessment which the aam aadmi holds true in the country.

Against this background, we find no cause either to share in the

Congress party's euphoria over the "historic coronation" of the "yuvaraj", Rahul Gandhi or in the BJP's discomfiture over the plight of its erstwhile president Nitin Gadkari who has had to yield place to Rajnath Singh for the high office. The celebrations in the Congress over Rahul Gandhi's elevation as vice-president and the circumstances, not very flattering, in which Gadkari has been eased out and Rajnath Singh inducted show that both the parties have become highly personality-centric. Both the parties revolve around personalities rather than around ideology or principle or service.

Like his father Rajiv Gandhi, Rahul has been a reluctant politician. During the last ten years, the crown was offered to him more than thrice, and yet, like Caesar, he rejected it as many times as it was offered. Now, ahead of the 2014 polls, the young man has succumbed to pressure. Though he has been number two to Sonia Gandhi all these years, and been treated as such by the rank and file, the formal anointing, and that too at a party conclave where a session of the AICC was also held, puts the official seal on the promotion.

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The stage has been set by the Congress for the party's number two to become prime minister in 2014, if the party and the alliance it commands win the contest.

Between the lines

Shinde spoils Rahul's launch

Kuldip Nayar

Rahul Gandhi's track record after he entered politics a decade ago is unremarkable. He has not shown himself up as a vote getter. Indeed, he has lost many a battle for the party in many states. His leadership qualities have remained well-hidden. The public movements like the anti-corruption, or the mass protest against the gangrape in Delhi or the angry upsurge of common people against the beheading of an Indian soldier failed to provoke young Rahul to come out in solidarity with the aam aadmi. But, admittedly, he has impressed one and all by his sincerity of purpose, his eagerness to do good for the people, his uninhibited demonstration of moral support to the villagers and the deprived classes, and his humility. On whether he is prime minister material, no unbiased assessment is available. Yes, the prime minister considers him possessing enough merit, talent and competence to join his Cabinet. Rahul has stayed away from the government on the excuse that the system as constituted is unable to deliver the goods.

It is now taken for granted that the BJP's prime ministerial candidate will be Narendra Modi. There has been also speculation that an inexperienced candidate like Rahul Gandhi will find Modi's challenge formidable. The saving grace for the Congress is that not all sections of the NDA support Modi. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is an outspoken critic of Modi. He may be a candidate himself. There are other aspirants in the NDA also. Modi's

(Continued on Page 10)

January 30 is the day when Mahatma Gandhi was shot dead by a Hindu fanatic for partition of India. Gopal Godse who killed him remained unrepentant and said in his defence in the Punjab High Court, where the case was heard: "Gandhi was a hypocrite. Even after the massacre of the Hindus by the Muslims, he was happy. The more the massacres of Hindus, the taller (he raised) his flag of secularism."

India paid a heavy price to uphold the values of pluralism. Yet a similar kind of incipient group has crept up, with the same ideas of eliminating those who are of different religion or who have stuck to the ideal of secularism. This group is attacking India's polity relentlessly and adding to its followers in the name of religion.

Union Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde has said that "reports have come during the NIA (National Investigation Agency) probe that BJP and RSS conduct terror training camps to spread terrorism." He further said: "Bombs were planted in Samjhauta Express, Mecca Masjid and also a blast was carried out in Malegaon. We will have to think about it seriously..."

The statement may be a bit sensational and I wish Shinde had not made it at this time when there is a fallout in India on what is happening at the border. And the facts he used at the Congress conclave at Jaipur raise doubts about

his intent. He looked as if he was out to defame the BJP and the RSS. I have no quarrel with him because both bodies are out of step with the principles of secularism we pursue.

What Shinde should have done is to produce evidence on which he has based his disclosures. A white paper before the next session of parliament in February is an appropriate measure. At a time when Islamist terrorism has already become a nightmare for the authorities, Hindu terrorism can be a greater threat because it will contaminate the majority community. Communalism by the minority community can be tackled. But when it embraces the majority community, it can become fascism.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has alleged again at the same conclave that Hindu nationalist terrorism is not the answer to Muslim one that comes reportedly from Pakistan. This may be correct but it does not help the situation developing in the country.

A Muslim intellectual from Pakistan has emailed his comment: "While there is no denial that there is a Pakistani connection in some of the terrorist attacks in India such as 26 November there should be also no doubt about the equally true fact that Indian Muslims themselves have many reasons to fight back on the Indian state that is treating them unfairly for now more than 60 years in India, just keeping in view the

Babri masjid attack and murder of Muslims in Gujarat.”

He further says, “in an increasingly violent world where the West is waging war for colonization of natural resources and political influence everywhere one should not be surprised to find out that violence creates new violence. Every action has a reaction as we have seen on French misadventure in Mali and Algiers.”

The response of the BJP is understandably hostile. It has demanded an apology from the prime minister and has threatened a bandh throughout the country. Yet after readmitting Kalyan Singh, who was chief minister when the Babri masjid was demolished to the last brick, the BJP’s anger has lost sting. It should be defensive in its approach.

Nonetheless, Shinde’s disclosures have lessened the sheen of Rahul Gandhi’s anointment as number two in the Congress. But this has not mattered with the party men who have suddenly begun calling Rahul, not *Mr* but *Ji*, the nomenclature the party uses for respect and acceptability.

By elevating Rahul from the position of secretary-general to that of vice-president of the party does not declare as if he is its nominee for the prime ministership in the 2014 general elections. He says he will build up the party. It looks rather odd that his mother, Sonia Gandhi, the president and he the vice-president, should be together building the party. But then the Congress, engripped by the dynastic politics, cannot help. It has to carry out Sonia Gandhi’s wishes, even though Manmohan Singh has lost

importance and has become a lame duck prime minister.

True, Rahul made a good, emotional speech at Jaipur. But what did it say, even if it is assumed that he wrote it himself? The observations like overhauling the system or fighting against corruption are empty words. How can he be taken seriously when he knows that his brother-in-law Robert Vadra has dishonestly acquired lands in Haryana?

People in India and abroad want to know Rahul’s views on the burning problems facing the country, not a goody-goody speech. He has never uttered a word on the international scene. Ordinarily, it may not be necessary to comment on such subjects. But since he is a candidate for prime ministership he has to allow a peep into his mind on these topics.

My hunch is that Rahul may not be the Congress candidate for the prime ministerial position in the next election. Sonia Gandhi, who reportedly wept on his elevation fearing that power was like poison, may carry on with Manmohan Singh as long as he lasts, if the Congress heads the post-election government. Rahul may step in after Manmohan Singh.

Some other person may also be a possibility. Already Finance Minister P. Chidambaram has engaged a tutor to learn Hindi. Sonia Gandhi is herself giving prominence to Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kamal Nath and has nominated him to lead the delegation at Davos. Commerce Minister Anand Sharma is only a delegate, although in the past the Commerce Minister has headed such delegations.

The 2014 election may turn out to be a contest between secular and non-secular forces. However, the BJP will think twice before nominating Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi. One, he will polarise the country and, two, the BJP will find it difficult to organise allies if he is projected as prime minister. The party should recall how the Vajpayee’s first government had to resign after 13 days in office because no other party was willing to join hands with it. Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

Verma report praiseworthy

Socialist Party (India) welcomes Verma Committee report for declining to recommend death sentence to a rapist and also for recommending review of AFSPA. We, the people of India and particularly the youths should orient themselves to behave in a humane and civilized manner while dealing with women. Law enforcement machinery can be helpful only when people at large cultivate civic virtues.

Demand to repeal AFSPA is an old demand raised by the people of Manipur and other N.E States as also by the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir state. It is high time the Central Government bows to the wishes of the people and do away with draconian laws. Armed Forces should not be deployed for curbing insurgency, which is by now on decline. Vigilant populace is the true custodian of public law and order. Local police should be more duty-conscious and people-friendly.

Pannalal Surana,
Chairman, Central Parliamentary Board

On Latehar Incident

The PUCL condemns the recent incident of mutilation and placing IEDs inside the bodies of CRPF personnel killed in an encounter with Maoist forces in forests of Latehar in Jharkhand. Placing IEDs inside the abdomen or stomach of dead men seriously endangers lives of uninvolved others like doctors and medical personnel who perform post mortems. Such acts of desecration of dead bodies is unacceptable and inhuman, constitutes a violation of all acceptable norms of human rights and robs the dead of their dignity.

It is the PUCL's understanding that under no circumstances can acts of brutality be justified, even if they be in response to equally heinous and brutal acts unleashed by the security forces, as we are seeing presently. We equally stress that whatever the circumstances, the security forces must act within the bounds of law.

As pointed out by the PUCL national council resolution of August 2012, '*Operation Greenhunt*' launched by the security forces and police of the Central and State governments in nine states across central and eastern India, purportedly to counter the Maoists has, apart from claiming hundreds of lives of both Maoists as also the police and Central Forces, killed thousands of ordinary tribals and others caught in the cross fire. Vast areas of mountainous regions in these states have become cordoned off by Central Forces and a virtual siege of terror launched by the CRPF, para military and police forces against local citizens. This has resulted in unending spirals of violence resulting in encounter

deaths, disappearances, torture, killings, sexual assaults, mass burning and destruction of villages; many other acts of untold miseries has made life for adivasis in these areas one of a 'living hell'.

In this scenario, the PUCL would like to reiterate its resolution of the Ranchi National Convention held on 1st December, 2009 and calls upon the Government and the Maoists to cease all hostilities and engage in a dialogue. We also believe that open and free access to the public, civil society and the media should be permitted in these areas so that all information gets reported, and no restrictions should be placed due to threats of the Government or Maoists or other Naxalite groups. We also reiterate the urgency of equitable development in the tribal areas. The PUCL also firmly believes that for every death, including as a result of action by the security forces and the police, an FIR should be lodged followed by fair investigation and just trial.

We have had a consistent stand on the question of violence as a means of settling disputes or conflicts of whatever nature, whether socio-economic or political. This was articulated in the PUCL National Convention held on March 7 1982, at Madras (now Chennai), "The PUCL reaffirms its faith in the democratic way of life. It appeals to all to use to the utmost the agencies and methods available in an open society. Apart from other factors, violence, even for laudable objectives, will legitimise counter-violence by the State and other groups". We reaffirm that even those who have taken to violence are

entitled to due process of law. We believe that this commitment is the very faith of an open society and also that adhering to this commitment is an effective way of converting all to the democratic and peaceful path.

We would like to point out that when Indian citizens are abducted or killed as 'informers' or public servants are killed, it is the responsibility of the State to bring the guilty to book. The State must assert its authority, but strictly within the bounds of the law. We hold that a Maoist is an Indian citizen, who might have violated the law of the land and is entitled to be tried by a court of law like any other citizen who might have violated some law. A Maoist, no matter how serious the allegation against him, is entitled to be tried like Nathuram Godse and Ajmal Kasab. Godse had killed Gandhiji and Kasab was not even an Indian citizen. No matter how serious the situation, the State must act within the bounds of the law. Equally, when the personnel of the agencies of the State violate the law and commit brutalities and human rights violations, it is important that they be prosecuted and not granted impunity and protection.

The spirals of violence and counter-violence in the troubled areas of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and other states is grim and life threatening. The PUCL, through this appeal, is therefore giving a national call for a "*Humanitarian Respite*" and appeals to the Central and State Governments, the security forces and also to the Maoists, to agree to an immediate ceasefire, stopping of armed engagements and engage in talks.

Prabhakar Sinha
National President

V. Suresh
National General Secretary
Peoples Union of Civil Liberties

Right to Food: Nutritional and Social Dimensions

K. S. Chalam

The Right to Food is considered as one of the important components of the Fundamental Right to Life in the Indian context. It was also recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, reiterating the responsibility of every state to make everyone to be free from hunger. The convention on the Rights of Child particularly with reference to Art 22, 23, 24, 26, and 27 and the Apex court of India recognizing the right to food as integral to Right to life have pushed the entitlement to food as an enforceable right by virtue of Article 32 of Indian constitution. The World Conference on Human Rights through its Vienna declaration 1993 reaffirmed that, "human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birth right of all human beings; their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of governments".

The National Human Rights Commission through its deliberations and proceedings has established the legal foundation for the right to food. It seems the international pressure through the Millennium Development Goals and the paradigm of Globalization and with the consistent struggle of some individuals and NGOs induced the NAC finally to draft the National Food Security Bill 2011 (NFSB). Interestingly, several issues came up for consideration in the process of litigation and public discourse on right to food both in the Judiciary and in the Legislature debates. The executive through the aid and advice of the expert groups of different persuasions have actively participated in the deliberations

and the future of the Bill is now hanging in balance between (to use an old terminology) libertarians and the egalitarians. It is a known fact that the rights are not sanctioned or ordained just like that in any part of the world; they are fought and won by those who are passionate about the wellbeing of mankind. The story of food security in India appears to follow the same course.

There are several ad hoc programmes and schemes drafted either by the Planning Commission or by the individual departments of government to meet the challenges of scarcity of food to vulnerable groups in different parts of the country. The major concern in all these schemes seems to be to address the immediate threats like drought, famine, tsunami, etc. As against this, the Food security Bill 2011 contained enough provisions that would ensure the entitlements to meet the aspirations of millions of the destitute Indians once it is passed in the Parliament.

Content of Food

The discourse on food security or right to food seems to have concerned more about the provisioning of food and little worried about the kind of food, habits of people, the cultural background of the beneficiaries and the content of food. Unlike in some of the Anglo-Saxon countries, the food habits, the ecological conditions, culture, etc. are not uniform in India to make a homogeneous prescription of the content of food for all Indians. The draft bill however has defined under 2(k) that food shall mean any article used for human consumption. It has

further indicated that any article, flavor that enters the preparation of food or declared by government as food comes under the category of food. Food grains are defined as rice, wheat, millets, sorghum, maize, etc. It seems most of the activists and some experts are disquiet with the definition of food grains and are anxious as to the supply and the cost involved in procuring the same. It is alleged that the bill is kept pending due to the fact that there is no consensus on the amount of subsidy and the proportion of people (poor) to be brought under the priority, general and excluded categories. As the expert policy makers are examining the issue within the framework of a free market paradigm rather than a constitutional and welfare consideration, it is difficult to arrive at an immediate solution.

The debate on the food security or the right to food has clarified that 'every person shall have physical, economic and social access, at all times either directly or by means of financial purchases to, quantitatively and qualitatively adequate, sufficient and safe food which ensures an active and healthy life' (Art 4 NFSB). It seems this unambiguous mention of access to adequate food is a cause of concern to some experts who knew about the performance of the agricultural sector for the last few years.

The whole issue of the Green Revolution that took place under the supervision of the state and its overwhelming performance in meeting the growing needs of the population seem to have slowed down after 1990. In fact, the negative growth rates for some

years was a great source of anxiety and even experts started looking at clouds (monsoon) for solutions. It is presented in the Economic Survey of 2011 that the compound rates of growth of the yield and production of rice, wheat and coarse cereals during 1981-2011 are not uniform and have a declining trend (chapter 8). The above three items are considered by the experts as the food basket for the entire country and therefore, it is really a problem for NFSB to commit and strain the economy (according to them have other priorities). Even the investment in the agriculture sector in terms of the gross capital formation has also declined and the policy makers seem to have failed in recognizing the problem in a country where 60 percent of the population relies on agriculture for succor (even in 2011). One cannot be blind to these facts while examining the NFSB. In fact, these details provide a vision for a different frame work probably specifying right to land and security of common property and livelihood resources.

There is no doubt that the rate of growth of the economy and its global orientation particularly to the western styles of living has changed the consumption pattern of the population during the same period (1987-2010). The Economic Survey quoting the 66th round of NSS has provided data to show how the consumption expenditure on cereals both in rural and urban areas have declined. There is a marked change in the consumption habits of people as more amounts of money are being spent on milk and milk products and the expenditure on pulses has remained plummeted. Fascinatingly, there is marginal change in the expenditure on non-vegetarian food items like eggs, meat, fish, etc. Similarly, the production of fish during the period

is doubled and our exports have also increased substantially. This data and information have implications for the food security of people who have different habits in obtaining proteins rather than through a package of vegetarian items like pulses. In fact people in the rural areas obtain protein foods with their own effort and have to retain or obtain pulses which they may exchange for other low cost calories.

Dimensions of Food habits

The story of poverty is known to scholars who are familiar with the struggles of the oppressed. Interestingly, economists have entered this field allegedly appropriating the concept of poverty originally developed by sociologists. Though the accusation is partially correct, economists have made the subject a source of great professional enterprise by incorporating dimensions of measurement to it. In fact, the issue of poverty was first taken up by nationalist leaders like Dadabhai Nawroji who had published 'Poverty and Un-British rule in India' where he has calculated the cost of 'rice or flour, dhal, mutton, vegetables, ghee, oil and salt' that came to about Rs 15 to 35 at 1867-68 prices in different regions of the country. Rammanohar Lohia, an economist by training had also given figures and discussed it in the Parliament. But, this concept has somehow drifted from its original initiation and is now going round the statisticians and nutritional experts. This has attracted the wrath of the common man for the failure to address their empirical reality rather than exhibiting skills of measurement of some experts for the last five decades.

The theory of poverty has entered the public domain through Planning Commission that has used nutritional standards or calorie

intake as a source to measure poverty since 1970s. It is considered that a person in the rural area with hard labor needs 2400 calories per day while the urban norm is fixed at 2100 calories to deem anyone living below that level as poor. The calories are then indirectly obtained from different items of consumer expenditure data. Though the idea of nutrition is scientific and is being used by scholars to determine the health and wellbeing of people, its application in India to estimate the poverty levels has been a subject of great controversy. It appears that late VKRV Rao, the noted economist has said that the poverty line thus calculated is only a 'nutrition line' and someone called it 'starvation line'. The contention about the basic data to estimate the priority, general and excluded groups to provide subsidized food under the discourse of Right to Food seems to have not been resolved largely due to this hullabaloo.

Experts in the area of poverty studies mostly under the direction of World Bank sponsored studies have concluded that economic reforms have substantially increased the rate of growth and thus reduced poverty levels in India. This is the sum and substance of 600 pages anthology on 'the Great Indian Poverty Debate' published by two World Bank experts Angus Deaton and Valerie Kozel. Interestingly, none of the articles in the book touched the core of the poor in India, Adivasis, Dalits, Service castes, Minorities and Women. It seems some of the experts are guided by the so-called nutritional experts (not from NIN) who appears to have advised government experts that there is significant development in the country and therefore people are adapted to sedentary life (based on European standards) and the norm 2100-2400 is very high and

outdated. It is better to reduce the values to 1776-1999. We do also come across arguments like, as the height and weight of Indians being very low, the above calorie standards would lead to overfeeding and a waste.

It is a strange logic and is far from our everyday experience. It is common sense that 60 percent of the population still depends upon agriculture and even if allowance is given to mechanization in some pockets, majority of the farm workers do hard labour. Even in the urban areas workers who come under BPL category use manual labour. The average height and weight of the elite and the poor is slowly rising and we have different social or ethnic clusters with different statures. It can also be argued that the low average weight or height or stunted growth is precisely due to lack of sufficient food. Further, we have pockets of flourosis, endemic to tribal regions that need special attention. Therefore, some civil society groups are arguing for a norm of 2700 calories. But, some of the experts from the urban elite seem to consider their environs and their habits as the average and come to such obtuse conclusions. But, there is a deeper design behind such estimates - to certify that the economic reform promises are realized. Thus, it is possible to show that poverty levels in India are declining only by way of reducing the nutritional standards. Otherwise, the present rate of decline in poverty was same as in the pre-reform period.

The draft bill on Right to Food has defined several concepts including malnutrition. It is said that 'malnutrition is a condition which develops when the body over a period of time does not receive or absorb adequate and appropriate calories,

proteins and other nutrients for good health, growth and maintenance of human body and mind'. The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB) have been conducting studies to provide information and data on nutritional aspects of Indian population at different age groups. The NFHS provide data that show the impact of malnutrition on the growth of the human body, mortality rates, etc. In fact the WHO in collaboration with FAO and other international organizations like UNICEF have been providing technical assistance and standards on this subject. Most of our institutes seem to follow the standards prescribed by the agencies. The recommended dietary allowances (RDA) tables prepared by NIN are available on the net for ready reference. However, what seems to be not clear is about the kind of food items people with different social, cultural and ecological regions of the country take and their nutritional values.

The Government of India under the Ministry of HRD as a nodal agency is now implementing the Mid Day Meal scheme for the children in the age group of 6-14 in all the government and government aided schools in the country. It is found that an amount of Rs 10000 crores are being spent on the scheme on 12 crore children in 12.5 lakh schools. It is alleged by civil society groups that the MNCs are now eyeing on this segment to capture in the name of supplying micro-nutrients?

The apex court and the government seem to have come to the view of providing a nutritional diet that gives 650 calories to a primary school going child and 900 calories to an upper primary school going child. They do also get 20 grams of protein per day. But, there

is a nutrition or calorie gap here. The NIN and other agencies have recommended dietary allowances for a child of 6+ years as 1350 calories per day and in the age group of 7-14 about 1690-2100 calories depending upon the sex of the child and body weight. It is difficult to get any answer to this gap from published documents and we may have to infer that it will be supplemented by the families, welfare hostels, etc. But, some of the indigenous people like adivasis, mushahars (Bihar Dalits) have their own methods of meeting the satiety by eating rats, 50 leaves, 46 fruits, 15 flowers, 14 tubers, 11 seeds, 4 gums, fish, beef, pork and other items. The question is - do they consume them with human dignity that is fundamental in a paradigm of rights or forced to eat them so as to stay alive like any other animal? Would the government accept the so-called nutritional experts' advise that the intake including the animal protein is sufficient and they do not need any subsidy?

Issues for Discussion

1. Is the right to food an exclusive right or need to be combined with other freedoms?

2. The RTF is based on the assumption that each person is independent and exclusive while group identity as caste or tribe is important in matters of food habits of some groups. How to reconcile this?

3. The food habits and culture vary from region to region and are basically evolved on the basis of the social background, religious orientation and other considerations. Do they have any role to play in RTF?

4. Malnutrition is not a condition of the absence of adequate food and it can also result in as a consequence of diseases such as Measles (virus)

among children. How do we account for that?

5. Security of food with adequate supply of food grains without ensuring the required calories would defeat the basic purpose of the right. Can we add nutrition as a part of the right?

6. How does the right of the child to get prescribed nutrition inputs ensured without infringing his/her culture and food habit? How to make up the calorie gap in MDM scheme?

7. Whether the RTF is to be articulated within the frame work of free market or institutions have any role to play?

8. What is the impact of money transfer on RTF instead of subsidized food grains supplied to vulnerable groups in other parts of the world including USA (food stamps)?

9. How do the connection between poverty levels and food security are to be linked? Is there a need to review the standard amount of Calories in India in the back drop of new research inputs from medical sciences?

10. Whether the use of Paradigm of Rights in the area of RTF helps us to ensure ethical entitlements or instruments of justice?

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Anarchy sans Rebellion

Karan Kharb

The gang rape of a hapless girl in a bus on busy roads of India's capital city New Delhi on December 16 is just another slap on the face of Indian Democracy. Crime in the city has become a way of life leaving citizens to fend for themselves. Before we are able to recover from one sad occurrence, a new menace is lurking to pounce. Anti-corruption crusaders had squarely accused as many as fifteen ministers of the Manmohan Singh government for corruption. Not one of them has dared to sue the accusers for false allegation or defamation. Nearly a third of the Lok Sabha members are facing trials for various offences including heinous crimes as serious as murder, rape, extortion, robbery, kidnapping et al; and yet it is they who make laws for us to follow! Involved so intensely in their self-serving pursuits, how can they devote time to matters like public safety, welfare and development? No wonder, rapists, kidnappers, murderers rule the roost while the law abiding citizens, especially women pray for safety and take it as a divine reward if they are back home safe at night. What an adventure!

Guarding the Strong, Dumping the Hapless

Here is what public safety and security means to those who govern us. As per the details available on government portals and ministerial statements in the Parliament early this year, there is a countrywide shortfall of as many as five lakh personnel. A pan-India panorama until March 2010 had a total of

50,059 police personnel deployed for VIP protection against an authorised strength of 28,298, that is, as many as 21,761 police personnel in illegal service of the VIPs at a time when there was just one constable for a population of 761 (against the authorised strength of one policeman per 131 population). The situation since then has grown from bad to worse as the latest state of Delhi police deployment shows. Today in Delhi, while there is only one policeman for 364 people, there are 20 policemen per VIP, that is, a force of 8,283 dedicated to 416 VIPs. Deployment of SPG, NSG, ITBP and other para-military forces for Z series category of VIPs is in addition. And in most cases the deployment is not to ward off any security threat (which exists only for a select few), but to add an aura of majesty to the persona of the Neta.

Malls, multiplexes, *mandis*, colleges, institutions, public service centres, bazars, parks, parking spaces – all have learnt to fend for themselves and have their own security guards who pose to protect them without any legal powers. Public safety and security is the first among fundamental responsibilities of every government and a constitutional right of every citizen; otherwise, Right to Life will have no meaning.

Ritual of Official Response

Most crimes pass off without evoking concern from politicians, police or judiciary. Demands and assurances on the floor of the Parliament for 'stringent, exemplary punishment', 'speedy trials',

‘fast track courts’ do not inspire confidence nor do the eloquent demagoguery and crocodile tears shed by actors turned politicians because we have a history of ongoing betrayal of public faith in the country. Shockingly, no responsible authority owns up shortcoming or failure at their level. At best, they put forth excuses to win sympathy and appreciation rather than punitive action. Sometimes, the excuses appear plausible too; but surely, someone is responsible for deficiency, poor maintenance, equipment failure or lack of coordination – whatever the excuse!

Union Home Minister, CM, police chief – all come out with promises as if this would be the last time people had it so bad. But since the aim of these hollow declarations is only to cool down the rising public ire rather than change and improve, they are soon forgotten. Very much like their old speeches and election manifestos, these assurances come handy to our politicians for every successive rape, each being an occasion to rehearse and improve their performance on camera rather than perform and demand performance in governance

... ..

Governance is now marred by rampant corruption, inefficiency and callousness with total absence of accountability almost all over the country. Fed up with a corrupt and callous system, people looking for alternatives under desperation have gradually drifted to the side of the insurgents. Already more than one fourth of the country from Bengal to Kerala is already under the sway of Maoist insurgents. In the fast expanding ‘Liberated Zones’ state authorities are denied access and it is the writ of the insurgents that prevails.

Starved farmers and dissatisfied soldiers are committing suicides as never before. Shopkeepers and small business concerns are buying security by employing private security guards and paying hafta. Victims of loot, molestation, rape, kidnap and perpetual harassment at the hands of outlaws have lost faith in the police and judiciary. They would rather negotiate and buy peace and, if possible, patronage of the hoodlums rather than face disdain and further exploitation at the police station.

Shocking tales drip in blood and tears routinely from government hospitals and private clinics where human life and organs are freely traded with heartless brutality and impunity. News of child abuse in play schools is a daily dose too! There is neither fear nor remorse even when perpetrators of crime are arrested because bail is usually granted sooner than later and the litigation lingers for decades. Now, the Home Minister seeks to douse public ire by promising speedy action and setting up a Commission of Inquiry. What a cruel joke! By now, people know it well that setting up of ‘commissions’ is a fooling tool used by the government to confuse the issue as enquiries would be meandering through a labyrinth of irrelevant details lingering a simple and straight case through months – may be, years!

Public outrage in the capital these days is a pointer to total failure of governance. The hollowness of promises and assurances is betrayed by the fact that our political parties have in fact extended their patronage to the rapists and criminals. Rather than fast-tracking criminal proceedings against the accused, parties are actually abetting crime by giving tickets to criminals and

bringing them to the legislature as MLAs and MPs. Their newly acquired position comes handy to slow down and subvert the legal process. The latest addition is a newly elected MLA (Congress) of Himachal Pradesh gone underground after being charged for murder of a young woman in Panchkula. If more evidence is needed, here are the factual details collated by National Election Watch (NEW) and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR):

In Lok Sabha Elections 2009, political parties gave tickets to six candidates who declared in their Affidavits that they had been charged with rape.

In the last five years, parties gave tickets to 27 of those who affirmed in their Affidavits that they were charged with rape.

There were 260 contesting candidates from various political parties who were charged under different sections of IPC for crimes against women such as ‘outraging modesty of a woman, assault, insulting the modesty of a woman etc.

And these are their self-declarations, not full information about much more that could be lying beneath blackmail, compromise, unregistered and unreported heaps. There are plenty in the corridors of power who, notoriously dreaded for their character, are roaming free even if the likes of ND Tiwari, Gopal Kanda, Mahipal Maderna, Abhishek Singhvi et al are discounted because reported cases of rape and molestation in India are just the tip of the iceberg. Consequentially, the government has lost the character and credibility that could inspire confidence in the masses that are surcharged with anger and strong

urge for change.

India is up and angry. In modern times when political rallies are known for rampage, arson and loot, Anna had ushered in a culture of peaceful, non-violent agitation but finally he had to call it off as the government remained on a switch-off mode. Commendably, the youth power of the nation is still peaceful and very much restrained despite their justified anger. Such peaceful mass representations must be respected and heard empathetically with topmost concern. But the government seems to draw comfort from the public restraint which is a suicidal option chosen by it; for if you spurn peace, violence burst and turn into unmanageable bloodbath. Corruption, crime, anti-people government, arrogant police and civil administration – all add up to make it highly inflammable, not only in Delhi but throughout the country. It is surprising how people are restraining themselves from armed rebellion even in such anarchic times. The government will do well to see the signals and be advised not to try people's patience.

(Continued from Page 2)

advantage is that his candidature will be backed by the RSS.

As things stand, the Congress has an advantage right now over the BJP. Rahul's elevation has united the Congress, at least till the run-up to 2014 begins seriously, whereas Modi's induction is bound to divide the BJP. The present seems an opportune moment for the revival of the Third Front idea. A front that can provide shelter to politicians who want no truck with either the Congress or the BJP. Who will bell the cat?

Deprived Children

Arun Chavan

For the sake of simplicity we have chosen to describe our target group as deprived children, they hail from different tribes and communities. Some elaboration seems necessary to better understand these groups. They form the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid of Indian society, they are of the pariah status and a good part of them buried in the sands of forgetfulness, so that none of the planners and policy-makers of India over the past sixty years could take notice of their existence.

The underprivileged sections are divided into tribes, clans and communities. Their number runs into hundreds, each group is well-defined by its ethnic roots, dress, lingoes, traditions, means of livelihood, life style, its myths and manner of worship. (Deities of the most are pre-Aryan, or an amalgam of Aryan and Dravidian icons and they practice mixed modes of worship). In every sense of the term they live on the fringe of society and there is no socializing between them, if not hostility, and barriers of prejudice and suspicion.

Recently the government of India had appointed a commission of inquiry for them. The findings of the Commission given below are an eye opener:

These findings underline the precariously low index of human development. In respect of many of these groups and tribes the concept of human development has had no relevance at all. Because, for them Time, as it were, has remained motionless at least for 300 years. The total number of groups and tribes is 500 and their combined population is 130 million. They are caught in the vicious cycle of poverty and ignorance and a complete lack of cohesion.

The children are the most vulnerable section of this population. And paradoxically they are potentially the most creative part of it. Reaching education to the rising generation to breach the vicious cycle is the only way forward.

The Nobel Laureate in Economics Dr. Amartya Sen has asserted that they are special children. Their problems are special. They therefore need special schools. By that he meant residential schools, where children from 6 to 18 age group are given education, shelter and sustenance under one roof. He has further emphasized that the investment in their education will bring returns in quicker time than from any other sector of the national economy.

(i)	Children at school:	30 percent
(ii)	Distance from home of primary school for 80 percent of children:	1 to 5 km
(iii)	Land owning families :	9 percent
(iv)	Availability of wage employment:	57 percent
(v)	Availability of food throughout year:	37.5 percent
(vi)	Access to health care service	42.15 percent
(vii)	Raw drinking water availability	70 percent

The enormity of the problem is staggering. It is a question of schooling 80 million children and minors within a set timeline. The challenge has become all the more difficult because of the terminal crisis that envelopes the state-run primary education system. An isolated institutional programme will have only demonstrative value if it is not related to a wider endeavour. Alky rent from end to end cannot be mended by a mere patchwork. Concerted, broad-based activities on a wider scale and over a sustained period of time may point a way out of the tremendous logjam.

The direction that is suggested for the short term is the formation of an action plan targeted at ridding an administrative unit like Kolhapur District of child labour completely, and then induction into the schooling process. Of its population of 2.5 million the district has an estimated number of 40000 child labour hailing from the deprived sections. The feelers we have sent out have evoked a positive response from lead elements of Kolhapur.

At an opportune moment soon as the school, managed by Gandhi Worldwide Education Institution, who are our associates, attains palpable shape at the Vashi Campus, with prior spade work, the campaign process can be set in motion. That school may be looked at as a demonstration unit.

This meeting and this interaction is taking place at a time when the whole world is teetering on the cusp of a crisis. I believe we are not meeting as fair weather friends but as partners of a joint action for a better and more secure future for all of us, who could be described as Earthlings.

Debate about poverty alleviation which is interlinked with education of the millions of deprived children is balked at the prospects of excessive carbon emission. The debate is deadlocked on how the responsibilities should be shared between the two halves of the world, namely the developed North as against the developing South. The developed world has already consumed a great amount of the atmospheric space. During the coming decades China and India will use a good part of the remaining space to achieve decent living standards for their people, which includes education of deprived children in India.

Carbon emission is the great debate of the century. At the Kyoto Conference many nations urged the USA to reduce their consumption volume to bring down the carbon emission caused by it. But the USA representative said their lifestyle was not negotiable.

My younger daughter Vasundhara, her husband and their baby daughter live near Houston, Texas. She told me the bath room of her flat has seven lights and all of them lit up with one switch. I wondered to myself do we really need seven lights for one small 8x10 ft bath room. Perhaps that is what American lifestyle means. In the USA having seven lighting points in a bathroom is normal level of living. Whereas one lamp in a hovel where our child learns to read and write is a luxury. This wide chasm needs to be bridged without genuine hardship to any party.

To light a traditional light bulb in a fossil fuel-driven electricity system, one needs so many things to be in place. Let us enumerate

them: one needs a transmission network with pylons and cables to deliver the power, a power station to generate the electricity and people in a colliery in Bihar to dig out the coal, or workers in Kirgizstan or Quatar to extract the gas from the ground. Then the fuel must be exported to the power station. This means that the energy we need for the light bulb requires much more energy at the source. A normal light bulb which is in itself fairly inefficient, will need about 50 units of energy to produce 10 units. About 6 to 8 percent of the energy will be lost in transmission and distribution. The power station will be running at 35 to 45 percent efficiency and there will be about 10 percent loss in the transportation chain of the fuel from the mine head to the power station, which entails even overseas transportation.

“We have heard of a new movement taking root in the developed world. It is called Transition Towns. They are the places where climate is stable, where we have reliable, nutritious and tasty local food supplies, where the local economy is thriving, where we have affordable and ecologically sound energy, where we know and trust our community and those that provide food and provisions and all this is something that they have created themselves”

I have quoted here Teresa Anderson of UK who has made these remarks about a Transition Town named Totnes, a small market town in Southwest England.

And in UK alone there are a thousand such communities. So, there is hope for all of us. Self-sufficient communities was the dream which is central to Gandhian thought.

Relay Fast at Mumbai

Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan withdrew its 10 days long agitation, after having received certain concrete promises and directions for investigations in the issues related to the corruption in respect of housing rights and land scams throughout Mumbai. The State Government has agreed to conduct an enquiry through the Principal Secretary, Housing into SRA projects in six localities - Golibar, Ambedkar Nagar - Mulund, Ramnagar - Ghatkopar, Chandivali, Sion-koliwada and Indira nagar - Jogeshwari, defining the modus operandi involving all stakeholders and holding public hearings.

While the Andolan was going on, all the things were moving on the right path. However, within a few days of withdrawal of the agitation and announcement of inquiry on the six SRA projects having approval on fraudulency and involving irregularities and illegalities, the harassment of the people have been started by the henchmen of developers under the tight police protection. Few examples of this harassment are cutting of public water supply and locking the doors of fencing compound just to block the way of local residents of Sion Koliwada. No cognizance was taken by Police and MCGM Authorities for this. In Golibar, Ambewadi, on 18 January, 2013, developer with help of his 70-80 henchmen entered to fence the demolished area where the henchmen started assaulting the women with stone and bamboos to vacate the place. These women were badly assaulted and were admitted in hospital as they were severely injured. Nirmal Nagar Police Station

has not taken any cognizance of the matter and was playing pro-builder role. On the contrary, FIR has been registered in favour of the developer's henchmen and against the people who have raised their voice against the injustice.

Nirmal nagar Police station has set up a trap for the people who are raising their voice against the injustice and are fighting for their rights by registering false cases i.e. C.R. No.17/13 u/s. 143,323,324,342,354,427,447,504,506 IPC wherein they have prepared FIR against the whistle blowers and the ones who are playing leading roles in taking out fraud of the developer. In this case they have mentioned that there are 30-40 other males and females which mean that the ones who will initiate protest against the illegalities will be taken into the case. The most important question for Police Administration and Authorities is that on what basis SRP and police protection are provided here to the private person/body.

Demolition ride is still going on in different parts of slums and localities. Today demolition and eviction was carried out at M.H.B Colony, Opp. Balvikas school, Sarvodaya nagar, Jogeshwari(E), wherein MHADA officials came for eviction and demolition without any orders and denied to show the same. Same was the case with the Police Authority, when the questions were asked regarding if any, letter received by them from MHADA for providing police protection to carry out the eviction and demolition activity. One of the official replied that they are going to send the letter

by post and they are yet to receive the same. Then the question arises that how, before receiving the letter for providing the police protection from the concerned authority, protection was provided by Police Authority for eviction process. In this process literally, the policemen had manhandled and pulled the residents out of their houses in which they had not even bothered about the old people. One old lady had got injured in this eviction process which was without any intimation and notice.

We all at Ambewadi Golibar, are declaring our "strong protest" against such an act. Protesting against all the above mentioned injustice and harassment, Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan with various slums as well as middle class localities across Mumbai has decided to continue and even intensify the struggle at Ambewadi Golibar, Mumbai, to reach out on the deaf ears of Government Authorities for our rights and justice.

Even though the Apex Authorities are issuing the orders of certain investigations but the sub-ordinates are least bothered to implement and follow the directions given by their Senior Authorities.

The struggle of Mumbai's slum dwellers and those affected by corruption in Slum Rehabilitation and Re-development, continues at Ambewadi Golibar, Mumbai. We also stand in solidarity with the slumdwellers of Bangalore who are facing evictions and police repression at EWS quarters at

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America is in Congress's DNA, not India

At the Jaipur convention Rahul Gandhi's assertion that the Congress is Mahatama Gandhi's party and India is in its DNA is hollow and misleading. The Socialist Party would like to put the record straight regarding this hyperbole and contentious issue. Mahatama Gandhi is too far away for them, the present-day Congress has not remained a Congress even of the Indira Gandhi era. It is a Congress of Sonia Gandhi, Manmohan Singh and Rahul Gandhi via Rajiv Gandhi. Mahatama Gandhi, at the time of independence, had said that the Congress has served its purpose and should now be disbanded and a new political organisation should be formed for the political purpose. He further suggested that the Congress should be converted into Lok Sewak Sangh to serve the social purpose.

There were forces, communalists on one hand and communists and dalits on the other, who challenged the credentials of the Congress through different arguments. Some times they aligned with the colonial rulers in their denial to the Congress. So it is open to debate whether the Congress of the freedom movement had entire India in its DNA? However, as far as the independence struggle is concerned, the Congress was a pan Indian forum. But there can be no doubt that the present-day Congress has the U.S. in its DNA. It follows the dictates of the U.S., the epitome of neo-imperialism, and flourishes. The statement of Rahul Gandhi would be right if we accept

the Americanised India as the one and only truth about the country.

Congressmen celebrated Rahul Gandhi's speech, as expected, in a sycophantic manner. The mainstream media too projected Rahul Gandhi and his speech in such a manner as if he were really a true statesman who constructs and writes his statements and speeches himself. Everybody knows that he is a protected and projected leader of the Nehru family on whom a big amount of money, earned by the hard-working and honest people of the country, is being spent from the very beginning. It is also known to everybody that so far it has been a futile exercise on the part of the Congress. For the Socialist Party, it is a matter of concern that the serious political contemplation and debate, in this neo-liberal era, is replaced by costly spectacles repeatedly organized by political parties and propagated by the media.

The Congress has placed the rich resources of the country to be looted and plundered by the national and multinational corporate houses and companies. Its government is deeply immersed in corruption. The P.M., several Cabinet Ministers, and Chief Ministers face charges of scams of enormous multitude. The result is hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, price-rise, insecurity and farmers' suicides.

Rahul Gandhi has always been number two in the Congress, after his mother. Therefore his call to

bring a change in the Congress party and the policies of the government is old story. It is also old story that Congress leaders clap on every word he utters. This time this tamasha became 'serious' when some Congressmen wept while listening to Rahul's statement that his mother wept before him the earlier evening!

The message by Sonia Gandhi to Rahul that power is nothing but poison has been applauded by Congressmen. The message that this poison could be balanced by using power for the apparent wellbeing of people has also been well understood by the masses who have little option but to keep drinking the poison of hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, price-rise, insecurity and suicides.

The Jaipur conference once again proved that the Congress is a den of sycophants, many of whom do not have any worth of their own to rise to the top posts they are holding. They worship the Nehru-Indira Gandhi family as the Congress family with the fervent hope that this would secure for them the 'cream' of personal power and gain.

The Socialist Party would like to caution that the Congress and its leaders are not at all concerned about their needs. They, like the BJP and other mainstream political parties, are only concerned for the upper-and-middle class India who has been benefitted by the neo-liberal policies of the last three decades and reflects the U.S. in its DNA.

- Prem Singh,
General Secretary, Socialist Party (India)

Fishworkers' Demands

- The General Body Meeting of National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) was held in Puducherry from 6th to 8th December 2012. Delegates from all the 10 coastal states of India participated in the meeting.
- The meeting elected a new Chairperson of NFF in the person of Rambhau Patil and a new General Secretary of NFF in the person of M. Ilango.
- The General Body Meeting passed the following resolutions:
- In opposition of the commissioning of the Kudnakulam Nuclear Power Plant and demanding immediate withdrawal of cases and warrants against the people fighting against the Nuclear Power Plant as well as release of all arrested people.
- In opposition of Nuclear Power in general and in support of alternative energy options with conservation of energy that can more than compensate the Nuclear Energy in use in the country and calling for a nuclear free India.
- In demand of an independent and separate Fisheries Ministry in the Government of India
- In opposition of Foreign Direct Investment in Retail Trade
- In opposition of blanket bans on fishing imposed in the Marine and Coastal Protected Areas like Sundarban in West Bengal, Gahirmatha and Bhaitarkanika in Orissa and Gulf of Mannar in Tamilnadu and claiming right

to fish and fishing to manage the fisheries resources in these protected areas.

- In demand of immediate payment of insurance and compensation amount to the next of kin of the fishermen lost in the sea on indemnity bond without waiting for six years.
- In demand of fisheries to be dealt at par with agriculture in the matters of loan waivers, interest on loans and also in demand of tax free supply of fishing gears and equipments used by the small and traditional fishing communities.
- In opposition of the continuing excesses by Sri Lankan Navy over Indian fishermen and demanding stern action by the Government of India and the Indian Navy against Sri Lankan as well as the protection of the innocent fishermen by the Indian Navy.

The following Action Programmes were adopted in the General Body –

A. Fisher People from all over the coast will sit in a Five day dharna at Jantar Mantar in Delhi in the 1st week of March 2013 in demand of –

1. A separate fisheries ministry in the Government of India.
2. Booking of violations of CRZ Notification.
3. Fisher people's Rights to fish in the marine and coastal protected areas.
4. Fisher People's Rights to seasonal fish drying on Jambudwip.

5. Ban on purse seining.

6. Kerosene and diesel subsidy for small and traditional fishermen.

B. In view of the urgent need of an act to protect the coastal traditional fisher people's rights, concerned with the totally unacceptable draft bill circulated by MoEF and taking note of the Prime Minister's reference to the necessity of such an Act in the CoP-11 at Hyderabad, NFF has resolved to prepare a draft discussion paper on it for wide circulation and discussion among the fisher people and their organizations towards preparation of an alternative draft and present the same to the government.

Vasudev Bloor, T. Peter, Pradip Chatterjee

(Continued from Page 12)

Ejipura by BBMP. We demand that illegal demolitions by state will be resisted at all costs and we will stand in solidarity wherever homes will be demolished across the country.

Andolan demands that Maharashtra Government takes firm and concrete decisions, investigates into corruption and irregularities as well as Government should also carry out inquiry on Police Administration and Authorities for providing police protection to private bodies and for not even taking cognizance of the effected people and until then, people are determined to continue.

–Sumit Wajale, Sandeep Yeole,
Ajit bhau, Dattaram Tandel,
Sushant Gumre, Madhuri Shivkar

Rape Rage

Nandana Reddy

After the recent Delhi incident, Rape Rage has suddenly burst on our consciousness. It has ripped the lid off the ugly Indian underbelly. Though we all know that violence against women of all ages and social backgrounds, including the ultimate form – rape often combined with torture and ending in murder was common place, we kept it under wraps, allowing it to fester under the surface, denying its existence and suppressing any form of redressal, remedy or restitution or even discussion, by creating a climate where the victim becomes the guilty one tarnished, stained, suspect and immoral – often forcing her to seek refuge and absolution in death.

All the systems we have created to protect ourselves, all the constitutional provisions proclaiming equality and all our religious teachings pontificating the protection and veneration of women, fall apart, as we, so-called civilized citizens of a democracy, the guardians of rights, the protectors of the weak, the custodians of law and morality turn violators and women are desecrated by those who are supposed to care. Our elected representatives, police, courts and even religious leaders – the ones we should turn to in need – all suffer from the same ailment – misogyny. As products of our society they only reflect what we have constructed in the name of progress.

The Delhi rape case attracted attention. Thousands came out onto the streets – young and old, men and women from all strata of society. Why?

Perhaps it was because the girl was just the girl next door – not a

‘wayward’ girl returning from a pub – not ‘gallivanting’ with a bunch of boys – not dressed ‘provocatively’ – not a call girl. There were no ‘excuses’ this time, though some tried; and “why was she out so late?” or “she was kissing on the bus” – but it was difficult to malign her with the usual denigrating clichés.

Perhaps it was because it was Delhi where there is a more politically and socially aware section of young and middle class. Perhaps it was the timing.

But perhaps it was just the last straw – the final ember that lit the fire – perhaps we had all just had enough. The simmering anger and discontent at having been wronged for so long burst into flames especially in the face of the apathy and absurdly patriarchal remarks of the authorities.

This outpouring of anger and the demand that something be done demonstrated that some sections of our nation [that are a part of both Bharat and India] have matured despite the prevailing popular culture – despite the so-called popular opinion and the proverbial ‘what will our neighbours think?’

These are people, both men and women – who want to have normal tension free sexual relationships. To be able to explore their sexuality, experiment and discover what is best for them. They do this with respect for each other’s boundaries and honour the word ‘no’. They are tearing away at the false façade that covers deep seated misogyny and so it is they who are the most threatened as they are threat to those who wish to ‘protect’ what they call so-called ‘Indian morality’ and ‘family honour.

Humankind was meant to procreate like all other life forms. This is a natural instinct and a biological predilection. Early humans didn’t know that it took a man’s sperm to fertilize the woman’s egg to create a baby. It was just the fulfilling of a need like hunger or thirst. Sex was central to our being like eating, breathing and excreting.

As we evolved into thinking sentient beings and became civilized we elevated sex to an art form. In India we have the Kama Sutra, in Japan the *Ishinpo* that contains some of the Taoist sexual manuals and The Classic of Sunu that provides advice on sexual practices, in ancient Greek Eros the god of love, is equivalent to Kama, the Hindu god of love. Cupid depicted as a young cherub type of creature, armed with a bow and arrow, and Psyche, or Soul, is the Greek counterpart to Shakti. We infused respect, consideration and affection into what was a crude process of conjugation.

It was out in the open. We displayed reliefs on temples and temple carts; in paintings and wall hangings; we explained it through songs and games in marriage ceremonies and coming of age ceremonies and children grew up with a nuanced understanding of sex and sexuality and a feeling that it was normal. In Kerala men and women went bare chested until the Christian missionaries and social reformers arrived on the scene with their brand of morality and gradually in India and other countries of the Far East, sexuality eventually lost its sacredness and society became more sexually conservative.

With the spread of Christianity, sexuality became limited to

procreation. Sex and morality were converging for the first time in history.

The Christian church had strict rules about sex and having children. Some strict theologians went so far as to recommend abstinence on Thursdays, in memory of Christ's arrest; on Fridays, in memory of his death; on Saturdays, in memory of the Virgin Mary; and on Sundays, in honor of the Resurrection. Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays were often religious holidays and fasts, so intercourse was banned on those days as well. Good Christians were not supposed to have sex during Lent, which lasted forty days, or on Christmas or other religious holidays and fasts. All of those restrictions meant the number of days you weren't allowed to have sex far outnumbered the days sex was permitted.

In the mid-1600s Europe developed and implemented modern amenities like sanitation and science, organized religion played a great role in the formation of one partner and one family and great constraints were placed upon couples to conform to the morality of the times. The modern perception of sex as sinful arose during this period.

We as a society also became more patriarchal and gradually we began to suppress the candid conversations, the dialogue and the knowledge, the songs and the ceremonies. We changed the way we dressed and the way we socialised, what was allowed and what was not was dictated by the patriarch until sex was mystified and sullied and became a tool in the hands of the powerful to oppress and subjugate the weak and the less powerful. This patriarchy was also internalised by women who in

turn have become instruments of suppression and oppression.

The politics of rape runs deep. The number of politicians who have forced women into having sex using their position and power outnumber the ones who haven't. It is their way of gaining a false sense of power and for them such despicable acts go with the territory – are part and parcel of their role. It is not surprising therefore that they come out with such insensitive and unsavoury statements. But we must remember that they too are a slice of our society and we have elected them!

Popular media – be it films or TV Serials – again a reflection of the society we have created depicts sex as a titillating series of gestures aimed at the groin, suggestive movements and erotic/pornographic dance sequences. All this but not the real thing! We do not show kissing or the act of making love. That is left to the imagination and if the imagination is ignited by the visuals one has seen – the act itself can only be construed to be an act of force, power, lurid and crude.

Would it not be better to show the act of love making with respect and tenderness, where two consenting adults come together for personal gratification and each other's fulfilment? Where sex is engaged in with respect for each other even if not for love? Where the human body and the act itself is not a means of demonstrating power over the other or a means of control and not an act of punishment?

Interestingly, cultures that are more open to sex and more comfortable acknowledging it as a normal human function have less incidences of rape. A Rape Map

of India constructed by Dutta and Malhotra shows that the North East and the extreme West of India have the lowest incidences of reported rape. Though the actual figure must be higher as a large number of rapes are not reported and reported cases are just the tip of the iceberg just going by these figures, Nagaland reported 23 cases in 2011, Sikkim 16, Daman and Dui 1, Pondicherry 7 as against UP 2042, Rajasthan 1800, Kerala 1132 and MP 3400! Sikkim has had 16 such cases.

Tribal societies have a very low, if any, incidences of rape or even unwanted pregnancies. In Bastar girls and boys on reaching puberty choose their partners and go off into the forest together for a period of trial before they decided whether to become a couple and start a family and according to studies the girl almost never gets pregnant as a result.

But what is the solution? The protests in Delhi are proof that at least a part of India has moved on and is sexually mature. But will this lead to action? Will making more stringent laws and enforcement – an important and necessary step in the short term – but will that be enough to really improve things in the long term?

Perhaps we need to take even greater steps to rip open the lid of sexuality and spill the contents. Perhaps we need to take our children to Khajuraho and Konarak and show them the reliefs and tell them how love can elevate sex to phenomenal heights. Perhaps we need to relook at our censorship laws and ban the vulgar gyrations and allow more of the real thing. Perhaps we need to join the one million rising and sing the songs of love.....

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Breakthrough still elusive

S. Viswam

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People**

Tehri Dam oustees languish

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Two decades ago, when the demand arose for a separate state, Telengana, to be carved out of composite Andhra Pradesh, everyone, inside the government and out of it, said that Telengana was an issue of emotions and sentiments and hence a hasty decision was not possible. Today, the same excuse is being trotted out. Meanwhile, much waters have flown down the Godavari and the issue itself, complex enough when first mooted, has grown more complicated. The Centre, regardless of which coalition has been and is in power, is to bear much of the blame for the current stalemate. And, specifically, Union Home Minister Shinde has added to the Government's problems by first fixing a deadline for a solution and then reneging on his word. Consequently, the issue is again on the boil. The familiar threats of resignations, dharnas and protests are being heard. The Centre, unsurprisingly, is clueless. To be fair, it does want to concede Telengana, but is unable, or unwilling, or frightened to visualize the consequences, and is unsure whether it can handle the resultant situation.

Time was when the issue could have been tackled and a solution

found. Telengana could have been combined with many other similar demands for new and smaller states and referred to a second states reorganization commission. Failure to do this has kept the issues like Vidarbha, Gorkhaland and Bodoland alive and simmering, if not boiling. The NDA dispensation was both selfish and short-sighted in creating Chattisgarh and Uttaranchal and Jharkhand and leaving grievances in respect of other states seeking division unaddressed. This was clearly unwise since the same criteria which were applied to the division of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh could have been applied to Maharashtra, Assam and West Bengal and the demands in each state could have been examined in depth and a way out suggested. Or, if the establishment did not favour division, some other solution which took note of the popular aspirations for betterment and development could have been incorporated into the system in each state. By leaving the issues unaddressed, the ruling regimes have dragged India many years back. If some new states are created now, each will have a lot of catching up to do.

Between the lines

Revival of two-nation theory?

Kuldip Nayar

The Congress, whose stakes are higher than the Bharatiya Janata Party in the creation of new states, has always had an eye on elections in its calculations on statehood issues. The BJP also linked the demands with polls and hence conceded Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttaranchal. Its calculation, namely, that the new states would always be grateful and hence loyal to the party, has proved shortlived. Only Chattisgarh has remained with the party since birth, but this situation may change. Uttarakhand and Jharkhand are under the control of non-BJP parties. The Congress also did some such calculation when it promised Telengana. Now, it is hoist on its own petard, because it does not know how to give effect to its promise without losing ground in the bargain.

Interestingly, over time, the argument against small states being not suitable for development has faded in direct proportion to the growth of popular socio-economic aspirations. Language also has ceased to be THE sole motivating factor for the demand for statehood. Indeed, if the Centre had experimented on regional councils in Andhra Pradesh and elevated the twin cities of Hyderabad-Secunderabad to the level of Union Territory as in Delhi or Chandigarh, a solution might have arrived. However, now, the all-or-nothing sentiment rules.

The stake for the Congress in deciding in favour of Telengana is obvious. It can win favours in Telengana but will invite only anger and resentment in Vishalaandhra. Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra will distance themselves from the Congress and align with anti-

Muzzafar Beg is one of sensible voices in Kashmir. But I could not understand why he was mentioning partition or the 1947 killings when commenting on the controversy over the BJP's demand for Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde's resignation on his remark that both the RSS and the BJP gave training at *shakhas* (small gatherings) to Hindu terrorists. On the other hand, a Pakistani lawyer told an Indian Muslim on a television channel that he was worse than a Hindu because he blamed the ISI (Inter Services Intelligence) for launching and supporting terrorists. Famous Indian actor Shah Rukh Khan says that as a Muslim he has felt unsafe.

In an e-mail message to me one well-read Muslim from Karachi says: "We do not have any problems with our Hindu brothers in spite of the fact that our Muslim brothers are being killed simply because they are Muslims in Gujarat." An Indian prisoner was severely beaten and killed at Kot Lakhpat jail by the staff which made "racial remarks against Indians." (Incidentally, the same jail has Sarabjit Singh on death row.)

One common theme that runs through all observations and the death in jail is the same old estrangement between Hindus and Muslims. Partition was considered a solution to the problem when the British rulers were quitting. But it is still a problem. After partition, relations between the two communities have been spoilt. Now

it is not only Hindus and Muslims but also India and Pakistan.

I am a witness to partition. The separation was a settlement between the two countries, and based on religion. Nothing could be more futile than an argument now about who was responsible for the partition of the subcontinent. With the sequence of events stretching back for more than six decades, such an exercise can only be an academic question. But it is clear that the differences between Hindus and Muslims had become so acute by the beginning of the forties that something like partition had become inevitable.

For Beg to remind partition is to raise a scare, knowing well that another partition is out of the question. I concede that the Indian polity is not as secular as our forefathers wanted or envisaged. Hindus have a feeling that they are a majority and Muslims suffer from a complex of being a minority. Yet India is far better than Pakistan whose founder Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had said that religion would have nothing to do with the state. Jinnah never propounded the thesis that the Indian Muslims would be Pakistan's charge.

Therefore, the intellectual from Karachi propagates pan-Islamic view when he says that "our Muslim brothers are being killed" Muslims on this side are Indians and those across the border are Pakistanis.

(Continued on Page 5)

This is precisely what Jinnah said after partition: You are Pakistanis or Indians and you cease to be Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, not in the religious sense but otherwise. He buried the two-nation theory there and then.

What happened in Gujarat is a shame and a stigma on the country's secular face. The result is that Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi has become a pariah throughout India. Muslims in Gujarat, West Bengal or in any other state are Indian citizens, equal before the law. Some extremists or the states with weak administrations do not make them lesser citizens by their behaviour. True, their backwardness is a point of concern, something which the Sachar Commission made. However, the report remains largely unimplemented even after six years.

In fact, the problem with Beg and others whom I have quoted have not got out of the two-nation theory mindset. Religion does not determine nationhood. The liberation of Bangladesh, East Pakistan separating from West Pakistan, buried the two-nation theory deep. The fact that both were Muslims could not keep East Pakistan from liberating itself when there was discrimination against the people living there.

When the Kashmiris project themselves as a nation, they are confusing community with the nation. They will be either part of the Indian nation or that of Pakistan if and when the UN resolution is implemented. Their independent status is neither accepted by India nor by Pakistan and I do not foresee such circumstances where three-four million people, landlocked, become independent.

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Shinde on Hindutva Terror: Terminological Confusions

Ram Puniyani

Protests are being organized and threats to stall the proceedings of next Lok Sabha session are being dished out to oppose the Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde's statement about the Hindu terrorism, its links with BJP and RSS. (23 Jan 2013). There are two major components of this statement. One is the use of the prefix Hindu for terrorism, and two about RSS-BJP links with terror training camps. What Shinde called Hindu terrorism has also been called Saffron terrorism or Hindutva terrorism. This prefix is to point out to acts of terror indulged in by the likes of Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, Swami Aseemanand, Col. Prasad Shrikant Purohit, Kalsangara, Sunil Joshi and many like them who were either actively associated with the ideology of Hindutva, or even were organizationally associated with RSS. Others were at that time or previously linked with some progeny of RSS like ABVP, Bajrang Dal etc. Many of them were part of organizations like Sanatan Sanstha, Abhinav Bhararat, who again aim at the goal of Hindu Nation or are ideologically inspired by the agenda of RSS.

The home minister's remarks are based on investigations done by Anti Terror Squads (ATS) of different states and by National Investigation Agency. Earlier the announcement was made by the former Union home minister P. Chidambaram, in July 2010, to Parliament that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) would probe the terrorist attacks on the Samjhauta Express

and examine the conspiracy behind the attack, including the links of the accused in terrorist attacks at Malegaon (September 8, 2006), Mecca Masjid in Hyderabad (May 18, 2007) and at the Ajmer dargah (October 11, 2007). He had used the word Saffron terror.

Various such acts of terror in which these people have been involved have been coming to light during the last ten years or so. In 2003, in Parbani, Jalna and Jalgaon districts of Maharashtra; in 2005, in Mau district of Uttar Pradesh; in 2006, in Nanded; in January 2008, at the RSS office in Tenkasi, Tirunelveli; in August 2008, in Kanpur, etc. Few of the details of some of these acts are very revealing

On 6th April 2006 two Bajrang Dal workers died when making bombs. The place where they died belonged to the RSS worker and saffron flag was hoisted atop the hose. There was also a board of Bajrang Dal, Nanded Branch on the wall of the house.

In Thane on 4th June 2008, two Hindu Jagran Samiti workers were arrested for planting bombs in the basement of Gadkari Rangayatan, due to which seven people got injured. The same group was involved in the blasts in Vashi and Panvel also.

In Goa a bomb kept in a scooter went off on the eve of Divali (17th October, 2009) in Margao. It killed Malgonda Patil and seriously injured Yogesh Naik. Another bomb

was detected in Sancoale in a truck carrying 40 youth for Narkasur competition. Both the activists belonged to Sanatan Sanstha. The second aim of this blast was to create communal tension in Margao, which has a history of communal violence. This group takes inspiration from Savarkar (Hindu Mahasabha) and Hedgewar (RSS) and indoctrinates its members into hating Christians and Muslims.

On 24th August 2008 two Bajrang Dal activists died in Kanpur, while making bombs. The Kanpur zone IGP S.N. Singh stated that their investigations have revealed that this group was planning massive explosions all over the state.

Indian Express, 23 October, 2008 reports that those involved in the bomb blast in Malegaon and Modasa (September, 2008) had links with Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad. Similarly in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu pipe bomb attack on RSS office (January, 2008) was projected to have been done by Jehadi Muslims.

The common pattern of these acts of terror has been twofold. One, that in few of such cases the activists related to Bajrang Dal or fellow travellers were killed while making bombs. Second these acts of terror were targeted to kill the Muslims, so these acts were organized at times when the Muslims congregations take place, at the time of namaz or festivals like Shab-e-Barat in Malegaon, or in Ajmer Sharif where they come in large numbers or Samjhauta express where the major number of travellers is Muslims.

While in the initial phase police authorities working under the

prejudice that ‘all terrorists are Muslims’ misdirected their probe, the probe came on the proper track after the Malegaon blasts when the motor cycle of Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, the former activist of Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad, a wing of RSS, came under the scanner and her links with many of those who have been named above and are currently in jail, came to the surface. These facts came to light due to the initiative and immaculate investigation done by the then chief of Maharashtra ATS, Hemant Karkare. Karkare pursued the investigation professionally putting together the threads due to which today most of them are in jails. While pursuing these investigations Karkare came under immense pressure from the politicians belonging to BJP and its close cousin, Shiv Sena. During this time Narendra Modi said that Hemant Karkare was an anti-national, (Deshdrohi) and Bal Thackeray in his Saamana wrote that ‘we spit on the face of Karkare.’ Later Karkare got killed in the Mumbai terror attack of 26/11, 2006.

The people involved in some way were associated to the affiliates of RSS or RSS itself. Mr. Singh, Home secretary has given some of the names from RSS stable who have been allegedly involved in acts of terror

1. Sunil Joshi (dead), he was an “activist of RSS” in dewas and Mhow from 1990s to 2003.
2. Sandeep Dange (absconding), He was “RSS pracharak” in Mhow, Indore, Uttarkashi and Sajhapur from 1990s to 2006.
3. Lokesh Sharma (arrested) He was RSS ‘nagar karyavahak’ in Deogarh.

4. Swami Assemanand (arrested), He was “associated with RSS wing Vanavashi Kalyan Parishad” in Dang, Gujarat in 1990s to 2007.
4. Rajender alias Samunder (arrested), He was “RSS Varg Vistarak.”
5. Mukesh Vasani (arrested), He was an “activist of RSS” in Godhra.
6. Devender Gupta (arrested), was a “RSS pracharak” in Mhow and Indore.
7. Chandrasekhar Leve (arrested), was a “RSS pracharak” in Shajhanpur in 2007.
8. Kamal Chouhan (arrested), was a “RSS activist.”
9. Ramji Kalsangra (absconding), was a “RSS associate”.

This is in addition to Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, Swami Dayanand Pandey, Lt Col Prasad Shrikant Purohit, Retd Major Upadhyay, who have been close to them.

While some beans were spilled by many of these accused the whole picture was pieced together by Swami Aseemanand, when he decided to confess in front of the magistrate. In his confession, the Swami gave the details of the whole set up raised under his coordination and involving many RSS workers and their associates. The major reason for this whole planning as per him was to counter the Islamic terrorism as witnessed in Sankat Mochan temple, etc. and second goal of theirs’ was to pave the path of Hindu nation.

The later investigation of ATS and now NIA has unearthed the linkages due to which these activists are cooling their heels in jails. Meanwhile in the wake of most of these terror blasts many a Muslim youth were arrested, some of whom were later released for the lack of any credible evidence. So this whole series of terrorists are Hindus. Does this then justify to label this type of terrorism as Hindu terrorism? By no means! Shinde is wrong to label this terrorism as Hindu terrorism.

Is the term 'saffron terrorism' correct? No way. This term was used by many including the then Home minister P. Chidambaram in the wake of the investigations done by Hemant Karkar in the case of Malegaon blasts. While one does not approve the term Hindu terrorism or saffron terrorism at all, one will like to see the background in which this term came to be used.

The RSS routinely adopts resolutions seeking to "curb Islamic terrorism with an iron hand". The term Islamic terrorism was first coined by American media in the light of 9/11 act of terror. This was the first major attempt to label an act of terror with religion. This became the most popular word and all and sundry resorted to this word time and over again. This was a deliberate mischief by US to target the Muslims and thereby get legitimacy to launch attacks in the West Asia to control the oil resources. In India also large section of media picked it up. RSS and its progeny in particular highlighted the religious nature of this terrorism, and the word Jehadi terrorism was the common one to be used. In a way associating terrorism with religion became a dominant

norm and it became part of popular perception.

In this backdrop when the acts of terror done by many Hindus came to light, it somehow came to be labelled with prefix Hindu or Saffron. Term Islamic terrorism and Jehadi terrorism is as much wrong as the term Hindu or saffron terror. The right word for first one may be Al Qaeda type of terrorism and for the second, Hindutva terrorism. Here again using Hindutva terrorism is fraught with some misunderstanding. As such Hindutva is a politics aiming at creation of a Hindu nation but due to its containing the word Hindu in it, it is also taken to be a religion in popular understanding. So the dilemma for Shinde! How to label this group of terror deeds? Probably one will like to make it clear that it is Hindutva terrorism, it has nothing to do with Hindu religion and the difference between the terms Hindu (a religion) and Hindutva (a politics) needs to be made clear in popular parlance.

So it's hypocritical to make the intense noise while the words Hindu-saffron terrorism are used. Same set of people are using the word Islamic terrorism, Jehadi terrorism and propagating that all terrorists are Muslims. One has to know that the phenomenon of terror has been promoted in the Madrassas specially set up by America in Pakistan to indoctrinate the Muslim youth and bring up Al Qaeda type formations. So why demonize Islam, Muslims and use the term Jehadi terrorism? Both such abuses of religion run parallel to each other.

What about the statement that training camps run by RSS and BJP?

In all fairness one conceded that the training camps run by RSS have gone to give the training in rifles but the training centres of bomb making and use are not directly conducted by RSS-BJP. Surely these activities are done by those associated with RSS-BJP. One can't take lightly the picture making rounds on social media, which shows Rajnath Singh and Shivrajsingh Chowhan with Sadhvi Pragya Thakur. One also can't dismiss the fact that Lal Krishna Advani and Sushma Swaraj had gone to see the prime minister to plead the case of Pragya Singh Thakur in particular. One can't ignore that those running these training camps had or were associated with RSS in some way, actively at that time or in the past.

So all this protests and threats of BJP, threats to disrupt the session of Parliament are their usual political tactics and do not have any meaning, as their indirect or direct association with the terrorists is so much obvious. What Shinde is stating is factual but terminology is confused, and that's not due to his own fault. We as a society have not been able to come to coin correct terminologies for different acts of terror anyway, so why get away with using the word Jehadi terrorism and haul Mr. Shinde to the coals for such a use of the term.?

(Continued from Page 2)

Congress forces, of which the party led by Rajasekhara Reddy's son Jagan Reddy, will make life difficult for it. But then, in politics ups and downs are only to be expected and endured. The Congress must bite the bullet now and concede Telengana. Buying time through procrastination is no more an available option.

Legislate on Verma report

Rajindar Sachar

Justice Verma and his panelists have shown commendable sensitivity to the public concern by submitting their report in 30 days instead of the allotted 60 days, thus leaving no excuse to Parliament to avoid passing the necessary law because of paucity of time during the forthcoming parliamentary session.

The panel has rightly ruled out death penalty (which is no longer accepted in over 160 nations of the world); life imprisonment meets both the requirement of human right and adequacy of punishment. The recommendation to clarify that life imprisonment would mean for life should meet the requirement of justifiable revulsion and anger at the rapist's conduct.

Rightly there is condemnation of Khap Panchayats' self-serving approach to women's rights, the glorification of their own arbitrarily fixed rules of conduct for women on the use of mobiles, co-education, the kind of dress, music and singing and their right to marry of their own choice. Law is needed against such outmoded feudal practices to put immediate stop to these.

Though the recommendation of breach of command responsibility placed on officers in the army for the acts of their inferiors may be somewhat debatable, there is no reason why the provision for prior sanction for prosecuting the army personnel should not be deleted and further these cases should be tried before ordinary criminal courts so as to give confidence to the

victims that the guilty will not escape punishment.

Though the speed at which Verma panel was constituted was rightly welcomed, public will have to keep close check to see that panel's recommendations get legal cover in the forthcoming session of Parliament. This is because the record of the government (and I have regretfully to accept even that of courts) in this regard has not been helpful in the past. Thus Parliament, though it amended the Criminal Procedure Code to provide that in offences of rape, the trial should be completed within two months from the date of commencement of the examination of the witnesses but yet trials continue much beyond that period. Even more regrettably the amendment in 2009 requires that offences of rape are to be tried as far as possible before a court presided over by women. And yet unacceptably (and in fairness it has to be conceded here that the responsibility is that of the judiciary also), four out of six fast track courts formed in Delhi to try sexual offences are being presided over by male judges.

Most important recommendation, which I am afraid, is not to the liking of politicians, is the one relating to electoral reforms. I say this because for over a decade various chief election commissioners have been writing to both the Congress and BJP Central governments to effectuate the existing the electoral rules so that electors can cast their votes as 'None of the above' candidates,

by amending the ballot box rules (which already gave such right to the electors) by now providing a slot in the electronic voting machine. But both parties are unwilling to do this, obviously because they are apprehensive that this will give opportunity to the voters to express their no confidence publicly in their candidates.

Important recommendation

In that context I have strong misgiving whether Parliament would give effect to the most important recommendation of the panel, namely that a "legislator should be disqualified if court takes cognizance of an offence punishable with minimum of five years jail."

I myself have been emphasising for long that the most serious menace to our electoral system is not the criminalisation of politics but the more menacing one is politicalisation of criminals. Previously the politicians used the criminals in their electoral battle, but the politicalisation of the criminals, which is now prevailing means that the criminals are sitting as the legislators.

Parties still continue to ignore the warning regarding criminal elements in our legislatures given by the Vice-President of India years back wherein he said; "Most important issue of concern today is the decreasing credibility of our legislatures as effective institutions capable of delivering public good and contributing to effective formulation of laws." Around 23 per cent of our

MPs elected in 2004 ha criminal cases registered against them – over half of these cases could lead to the imprisonment for five years or more. The situation is worse in the case of MLAs, failing to discharge its two-fold brief, legislate and deliberate, and that the country's top lawmaking body had fallen short of people's expectations.

Unless the Verma panel report really sings the conscience of the of the legislators into making a change in election law where a candidate if charge-sheeted with cognisable offence six months before the date is debarred from contesting the elections, I am afraid criminality in politics would continue and this would make a mockery of Verma panel's recommendation of changes in electoral law, a very strong component of the recommendations. The demand is therefore that all the recommendations along with that of electoral law should be carried out simultaneously.

As tempers stand at present BJP has threatened to disrupt Parliament's work unless home minister Sushil Kumar Shinde resigns over his 'terror' comment. This will mean no legislative business.

I am not suggesting Shinde's resignation. However, I do feel that the government could corner BJP into letting the Parliament function if in the beginning it takes up both Verma panel report and the passing of Women Reservation Bill – in this situation BJP possibly could not dare to stall the working of Parliament and incur the wrath of all women and overwhelming number of men. Such a consensus on these two major issues will be a fitting tribute to the memory of the brave heart and to the many previous victims.

Dalit-Muslim Relations in Pre-Partition Bengal Paradigm : Shift in Dalit Discourse

K. S. Chalam

The Indian historiography is undergoing several challenges today. One of the issues that the contemporary historian encounters is about the selection of social categories to narrate changes that have taken place in the recent past. It is only by studying the contemporary history and relating it with the past that we can save/sustain the discipline of history in India, was the penchant of one of our most distinguished historians, Prof. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay. Now Professor of Asian History at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, he is visiting India to sign MOUs with some Central universities on behalf of the Government of New Zealand.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay delivered the first Utkalmani Gopabandhu Dash Memorial lecture on 'Dalits in the Long History of Partition in Eastern India' on 21st January 2013 at Koraput. I was invited by the Vice-chancellor and Pro-Vice-chancellor of the University to preside over the lecture and offer remarks. I reluctantly agreed to go to Koraput as I knew the ordeal to reach there by road from Visakhapatnam. However, I was benefitted by participating in the session and discussing issues of academic interest with Sekhar for almost three days. Perhaps he is the only scholar of international repute to have taken up the issues of caste in history after Eleanor Zeliot (who worked on Ambedkar). The learned Professor has published extensively in international journals and is a celebrated name in the discipline..

The existing studies on partition, mostly on Northern India presented

the problem as communal in terms of Muslim-Hindu relations. But, the scholar believes that it was possible because the dalits of U.P and Punjab did not identify with Hindu nationalism and were not targets of violence. But, the situation in Pre-partition Bengal was different. It is for the first time a popular historian and a social scientist is bringing out the real categories into focus through an analysis of realistic and lived conditions of caste in the subcontinent and not in terms of the imagined European class. According to him, "we need to introduce the category of caste in to this discussion as the dalits participated actively in partition politics and they were equally victims and perpetrators of violence'. Dalit participation in partition politics and Dalit-Muslim and Dalit-Hindu relationships will have to be understood within this heterogeneous context of political response to fast changing historical contingencies.

The Dalit identity politics in colonial period started around 1870s and was intimately connected with two dalit groups - Namasudra and Rajbanshi - in Bengal. They are numerically strong, despite depredate assimilation by the dominant religious conversions, West Bengal today has the second largest concentration of scheduled caste population in India. Yet, we have very limited information and analytical studies due to circumstances that the scholar has narrated in his lecture. The two numerically large castes, Namasudras and Rajvanshis. are spread in to two geographical

regions in pre-Partition Bengal, the former in Bakarganj, Faridpur, Jessore and Khulna and the latter in Rangpur, Dinapur, Jalpaiguri, Coochbihar. The two castes were only presented (out of 60) in the lecture as they provided leadership to the dalits' struggle for land in 1872. They fought for the reclamation of the marshy lands of Sunderbans and questioned the dominance of Brahminism with the support of Sahajiyā-vaisnav sect and started joining the mainstream nationalist movement. But, when the riots broke out in 1911 and 1930 between Hindus and Muslims, they were not a part of Hindu nationalism and therefore joined the Muslims later to fight the caste Hindu landlords. Later, they remained silent, resulting in Congress getting only 7 seats out of 32 reserved for scheduled castes in Bengal.

The communalization of Bengal started with Hindu Mahasabha that campaigned for dalit votes. The 1941 Dacca riots took place perhaps with the active participation of Namasudras. There seem to be internal disquiet between Namasudras and Rajvamsis that seemed to have been persisted after the emergence of Jogendranath Mandal and Radhanadh Das, each supporting different viewpoints. Jogendranath Mandal was a towering personality, comparable to B. R. Ambedkar, in Bengal and in fact got elected to the Constituent Assembly from Bengal. He became the Chairman of the drafting committee of the Pakistan Constitution and resigned from the Parliament with disillusionment almost about the same time as Ambedkar in India. But, historians were unkind to him in the matter of giving proper space in their writings.

Sekhar narrated how Mandal took an aggressive stand against partition

and a pro-Muslim stance with the argument that Dalits and Muslims were of the same economic position and a separate autonomous united Bengal would be helpful for their advancement. He was supported by the Congress dissident leader Sarat Chandra Bose and Muslim League leader Abdul Hasem. But, Mandal became despicable for his pro-Muslim stand and his rivals Radhanadh Das and P.R Thakur joined Congress to get 26 out of 30 reserved seats in 1937. By that time, the Hindu Mahasabha had a strategy to create a Hindu majority province in West Bengal and was endorsed by Congress at the Tarakeswar convention on 1st April 1947. The country got divided.

It is also observed that the Rajbanshis had aligned with the communists in the Tebhaga share cropper movement. But, it was a movement against Rajbansi Jotedars by Rajbansi Adhiars (share croppers) and led to rupture in the dalit caste association. The scholar says, there are different layers of social relations that converged and cut across caste, class and communal boundaries in rural Bengal and may not be unidirectional as presented by some communalists. Thus, Sekhar Badopadhyay has opened a Pandora's Box for scholars to ponder over and contribute to the historical knowledge of the sub continent.

The study has brought some interesting lessons for the contemporary struggles in India. It brought out very clearly that Jogendranath Mandal's support for partition did not solve the dalits' problems in Pakistan. In fact, Namasudras were butchered in Naokhali. One of the greatest damages done to the Dalit solidarity in Bengal is fragmentation of Dalits.

Some were kept in East Pakistan at the time of partition without much relief and therefore, migration took place later in waves. By 1950-51, aggressive discourse of Islamic nationalism forced the dalits out of Pakistan, the dominant Hindu discourse in India tended to absorb them in to a 'Hindu refugee' identity. But, the Hindu nationalism was/is not willing to offer full citizenship to them. Though the author did not mention about the problems in our Eastern states and borders today, the current unrest there is due to the continuous migration of Dalits from Bangladesh. The refugee migration of dalits had one of the most pitiful stories of splitting of a community in recent human history which no historian has so far recorded. It is noted by the author that the Dalit refugees were denied any land in Bengal and were dissipated in to different parts of the country including Andamans and Dandakarnya. Interestingly, the non-dalit refugees in the beginning were accommodated in 24 pargans and other important places in Bengal with land and support. Thus, "organized dalit voice consequently disappeared from Bengal public sphere leading to that all-powerful political myth that caste does not matter in Bengal".

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From footnote to F.I.R.

As an intellectual, Ashis Nandy is known for his idiosyncratic views. But the eminent psychologist and social theorist, who has always marched to the beat of his own ideological drum, is anything but the casteist his detractors now claim he is. Whether one agrees or not with what he said during a lively and heated discussion at the Jaipur Literary Festival (JLF), there can be no justification for the thoughtless character assassination and harassment he has been put through. Cases have been registered against him under the Scheduled Castes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in Rajasthan and elsewhere. And heavyweight politicians such as former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati and Lok Janshakti Party leader Ram Vilas Paswan have demanded that he be arrested immediately for ostensibly maligning Dalits and Other Backward Classes. Quite outlandishly, the latter has

demanding that Prof. Nandy be held under the National Security Act, a draconian preventive detention law that empowers the police to detain people considered security risks without charge-sheeting them for up to one year. Rather than treat the intolerant chorus of outrage with the contempt it deserves, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has spoken of Prof. Nandy's "mental bankruptcy"; as if on cue, the police have swung into needless overdrive by directing that JLF organiser Sanjoy Roy remain in Jaipur until the probe in the case is over.

If it is depressing that those outraged by Prof. Nandy's remarks have failed to read them in context, it is truly annoying that they haven't even taken note of his explanation of what he really meant; his clarification that it was never his intent to hurt any community and that he was sorry if he had unintentionally done so has

also failed to assuage his detractors. This should have been enough to set the controversy to rest. But in a country where there is a flourishing outrage industry — helped by a slew of laws that takes the feelings of easily offended individuals very seriously — there is a great deal of publicity and even political capital to be acquired in claiming that sentiments are hurt. The hallmark of an open society is an environment where competing views exist and where disagreements are addressed, or resolved, through the medium of reasoned debate. Such dialogue is impossible when angry groups try to silence differing views through vehement protests or by harassing others through a misuse of the law. It is one thing for Prof. Nandy's remarks to be the subject of criticism, satire, disparagement or censure. It is quite another to perpetuate a culture of intolerance by using the police to settle a scholarly debate.

– The Hindu

Our corruption doesn't look that corrupt, their corruption does'

When sociologist Ashis Nandy remarked during a panel discussion that "most of the corrupt come from the OBCs, SCs and STs", he was responding to Tarun Tejpal's observation that corruption is a class equaliser. Tejpal said for "people on the wrong side of the tracks", subverting the system is the only chance in a society controlled by the elite. Nandy then added what he called the "most important part of the story". The discussion, "Republic of Ideas", held on January 26 during the Jaipur Literature Festival, had Patrick

French, Ashutosh and Richard Sorabji, apart from Nandy and Tejpal, in the panel that discussed their views with Urvashi Butalia. Excerpts from the transcript of the discussion.

Urvashi Butalia: Ashis da, your comments now on the ideas that have been discussed here: equality, the changeability, the need for change, the dreams of the founding fathers and mothers... and on utopia generally...

Ashis Nandy: ...In the context of

our discussion, if I may point, the only country which I know is close to zero corruption is Singapore, and that's not part of my concept of utopia; it can be very much a part of my concept of dystopia. I do wish that there remains some degree of corruption in India because I would also suggest that it humanises our society. Indian society... has only four sectors where your true talents are recognised... In other words, no considerations of caste, religion, sect enter your considerations. And these four sectors are: spectator sport, which is a very small sector

because sports heroes are not that many. Two, entertainment industry, which is a very slippery category because contrary to our belief, at least four-fifths of all Bombay films for example fail in the box office, so it's a very risky business... Third is crime; our criminal gangs are perfectly egalitarian. Do not forget that Dawood Ibrahim's gang had a lot of Hindus in it... Totally secular. And finally politics. You fight it out in politics and make it. All this talk of dynasty is an illusion created by the middle classes. Mrs Gandhi did not become prime minister when Nehru was living. There was a large and very noticeable gap between her ascent to the throne and Nehru's demise. She fought her way up. She was seen as a very meek, very unskilful, politically naïve woman. And therefore the syndicate chose her. She knew that in Indian politics you should not project yourself as either too intelligent or too shrewd or too clever or even too political, and that helped her. She clawed her way to power and so have each one of the names which have come up, whether it is Mulayam Singh Yadav or Lalu Prasad. In addition, in the case of Lalu Prasad and Mulayam Singh, and people like them, exactly because of the reasons you give, there is a sense of desperation, utter desperation and insecurity. Even if you make through corruption millions of rupees, you suspect that you will not be able to get away using the machinery of law or cleverly manipulating your investments in the right way with the right connections because you have none... To the best of my knowledge the only unrecognised billionaire in India today, in dollar terms, is Madhu Koda. He's a tribal and I can assure you that Mr Koda must

have been a very insecure, unhappy, tense person. And in this kind of situation, the only people you can trust are your own relatives... And if you fit your experiences within this model, you will recognise why this insecurity is there, because politics looks a very impersonal, contractual work to a large part of Indians. They are new to politics. And your family members do not have the capacity to absorb the additional money in a more clever, intelligent way. If I do a good turn to Richard Sorabji, he can return the favour by accommodating my nephew at Oxford; if it were in the United States, it would be a substantial fellowship. Ms Mayawati doesn't have that privilege. She probably has only relatives whose ambition was to be a nurse or run a petrol pump. If she has to oblige somebody or have somebody in the family absorb the money, she will probably have to take the bribe of having 100 petrol pumps, and that is very conspicuous, very corrupt indeed. Our corruption doesn't look that corrupt, their corruption does.

Tarun Tejpal: Urvashi, can I add something to what Ashis da just said? You know on this corruption issue, I just want to put this corruption issue in a different kind of light along the lines of what Ashis da just said. I'm saying perhaps corruption in a country like India is also a great class equaliser... I'm saying suppose, in an extremely class-ridden society like India, where somebody who works in my house, my driver or my cook, what chance do his children have in the way India is constructed today versus my children where for the last 50 years, in many senses, the class that has ruled India, the

elite, the privileged, my class of people, have built a set of rules that makes things easy for them and makes things lucrative for them?... In a situation like this if you come from the wrong side of the tracks of which roughly a billion people in this country would, what chance do you have of breaking through to get your hands on the spoils of life and on the spoils of a country? I'd say almost nothing. What do people like that do? People like that subvert the rules; these are not God's rules, these are man-made rules... I'll give you one the greatest examples of this which will easily strike a chord with most of you. There's a man called Dhirubhai Ambani. If he had not known how to subvert the rules — all the rules that he subverted today are now law, at that time they were not, at the time he was subverting them they were not — he would have still been filling petrol in a pump in Doha.

Ashis Nandy: Just a response to this part, very briefly, he's not saying the most important part of the story, which will shock you, and it will be a very undignified and — how should I put it — almost vulgar statement on my part. It is a fact that most of the corrupt come from the OBCs and the scheduled castes and now increasingly scheduled tribes and as long as this is the case, Indian republic will survive. And I give an example, one of the states with the least amount of corruption is the state of West Bengal when the CPM was there. And I want to propose to you, draw your attention to the fact that in the last 100 years, nobody from the OBCs, the backward classes and the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes have come anywhere near power in West Bengal. It is an absolutely clean state.

Eviction of Five Thousand People

Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Bangalore's local government along with the police demolished around 1200 tin-sheds, evicting 5000 slum dwellers at the economically weaker sections (EWS) quarters in Ejipura from 18-21 January, 2013. About 1200 women and 2000 children were affected by this action. The four-day demolition drive razed around 900 tin-sheds that were erected at the quarters more than 11 years ago. No written notice was served to the residents. The demolition was accompanied by violent police action which included pulling people out of their homes when they pleaded for the house not to be destroyed; lathi-charge of women and elders who resisted the demolition and the arrest of twentyone women.

Since the night of 18th January, hundreds of families have been living out in the open, braving the cold. Toilets in the area have been demolished, water supply has been cut and there is absolutely no shelter provided. Senior citizens, children and pregnant women in the area have been living in the open with serious risk to their health. Rosemary (60) one of the thousands rendered homeless by the eviction, died on the evening of January 22, after spending nearly three days out in the open. Her daughter says the death was a direct consequence of the demolition stating that she had barely eaten anything in the last few days.

People have been promised houses in Sulekunte village along Sarjapur Road. Sulekunte village is on the outskirts of Bangalore some 15 kms away from EWS

quarters. The long distance means that residents would have to spend a lot for their commute to the city daily, for work. Karnataka Slum Development Board (KSDB) is supposed to build apartments for the 900 families in a 5-acre plot there. This may take any time between 1-3 years. Until then the government has failed to provide any alternative arrangements, even temporary, for the evicted people. BBMP claims that it is responsible in providing interim relief to only 1512 original allottees and not the tenants and sub-tenants living at the quarters.

These actions are infringement of fundamental rights of the residents of Ejipura as the government has failed to abide by its constitutional obligations to guarantee the 'Right to shelter' and 'Right to life and livelihood' to its citizens.

In 1992, the Ejipura Quarters were built for policemen but were rejected by them as the quality of construction was very poor and even basic facilities like water and sanitation were not provided. The civic agency then allotted the quarters to the EWS. Many allottees continued to live in those poor conditions while some of the allottees rented it out to others who were in a worse off position than them. Thus, these buildings housed a number of poor people who were allotted the house and some very poor families, who stayed on rent in these blocks. Due to poor quality of construction of the EWS quarters, some of the blocks started cracking and collapsed in 2002, killing 3 people. Later, all the blocks even though experts ruled that with repairs, they would be safe for living.

Since then, many have been living in common tin sheds by the side of the demolished quarters.

Earlier in 2005, the BBMP passed a resolution to provide housing on the same land for all residents, including those it now dismisses as "illegal occupants" or "squatters". In 2006, the BBMP had issued guritina cheetis/hakku patras (rights/identification certificates) to the people who were on rent from the original allottees. These are the people whom the BBMP now terms as encroachers.

Later, a Public Private Partnership (PPP) between BBMP and Maverick Holdings was signed to develop the land. As part of the joint development agreement half of the land is to be used for the construction of 1,512 EWS apartments. The other half will be used by Maverick Holdings to construct the mall. Eviction of residents for the project has been stalled several times since its inception with residents and rights groups staging protests, alleging that it smacks of a land scam. Incidentally Maverick Holdings are also the beneficiaries of another Joint Venture Programme on Magrath Road, which was initiated as multiple car park but instead got developed into the Garuda Shopping Mall. Complaints have been lodged against the said project and the said company before the Lokayukta that is seized of the matter presently (Case no.426/2008 with Karnataka Lokayukta).

Pursuant to this, the original allottees filed a case in High Court which ruled last August that BBMP and Maverick should go ahead with

the project and that only original allottees should be given the new flats. Court also ordered Maverick Holdings to pay Rs. 30,000 to the original allottees still staying in the quarters, as compensation and ordered BBMP to provide rehabilitation for 1512 original allottees, except those who have accepted compensation, at Iglur on Hosur Road. It authorised BBMP to evict/eject all occupants from the site and if necessary taking aid/assistance of police force. Unfortunately, the order did not hear the people who were on rent and disregarded that those who are staying on rent for more than 15 years and, in turn, disregarding their right to housing on basis of perpetuity. (Writ Petition 45915/2011)

Later the people who were on rent, approached the Karnataka High Court(Writ Petition 42743/12) asking that the order in (Writ Petition 45915/2011) be stayed. The Karnataka High Court is still hearing the matter and even as it is doing so, BBMP and the police carried out these demolitions.

It is unfortunate that in a country where the housing rights of millions

are not met, land meant for housing for the economically weaker sections is being used to build a mall. Utilization of public lands by the Government is controlled by the Public Doctrine and the Joint Venture defeats the public trust doctrine inasmuch as it allows the Private third party to extract profit from the public land which was meant for the housing of poor and vulnerable sections of society. It is pertinent to note that the land has been earmarked for the construction of houses for economically weaker section, and it was for this purpose that the EWS quarters was constructed, and the present Joint Venture takes away from the sanctioned character of the land.

BBMP's Agreement with the Private builder is unreasonable, arbitrary, unfair and opposed to public policy, public interest and the public trust doctrine.

When on the one hand the efforts of the Hon'ble Supreme Court is to respect and realise the constitutional rights of the urban homeless, this demolition of the EWS slum, stands at cross-purposes with these efforts. It is just and necessary that

immediate steps be taken to ensure that the displaced families have proper shelter, access to basic and other services.

Action Requested

We request the National Human Rights Commission to immediately look into this issue and ensure that the rights of the affected people are restored. We request the commission to direct the Government of Karnataka to -

1. Conduct a an enquiry on the gross human rights violations by the state authorities during the demolition and eviction drive and conduct a public hearing on the whole issue.
2. Provide immediate housing or basic shelter in the same spot or at least in the same area.
3. Grant compensation to all victims for injuries caused to them and damaging their belongings.
4. Scrap the current PPP project and houses for all the original allottees and current residents to be provided in the same spot.

– Isaac Arul Selva, Karnataka Slum Janandolana

– Prabahakar R,Dalit and Minorities Land Protection Forum

– Medha Patkar. National Alliance of People's Movements

Extracts from a letter to Justice K. G. Balakrishnan, Chairperson, National Human Right Commission.

Tehri Dam oustees languish

The State government in Utrakhand must have earned at least 1000 crores from the electricity generated by the Tehri dam project on national river Ganga and this is a recurring income yet in the ongoing Supreme Court case between N.D Juyal and Shekhar Singh v/s GOI and others, the former government

in its affidavit on the delay in rehabilitation work gave the reason that T.H.D.C has not provided funds for rehabilitation. The court had directed THDC in November 2011 to provide for a paltry 102.99 crores for the same. Even now the reason given to the SC for the delay in rehabilitation work is said to be

lack of funds.

Before the current government came to power the present Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna had conceded that the rehabilitation work was not being properly done. In response to the destruction of villages around the Tehri Dam

during the monsoon in 2010 he had suggested that the state government should spend the earnings generated by the hydro electric project on the project affected people. This line of thought is in consonance with the power ministry's guideline for the development of hydroelectricity projects dated 23 may 2006 which on page 10 states that the income so generated should be spend on project affected people.

Guideline

2.3 Provision of 12% free power to the home state Government of India, vide its O.M. dated 17th May, 1989 have approved that "since the Home States are increasingly finding it difficult to locate alternative land and resources for rehabilitation of the oustees in hydro-electric projects. They need to be suitably assisted by giving incentives, such as the (proposed) 12% free power, to enable them to take care of the problems of rehabilitation in the areas affected by the hydro-electric projects.

Without such assistance and incentives, considerable hydel potential of the country would remain unutilized. Accordingly, the State Government shall be entitled to realize 12% free power from the project for local area development and mitigation of Guidelines for development of Hydro Electric Projects Sites hardships to the project affected people in line with the Govt. of India policy".

Further in this context the basic amenities mentioned below are nonexistent and if at all they exist, they are of very poor quality, even at rural rehabilitation sites like Pathari part-1,2,3&4, the dam oustees in the rural area of Haridwar have not been

properly rehabilitated, even after 30 years - 70% of them do not have land rights. These rehabilitation sites lack basic infrastructure like electricity, water, irrigation, transportation, health post, bank, post office PDS, panchayat, mandir, roads, drains so much so these sites do not have fences or walls to keep out the wild animals. People have been fending

off for by themselves and have built houses on their own. In not so distant past on 11 June 2012, Rajesh Nautiyal, Assitant Executive Engineer at the Shivilak nagar rehabilitation office in Haridwar division said that 4 crores have been sanctioned for the rehabilitation work but none for providing the basic infrastructures.

-Vimalbhai And Puran Singh Rana

(Continued from Page 3)

In fact, the question is a larger one. Hindus and Muslims who have lived together for centuries have not generally shed their animosity towards each other. The only relieving patch was when even during the Muslim rule, they were together in their struggle against emperors. The British were the villain of the piece. By introducing communal electorate and reservations for Muslims they injected the poison of separation in Indian body politics and it has not gone out of the system yet.

Soon after independence it looked as if we have got rid of the virus. Muslims voluntarily gave up reservations and even when the Constituent Assembly wanted to have a provision of reservations for Muslims, they said no. Little did they realise that they would face discrimination subsequently. So much so, the Sachar commission has said that the plight of Muslims is worse than that of dalits.

The immediate point of concern of Muslims is that an extremist group of Hindus is indulging in acts of terrorism and the Hindu community on the whole is suspecting Muslims for the killing or bomb blasts. Young boys from the community have been picked up by the police as terrorists and kept in jail for years till the

courts have acquitted them. True, their innocence is established but by then they spend best part of their youth in detention. And there is no accountability and none in the police has been punished for having put them in jail wrongly.

The most serious slur is Shah Rukh Khan's statement that he, as a Muslim, feels unsafe. He is not the kind of person who will exaggerate or try to invent. Terrorist Hafiz Mohammad Sayeed exploits the expression and welcomes SRK to Pakistan. Of course, the latter has pooh-poohed offer. Yet India fails in its credentials of being a secular society as long as SRKs do not feel safe as Hindus do. I see the revival of a two-nation theory in such developments.

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Measures Suggested to Reduce Violence Against Women

Some of the suggestion in the Representation by Centre for Equity Studies to the Justice Verma Commission:

Vulnerable Groups

CES requests the learned Committee to kindly focus adequately on safety and gender justice for the most marginalized and vulnerable women such as dalit and adivasi women and women of minority communities, women in conflict situations who are subject to sexual violence as a political weapon of subjugation, when the aggressors belong to upper caste, class, or authority, disabled women, homeless and destitute girls and women, sex workers, and trafficked girls for sexual and domestic labour, transgender people, domestic workers, casual wage workers etc.

We believe that for any system to be effective for the protection of girls and women from sexual violence should be seen in the wider context of power relations and the endemic and entrenched violence against women. We need to draw your attention to the violence perpetuated against vulnerable women each day in both public and private sphere. Such assaults are not isolated incidents, but are rather experienced in a continuum of daily living, in which sexualised violence against the powerless is normalised and invisibilised. Rape is the routine violence of homeless women living on city streets, who fear the police most. Dalit girls and women routinely suffer sexual abuse. It is routine for young girls and women with intellectual disability living in State run institutions. Violence against women with disabilities is often a silent act because in a majority of

cases they are unable to communicate the act of violence. Even if they communicate, they are not believed, their complaints not heeded. There are few human rights protections for women in conflict areas, when they suffer sexual violence from men in uniform. Women's bodies are used as battlefields in mass communal violence. Domestic workers have far less protection from sexual assault and harassment in the confines of the homes which are their non-public work places. Single women suffer more violence from men, because they are seen as 'unprotected'; and the criminal justice system is even more indifferent or actually hostile to single women survivors of violence.

a. For such vulnerable categories of women and girls, the state should firstly aim for preventive mechanisms, systems and even structures, designed with sensitivity to their specific vulnerabilities. For instance, urban homeless women can never be protected from violence, unless the state has a legal duty under the law to ensure that all homeless women, as well as women survivors of violence who leave their homes, are ensured by the state safe and dignified spaces. This should form part of any law which aims at safety for women. Some preventive measures are elaborated in the next section.

b. It has been our common experience that aggressors are confident of the powers they exercise and are connected to and absolutely sure of getting away with the act of rape. The victim has diminishing

chances of being heard depending on the degree and multiplicity of her vulnerability. A mechanism of acknowledging the special vulnerability of the rape victim should kick in from the very first act of registering the complaint, and the criminal justice system should provide adequate support to ensure that she has equal access to justice.

- c. By the same logic, multiple vulnerabilities should be recognised and acted on right from booking charges under multiple acts - For example if a dalit woman is raped, both provisions of the SC/ST Atrocities Act and the proposed Sexual Atrocities Act must simultaneously be invoked. Similarly financial support and compensations should award added amounts. Since vulnerabilities are multiple, compensation should be multiple as well.
- d. Official recognition of vulnerability would hold the state machinery accountable if adequate protective attention is not given to secure the victim and her family against further harassment and attack, and to secure the evidence against being destroyed.
- e. Recognising multiple vulnerabilities would also explain and condone the delays in registering the case and filing evidence as the victim would need to build courage to approach the judicial systems. For instance, in conflict and post-communal violence sites, women sometimes take months or even years to feel

confident enough to file their complaints.

- f. Protections to security personnel by laws like the Armed Forces Act should be withdrawn, and in any case, even until such laws are in force, they should provide no protection for sexual crimes.

Preventive measures in areas of their concentration for their safety and security

- a) The system of shelters for women should be greatly expanded, but these should be open, voluntary, dignified and above all safe places of women's shelter. There should be an independent and active system of independent (all women) visitors for all these homes and shelters, and every state-based shelter home for women, nari niketans, remand homes, juvenile delinquent homes, shelters for disabled children, orphanages, as well as schools, prisons and areas under army patrolling or combing operations should have a schedule of inspections by these independent to probe for on-going sexual harassment or assault. The people confined within should have the right to insist on persons whom they trust outside jail to accompany the team when it does these surprise checks
- b) Working Women's Hostels: The number of affordable student and working women hostels for SC/ST/ Minority/ Disabled girls need to be built to ensure safe accommodation for migrant women. There should be a wide network of homeless women shelters as a legal right in every city and town (with a capacity to house at least 0.25% of the total population of the city).
- c) Public Spaces: The current policy of clearing the streets of vendors

and chasing away other people who occupy public space at night makes the street more unsafe for women. This policy should be stopped as a greater presence of people and well-lit public areas at night are essential in reducing the danger to women travelling to and from work as well as homeless women. Women should be given priority in being given vendor licenses and employment in public transport.

- d) Public Transport: There should be an expansion of the public transport system to run round the clock. The government should bring a public-transport-for-women-on-demand facility for any neighbourhood with a number of working women coping without public transport, including dispersed adivasi settlements and urban slums, functioning in the same manner of response to demand as anganwadi-on-demand. Strict implementation of women's general compartment in all trains and women's seats in all inter-city buses is necessary. The state should launch a special drive to train and recruit women of as drivers and conductors in state run buses. Both public and private forms of transport must be effectively regulated and monitored for safety by the government. The routes from public transport sites to housing areas must be well-lit and tinted window vehicles should be strictly monitored. In Delhi specifically, the metro services need to be operational throughout the night with the same security as provided during the day. The state govt should also launch a scheme to promote women's employment in all transport services such auto's, taxi's, buses, metro's.

- e) School curricula should include

basic information on how stalking, harassment, and touching another person without consent constitute unacceptable and illegal behaviour, and the government should set up a training module for at least 2 staff members from each school to help children to report cases of domestic sexual assault. Caste, communal, gender identity and disability based discrimination against dalit, adivasi, religious minorities, gender and sexuality minorities, people with disabilities, homeless and working class people, etc. should be clearly and unequivocally taught to be unacceptable. This will greatly decrease their vulnerability to sexual assault.

- f) Health care providers: Due to its impact on physical and mental health and a high degree of mortality, rape is also a public health issue. All Medical personnel and public health workforce (ASHA and ANM workers) need to be trained in sensitizing at the family and community level in de-stigmatizing rape-survivors, enabling them to file FIR's.
- g) Effective women help-lines and other emergency services should be provided around the clock and should be well advertised by video and audio messages in rural and urban areas. Emergency telephones to this helpline must also be available at all bus and train stations. Calls should be addressed by specially trained staff and automatically recorded for later review, and the staff should be able to dispatch immediate vehicles to assist women facing an emergency. Disciplinary action must be taken against staff for inappropriate or inadequate responses.



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Total mismanagement
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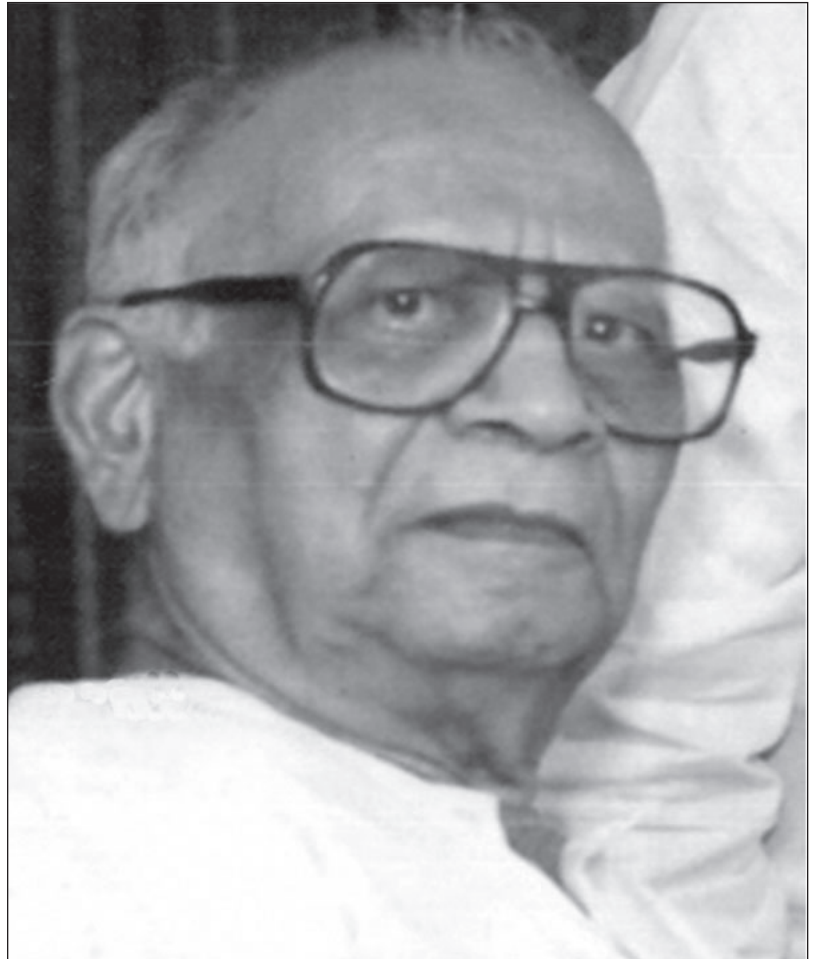
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मुंबई पोर्ट ट्रस्ट, डॉक अँड जनरल एम्प्लॉईज युनियन

(स्थापना : ३ मे १९२०)

(संलग्न : हिंद मजदूर सभा)

कर भला सो हो भला

सर्वात जास्त आनंद कोणत्या
गोष्टीत होत असेल तर
तो दुसऱ्यांना आनंद देण्यात...

—कवी वर्डस्वर्थ

डॉ. शान्ति पटेल
अध्यक्ष

अॅड. एस. के. शेट्टे
सरचिटणीस

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दूरध्वनी : २३७७६३२०/२३७७२३६१/६६५६६४८७
फॅक्स : २३७५४७९४
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Total mismanagement

S. Viswam

There is a right way of doing things and there is a wrong way of doing things. In an orderly society, irrespective of who the “doer” is and at what level he performs, it is vitally important that things are done in the right way. This is even more rigidly applicable where the “doer” is the government in power. In the Afzal Guru execution matter last week, the government, acting through its home minister, did everything, but everything, in the wrong way. And because it did so, either accidentally or deliberately, Indian democracy and the concept of rule of law have taken a big blow. And, many questions have been raised for which no satisfactory answers have come. Indeed, the execution (and its fall-out) has served as a classic example of how governments should and should not behave in circumstances which involve popular emotions and public law and decency.

While signing the “file” on the execution, Home Minister Shinde seems to have spared no thought at all to the several issues related to the execution. If anything, “signing off” a man’s life seems to have been done with the same casualness as granting a day’s casual leave to an employee. The government acted eight long years after Afzal Guru was sentenced to death. But it showed unseemly haste and alacrity in carrying out the execution and that too in extreme secrecy. The heavens would not have fallen, nor would the cause of the war against terrorism have suffered damage, if the family of Afzal Guru, which

comprised apart from his wife, his young son (11 years old) and his aged mother, had been taken to the Tihar jail to meet him for a farewell meeting. Shinde has claimed that all legal processes had been observed. But where does it say that legal processes are, or have to be, so un-humane and cruel and heartless, that a family meeting is barred. Secondly, is the government and its minions become so heartless that a family about to lose its most important member is informed of the impending loss through speed post, and that too in such a routine and casual way, that the family learns of its loss long after the world has been informed and told that justice had been done to the victims of those who were killed in the December 13, 2001, Parliament attack?

There can be two opinions on whether or not the death sentence on Afzal Guru was justifiable. It is no secret that he was convicted on circumstantial evidence. In the same case, the court also set aside the death sentence of another co-accused, released one accused and commuted the death sentence of another to life imprisonment. In the case of Afzal Guru, the court chose to make him an example as one deserving capital punishment even if only to satisfy the collective conscience of society.

It took eight years for the government to implement the court order. The examination of the verdict and the determination of the judicial processes that needed to be fulfilled

took that long! The President rejected Guru’s mercy petition and with that official decision, things started moving fast—and in a palpably wrong way. The man in the death row was not given a chance to approach the court and the president once again for another review— a right the Constitution bestows on him. And the person to be executed was not told of the decision to hang him sufficiently in advance. News reports say that he had time only to scribble a few lines to his wife before being marched to the gallows. Not that it would have mattered, but he was not even offered breakfast. Such was the haste with which the jail authorities, acting under the Home Ministry’s orders, sent an accused packing!

There is a strong case for and against capital punishment. India and its civil society are being evasive in avoiding a comprehensive and serious debate on keeping capital punishment on the statute books or abolishing it. The sooner a decision is taken the better. A serious examination will at least give the country an opportunity to take a well-informed decision. There are more countries in the world today that have abolished it than those that have retained it. An added flip side to the existence of the penalty in India is that political parties start demanding execution of certain category of accused in order to derive political advantage. But the more unfortunate flip side is that the country’s highest court itself is guilty of erroneous verdicts. And

(Continued on Page 10)

Between the lines
Kuldip Nayar

Afzal's hanging and its aftermath

I was at the Parliament House when Afzal Guru and a few others attacked it in December 2001. Members like me were furious over the incident and the first suspicion was on Pakistan. It turned out to be true because the three who escaped were from Pakistan. Guru was from Kashmir and hence the same mix-up of Kashmir with Pakistan.

How to sort out the Kashmir problem or, more so, why it has been held hanging thus far are the questions which need to be answered by the rulers, both at Srinagar and New Delhi. State chief minister Omar Abdullah shrugs his shoulders and says that it is a long-term problem as if it becomes less pressing by saying so. He says he has attended to the short-term problem of security and law and order following Guru's hanging.

Has Omar Abdullah really done so? Already, most towns in Kashmir are under curfew and there are reports of clashes between the youth and the security forces. The fact that newspapers have been advised not to publish stories about the trouble and the television channels told to black out are enough indication of how the situation is.

The effect on the youth, which are entrapped in a situation of not their doing, is there for everyone to see in their psyche, uneasiness and futureless tomorrow. Some 66 years of uncertainty, accentuated by three wars between India and Pakistan, should have been a long enough period to narrow the distance on the Kashmir problem, if not to find a final settlement. What do the Kashmiris do when they are considered a problem in the rest of

the country? They are spotted out as Kashmiris who have not accepted their state's accession to India from heart?

By repeating ad nauseum that Jammu and Kashmir are an integral part of India, the state does not become one. True, independent elections have thrown up the representatives who govern the state. Yet they are always looking towards New Delhi for its rating. Sheikh Abdullah, who spent 12 years in detention, had to accept an agreement which he assumed would give the state autonomy of sorts. But his assessment turned out to be wrong. I can appreciate the argument that the centre wants to "do something" but I find it hard to believe that the opponents are willingly endorsing what New Delhi does.

Pakistan could have helped the situation ease by not sending terrorists across the border. But why should it oblige New Delhi when from ISI to Hafeez Sayeed, responsible for the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, are demanding the valley's accession to Pakistan? Enemies can sit across the table for talks but so long as they do not give up suspicion and mistrust, they do not reach anywhere. Therefore, the composite talks will take the two to anywhere, but the composite approach can. For one year, the Atal Bheari Vajpayee government kept the forces at the border but had to withdraw them sheepishly.

Yet it is not understandable why Guru, no doubt pronounced guilty by the Supreme Court and the constitutional head, President Pranab

Mukherjee who refused to commute the sentence, was not given the due before being hanged. His family was not given access to him. Even a dictator like General Zia-ul Haq allowed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's family to meet him a day or so before he was hanged. Why not Guru's family?

Guru's family could have been called to New Delhi on some "urgent work" if even a whiff of suspicion was not to be raised. The jail manual lays down meeting of the condemned with the family before hanging. It is understandable that the body cannot be handed over to the family, lest another centre of martyrdom should come up at Srinagar. But there would be no harm in allowing the family members to say 'fateh' at the place where he is buried at the Tihal Jail in Delhi.

When the Supreme Court bases its judgment primarily on "the circumstantial evidence," it becomes all the more necessary to commute the death conviction to life sentence. It would have been better if it had been done so. I am against capital punishment. But the life sentence till he breathes last in the jail could have served the end of justice.

If Guru's hanging leads to serious discussion on Kashmir, the entire furor would take some shape. But if this had been in view of the government, it would not have detained the Hurriyat leaders. It is a pity that the whole thing does not seem to go beyond the temporary issue of law and order problem while Omar Abdullah himself could have initiated talks at his level, to be taken further by Delhi subsequently.

Whether or not a dialogue begins, the experience of being in parliament house when it was attacked will always stay with me. I recall how tempers were frayed in the Central Hall. Two hours after the first shot was heard, the then minister for parliamentary affairs Pramod Mahajan stood up on a table to announce that MPs could now leave, women first. The members were not panicky even in the first instance but appeared more than relieved when they heard that all was over.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Sushma Swaraj refused to go with the caravan of women. I heard her saying something like, "Let me find out what really happened." By then, the army had arrived. I saw some members thanking Mahajan, including those who had sought his resignation. It was a curious kind of camaraderie, reflecting a unity which the country assumes when confronting an external threat.

Democracy is an idea, a nation's determination that extremists

can never understand. They only strengthen the belief that no price is too high to sustain freedom and democracy. I returned to parliament the following day as usual, as others did, to reaffirm our faith in the institution and to warn the assailants and their masters to keep their hands off.

Still the anger against Pakistan was voiced practically by every member. I often wonder if Pakistan is a solution or a problem.

Regal, but not yet imperial

I am surprised over the ease with which a public figure like Pranab Mukherjee has slipped into regal environment of President's office. In six months' time he is a different person in the midst of an array of kamarbandh (a belt-like rope around the waist) who bow whenever he passes their way. I thought he would change the office to bring it nearer to the people. But he has changed himself, to enjoy the ostentatiousness that the British viceroys had displayed when they ruled the country.

A function took me this week to President's house (Rashtrapati Bhavan). I was particular to find out the difference between his style and that of his predecessors. But there was none. A gilded chair looked odd against three ordinary chairs placed on the dais. A buttoned-up officer, probably on deputation from one of the three services, placed the speech pad on the podium from where the President addressed. I must admit that what he spoke was relevant to the present situation in the country.

Yet, this is where he should have changed. He must realize that he is only a figure head, like the Queen in England. No doubt, he is the custodian of the constitution

and all power resides in his office. But it is exercised by the elected government which is answerable to the people. Most of President Mukherjee's speeches delivered so far are political and reflect his bent of mind as if he is still a member of parliament. His role should be that of a guide and philosopher, but he endeavours to be an active politician.

If President Mukherjee had ears on the ground he would have returned the Ordinance on sexual harassment to women. Recommendations by former Chief Justice J. C. Verma should have been incorporated in toto. Women are opposed to the Ordinance because it is inadequate and does not cover the points they had raised.

Strange, after the function Mukherjee retreated to his presidential quarters. His predecessors would mix with the invitees and even have tea with them. He is listening too much to bureaucrats who are creating a hiatus between him and the people. I have seen President Mukherjee's entourage following him when he visits any place in Delhi. The traffic is stopped as before and there is a fleet of cars in the procession. I

once asked vice-president Hamid Ansari why he had such an elaborate security arrangement. He said it was not in his hands because the government wanted that way. I am sure, if he were to make it an issue he would succeed.

Like the vice-president, the President's security is also in the hands of the government and guided by the Blue Book which lays down the quantum of security in the case of President, vice-president, the Prime Minister etc. First Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru did not want the traffic to be stopped for him. But I recall that Home Minister Govind Ballabh Pant, with whom I worked as Information Officer, rejected Nehru's request in view of security.

Perhaps the President should have his own protocol division which at present is looked after by the Ministry of External Affairs. The ministry is given to the old practices and emphasizes on the ceremonial aspect too much. When he has eliminated buglers to herald his arrival and when he has deleted the prefix "manniya," he can make some drastic changes, especially in stoppage of traffic. Mukherjee should be a person easily accessible and the office of President should not come in the way.

When I was India's High Commissioner at London, I found that the Queen had only one pilot motorbike guiding the car. There was no vehicle following her and the traffic was not stopped. Agreed, the conditions in Great Britain are more settled than ours, although the terrorists have been located there as well.

Still security is an obsession in our country. President Muherjee is a popular person who had practically no security till the other day. He should at least reduce it as well as the pomp and show which has become part of the office. Intelligence agencies always exaggerate threats because they do not have to do any home work to assess whether a particular person requires the paraphernalia of gun-totting guards around him or not.

I recall another example of a cool attitude of the British in the security field. When President R. Venkataraman came to London on an official visit it began on an ominous note. An overzealous policeman mistook a shopping bag on a railway platform for a bomb. The Royal train was waiting at a station near Gatwick airport to carry the President and his party to Victoria station where the Queen was to receive him.

The policeman sent back the train. No one questioned his judgment till the bomb experts had 'defused' the harmless shopping bag. By then the President's cavalcade had been diverted to a crowded highway. The four motor cycle outriders did a tremendous job, enabling a fleet of cars to weave through a maze of crowded roads to Buckingham Palace where the Queen welcomed him. Even I was informed about the change in the arrangement before we entered the Palace.

Security apart, President Mukherjee has to change the functioning of Rashtrapati Bhavan and what the office entails. Dr Rajendra Prasad, India's first President, did bring a whiff of fresh air when he stepped into Rashtrapati Bhavan which was until then the Viceroy's residence. It was so different from the earlier functioning that the word went around that an Indian had stepped in.

The ceremonial humbug should be changed so that it is in tune with the people's thinking. My complaint is that the office is already too regal and it is turning into something imperial. President Mukherjee may not have taken part in the struggle for independence because he was too young. But he can at least behave in a way that the style of living and contact with the public does not have the distance which the viceroys had with the people.

Hangings of Afzal Guru

The PUCL condemns the hanging of Afzal Guru in Tihar Jail early in the morning (9.2.2013) today.

The tearing hurry with which Afzal Guru was hanged, accompanied by the flouting of all established norms by not giving his family their legal right to meet him before taking him to the gallows, clearly indicates that there were political considerations behind taking this step. More shameful is the explanation of the Home department that the wife and family of Afzal Guru were intimated of the hanging by a mail sent by Speed Post and Registered Post. Decency and humanity demanded that the Union Government give prior intimation to the family and an opportunity to meet him. Such a surreptitious action of the government also deprives the family of Afzal Guru of the right to seek legal remedy.

PUCL also condemns the repressive stand of the Delhi police in not allowing a group of people who were protesting against the

hanging and detaining them in police stations. We are equally concerned by reports that right-wing goons were permitted by the police to use violence against the protestors. PUCL asserts the right of citizens to dissent and express their opposition to capital punishment in a peaceful manner.

PUCL reiterates its demand for the abolition of the death penalty. PUCL is of the view that India must not retain in its statute book something so abhorrent to human rights as the death penalty. More especially, when more than one hundred and fifty countries have banned or put a moratorium on it. PUCL feels that as the land of Buddha and Gandhi, death penalty has no place.

PUCL feels that starting with Kasab, now with Afzal Guru, the country is going to witness a spate of executions. We give a call to the nation to break this spiral of executions.

Prabhakar Sinha (President)

People's Union of Civil Liberties

V Suresh (General Secretary)

An unfinished battle

Harsh Mander

A potentially historic piece of social legislation that will legally guarantee food for all is likely to soon conclude its prolonged, rocky and uncertain journey. Parliament, in its forthcoming budget session, is expected to finally decide the contours of a law to reduce endemic widespread hunger and malnourishment in the country.

The imagination of this statute is to create legally binding obligations for the State to ensure food - as subsidised grain, infant feeds, free cooked meals and social security cash transfers - to every child, woman and man lacking assured access to sufficient food for an active and healthy life. In a country which, despite galloping economic growth, is home to every third malnourished child in the world, and the largest number of chronically hungry people, one could have expected substantial national consensus for the proposed bill.

But many among the country's senior leadership, lawmakers, planners, economists, industry and the influential middle class remain ambivalent about a food law, convinced that it is profligate and administratively not implementable. No wonder that the proposed law has been continuously eroded at every stage of its four-year journey. The initial draft law by the National Advisory Council (NAC) and the right to food campaign were criticised by the Left parties for failing to universally cover all households with subsidised foodgrains. It

contained many robust protections for children, women, destitute groups, malnourished children and people in starvation, but these were curtailed in a weakened bill approved by the Cabinet for Parliament.

I still had faith that the Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC) would restore the body and soul of a strong food law, as it had done for the Right to Information statute. The PSC did improve on earlier proposals in two ways. First, it covers all households with uniform entitlements of subsidised grain except those which are excluded by transparent criteria. Second, it extends school meals to children up to 16 years, up from the current 14 years. But my optimism lies belied, because the PSC otherwise diluted the already weakened official draft, with many disappointing and indefensible deletions.

It brought down the numbers eligible for subsidised grain in the countryside to 75 percent from 90 percent, as proposed by the NAC. The quantity of grain per individual is also down to 5 kg from the proposed 7 kg, despite massive grain procurement of over 60 million tonnes over the past five years - which the government still prefers to let rot rather than distribute to the hungry.

Even graver is the complete elimination of the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) from the ambit of the law on

the specious grounds that ICDS is not yet equipped to deliver legal guarantees because of operational and programmatic gaps. Malnutrition sets in irreversibly in the first 1,000 days of life, and indeed even before this in the mother's womb, and ICDS is the only State programme which serves children below six years, with pregnant and nursing mothers. The Supreme Court converted all ICDS services into legal guarantees more than a decade ago in 2001, and the PSC seeks to reverse this now.

The PSC further curtails children's right to food, by restricting this to only one meal a day, provided in schools for children of two to 16 years "or the age at which they start school". As children enter government school only at six, this excludes children in the age group of two to six. The food rights of the most vulnerable children of all, those who do not attend school, through the requirement that no child would be turned away from any feeding centre on any grounds, are again eliminated.

The proposal to entitle lactating mothers support for exclusive breastfeeding through assistance at birth, skilled breastfeeding counselling and related assistance is again withdrawn. Further, governments aren't duty-bound to identify malnourished children and entitlements of severely malnourished children to care at Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres or in the community have been

Writers, Scholars and Freedom of Expression

K. S. Chalam

withdrawn. The committee also restricts maternity benefits only to two children. This unfairly penalises poorest women and children, because large families are a result of poverty, gender inequalities and poor health services.

It is equally unfortunate that the PSC removes destitute feeding centres, suggesting that such a programme will be difficult to implement. Tamil Nadu and Orissa have implemented successful destitute feeding programmes for years, and this has been the last defence of the poorest against starvation in these states. Other reasons cited by the PSC for deletion are extraordinarily disrespectful to the poor, suggesting that poor households will turn away old members just so that they can get free food.

Gone also are other entitlements of persons living with starvation. These included duties of state governments to establish protocols for preventing starvation, providing relief, investigating starvation deaths and assigning accountability. Likewise, all protections for people grappling with emergencies are also excised from the bill.

All effective rights legislations, like the Right to Information law, require strong independent grievance redress mechanisms, with penalties for violations by public officials. Both the Cabinet draft and the PSC have completely diluted these enforcement systems, thereby critically weakening the law.

Although convincing economic arguments can be made in support of a food rights law for strengthening the gains of India's demographic

(Continued on Page 10)

The twentyfirst century knowledge society has created weightless goods and is responsible for the demise of distance. This revolution has facilitated access to information to those who have the capacity to own or use ICT. At the same time, it is required to help the customer or user to have free entry that is either seemingly available without cost or at a price. This needs radical changes in the institutional structures that have been evolved over a period of time and are responsible for identity of the nations. One may consider this, as an element of transformation of the post-modern society, or hegemony of neo-liberalism. But, the required technology maintaining the useful information is cost driven, mostly acquired from the Anglo-American countries. Already, the WTO regime is in place with GATS to make even "expressions" capable of getting a patent. It is under this background, according to some cultural theorists, culture, knowledge and several other forms of intangible goods are packaged and marketed. Therefore, it needs a market place to trade. Though, market is now increasingly shaped by Internet, sometimes it is necessary to create a physical ambience to meet and exchange. If we extend the logic further, we see today that even the Media Houses are creating such facilities to 'manufacture' their own media products without depending on others. In a situation like this, International Literary Festivals in countries where there are potential customers and subjects are received

with great enthusiasm.

The recent controversy over the statement by a non-teaching Professor (Hon Fellow of a Research Institute and not a University Department) is to be looked into in the broad context of the changing times and the intolerance against certain excluded groups (when their voices are also heard feebly). It is alleged that some elite scholars from metropolitan centers under the guise of research studies have started popularizing the received theories without adequate discussion with students and or peers. It is not for the first time that the country has witnessed such outbursts of people on social or cultural issues. We have a long history of fights and duels in the country over petty issues like endorsing the status of a particular caste; inter faith and intra sect issues trickling out in public discourses and ending in legal battles. But, the present issue appears to be due to the misunderstanding or confusion to make a distinction between the statement/utterance of a writer and the proposition or observation of a scholar. This can also be interpreted as a phenomenon of social change (good or bad).

The increasing market for leisure time activity owing to rise in incomes and alternative sources of entertainment have proliferated the publishing companies to bring, what is popularly called "non-fiction" categories. Otherwise, how do we account for the attendees like Ashis Nandy, Binayak Sen, Barkha

Dutta,, Dalai Lama,, Gurucharan Das, Nandan Nilekani, Kiran Bedi et al at the recent Jaipur festival. There are some creative writers, poets and sundry authors who might have participated or visited the venue to show case their writings. But, how do we evaluate or understand this phenomenon?

Writers are generally considered as those who write books, stories and other types of creative writing to appeal to the 'senses or emotions' of readers or people. They are not bound by any restrictions except to correspond to the aesthetic values if they care to. Literary critiques have developed several theories about the evaluation of literary pieces based on the aesthetics developed in each country grounded in their culture and society. Indians are fond of 'Rasa' theory while the Western, African and other nations might have their own parameters to judge creative writings including poetry (I am not proficient to comment). Scholars are those who have specialized in a discipline and have aptitude for deep study and reflection. They can be broadly divided into scholars of Social Sciences and Humanities and Physical and Natural Sciences. There seem to be a design to marginalize and outwit the social scientists who raise issues of social concern particularly in the emerging unipolar world. Therefore, we have deep crisis in social science research that I have occasionally commented in my columns. I have touched the issue about a decade ago in my EPW article "Social Science Research: the Social Context" (2002). On the other hand, there are writers who can address anything from nuclear energy to nuclear family and publish without sufficient theory, data, methodology and deep study of the problem without much concern

for the consequences, academic or social. After all Social Science research is to be considered as a 'process of argument and not a body of settled conclusions'. Even established laws in Science are being questioned now and therefore, a social scientist should feel more responsible and cautious in making public statements on contested issues! (Creative writers are different and Journos are privileged people as the publicized word and voice are under their control).

The scientists are responsible people and must be in a position to defend their argument or make it clear that they are only making a protocol statement subject to verification and falsification. In fact, serious scholars are not generally seen discussing issues in public except in the classrooms or informed groups or gatherings. Unfortunately, the decadence is seen much faster in issues relating to social science research with competing claims by everyone including the civil society action research based on limited and sponsored agenda. If Ashish Nandy has made the contentious issue as writer, I don't think anyone would have an objection (subject to norms of the Constitution). But Nandy has a tag as Professor of Political Sociology, Social Psychology etc. It is not only Nandy, there are other characters, in recent times, who wanted to be in limelight in the garb of (a new import from the West) Public Intellectuals (PI). Some self styled PIs with civil society connections are ever ready to download standard printouts with high profile names attached to statements, on any issue without a proper debate and concrete secular agenda, need to ponder over issues of social consequences in a pluralistic society?

The post- liberal society has invented several notions and categories on the basis of the experiences in the market economies of the OECD, and pushes them in to developing countries like India through World Bank, MNC sponsored publications. It is now debated that the concept of civil society originated in the writings of Hegel, Marx and even Gramsci is being inverted to provide the primacy of market over the state by some PIs. In fact, Gramsci, it is said, revived the civil society concept (to strengthen the superstructure argument) as a political activity of struggle against the tyranny of class state. PIs are neither serious scholars nor organic intellectuals, but are those who can translate complex ideas in to simple people's language. In that sense, every thinking person including the media people starting from a stringer to cameraman who can project the degradation of basic human values should be considered as a PI. However, we know the standards of some of our PIs who privately manipulate and twist issues depending upon the reciprocal value of the transaction. Do we have public Intellectuals like an Edward Said to question the hegemony of the West? Do the Nandys or PIs come under this category?

Some of the PIs including the media houses cite Article 19 of the Indian Constitution time and again to vent their views in the name of freedom of speech and expression. They just do not tell us why they have not been able to use it or have distorted Imrana case or Khairlanji or the latest case of a Dalit Professor being attacked in Dhule, Maharashtra when he spoke on reformation movement in the classroom that was captured in a cell phone and webcasted to incite

Execution of Afzal Guru

communal hatred? In fact, article 19 is meant for citizens and not corporate bodies and consists of 6 other freedoms, with reasonable restrictions (of the Press Act of 1951, Press Council Act 1978 read with 1835 Act). Freedom of 'opinion and expression' is incorporated as Art 19 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of UNO and not the Indian Constitution. There are studies to show how the Corporate Media Houses particularly the dominant ones restrict the freedom of expression of citizens by manipulating and distorting facts as episodes or what Chomsky calls the 'manufacturing of consent'. It is perhaps with the indulgence of some representatives of the media either out of confusion or deliberately put statements of persons like Nandy as conduits of their depraved feelings and abuse freedom of expression of citizens. It may be due to the willing cooperation of PIs who degenerate or get pampered by sectional interests, create ruckus out of nothing as perishable news value, but not a durable commodity of expert opinion.

(Continued from Page 3)

what is more, the court has not been applying uniform considerations or judicially sound norms in its various judgments. That the government needs to avoid viewing death row cases through a political prism goes without saying. It is easy to attribute political motives to governments, but the demand of J & K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for applying the same considerations that hastened Guru's execution to the pending cases in Tamil Nadu (Rajiv Gandhi's killers) and in Punjab (Beant Singh's assassins) is not without merit. The people of Kashmir must not nurse the feeling that Guru's hanging was "selective".

We, concerned citizens from parts of India, are shocked by the secretive manner of the execution of Afzal Guru who was accused in the Parliament attack case and condemn the continued use of death penalty. We are also dismayed to know that his family members were not informed about the hanging and his body was not handed over to them as per colonial prison rules that should be revised immediately. As there are a number of doubts in his case regarding the evidence produced that was primarily circumstantial in nature and that he was not provided proper legal assistance at the trial stage, sentencing for life should have been the preferred option.

The timing of the execution with elections around the corner is giving rise to strong suspicion that this decision could have been guided not just by judicial considerations but also by political exigencies, and hence is a matter for concern for democratic traditions and civilized values of our society.

All acts of terror and criminality deserve exemplary punishment but death penalty should not be used as

Admiral L Ramdas-Alibagh; Mahesh Bhatt-Mumbai; Prof. Achin Vanaik-New Delhi; Prof. Rama Melkote-Hyderabad; Prof. Ritu Diwan-Mumbai; Sandeep Panday-Lucknow; Lalita Ramdas-Alibagh; Dr. Mazher Hussain-Hyderabad; Dr. Ram Puniyan-Mumbai; Prof. Kamal Mitra Chenoy-New Delhi; Irfan Engineer-Mumbai; Dr. Samata Roshni-Hyderabad; K. Sajaya-Hyderabad; Anuradha-Hyderabad; Ambica-Hyderabad; Jatin Desai-Mumbai; Jeevan Kumar-Hyderabad

(Continued from Page 8)

dividend, I have argued in my book *Ash in the Belly: India's Unfinished Battle Against Hunger* that ultimately the case for the law is ethical, the unacceptability of mass suffering of hunger and malnutrition in a country with wealth and food resources. Gandhi

a punishment as we all recognize that the process of justice always contains the possibility of error and misjudgment. Hence all judicial decisions should have the scope for review and redress. Death Penalty has no such scope. Further, the choice of awarding life sentence or death penalty rests solely on the judge hearing the case. Thus the personal stand of different members of the judiciary can have crucial bearing on the judgment.

In the US, the state of Texas has the largest rate of death penalty and the largest number of lethal crimes. The history of capital punishment has shown that it does not have any deterrent effect on crime. And thus there is nothing in its favour. A number of countries across the world have already abolished death penalty. Larger and larger sections of democratic opinion in this country and all over the world have been demanding that Capital Punishment be removed from the statute books since it is cruel, violent and violates the sanctity of human life. We demand immediate steps to abolish the death penalty.

had counselled us to recall, in moments of doubt, the poorest and weakest person we know. I hope that it is his face which our lawmakers remember when they reflect on a law which - if we get it right - can alter the destinies of millions of our most dispossessed people.

Prof. Vinod Prasad Singh

Prof. Vinod Prasad Singh passed away on February 8, 2013 at IGIMS hospital, Patna, after a long illness. He was 73. Popular as Vinod Babu among his friends, Prof. Singh was a prominent socialist thinker from Bihar. He joined the socialist movement at the age of 12 and performed a long political and intellectual journey throughout his career. He was appointed treasurer of the Samajwadi Yuvjan Sabha (SYS) in 1971. He worked as the national secretary of the Socialist Party from 1973 to 1977. He was elected to the Bihar Legislative Assembly in 1977. He took voluntary retirement as Professor of Economics from Delhi University and started full time political work in Samajwadi Jan Parishad. He held posts of national General Secretary, Vice President and President in SJP. He joined the Socialist Party (India) after its formation in May, 2011.

Prof. Singh worked hard for the propagation of the socialist movement and ideology. He edited Hindi 'Pratipaksh' and 'Naya Sangharsh' for several years and brought out important special issues related to the socialist movement, thought and personalities. He had special interest in the August Revolution and published two special issues of 'Naya Sangharsh' on this subject. He edited the documents of the socialist movement in 2 parts with Dr. Suneelam and a book titled 'Madhu Limaye : Jeevan Aur Rajniti' with Dr. Prem Singh.

The Socialist Party held a condolence meeting at its Delhi Party office and paid homage to the departed soul. On this occasion Justice Rajindar Sachar said that the demise of Prof. Vinod Prasad Singh is a big loss to the true socialist tradition that fights against the twin menace of corporate capitalism and communalism. In his condolence message to the family members of Prof. Singh he expressed hope that they would bear the loss with courage and strength.

Dr. Prem Singh

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Iftikhar Gilani's Complaint to Justice Markandey Katju, Chairman Press Council of India:

At 10:30 a.m on February 9 (Saturday) I was just putting my bag in my car to leave for office, I saw two persons in the compound who enquired about the house of Geelani saab. I asked them which Geelani saab are you searching for, making out they could be from some courier agency to deliver some mail for me? They replied that they are searching for a Kashmiri leader, who lives somewhere in the colony. I told them he lives in the opposite block and tried to give them directions. One of them requested, if I can accompany them.

So I did. On the way, they told me they are from Delhi Special Cell. When we reached at JD18 E block of Khirki Ext. I saw a crowd of plain clothesmen in the gully. I just pointed out to first floor and told them there lives Geelani saab, you are searching for. As I started to withdraw, they grabbed my hand and said they need few minutes to talk to me. And virtually dragged me to first floor flat, taking away my purse, identity card, keys etc. They could not trace my phone till then, though they were insisting to hand over phone to them. Upon reaching the flat, I saw many more people inside. As they got busy with conversation to some other person, I managed to go to bathroom and sent SMS to my office and some friends. When I was back, they noticed the phone and took it away.

After 15 minutes, I saw my wife also arriving at this house, escorted by two male plain cloth police wala. My children were alone at my house. I repeatedly asked

them to explain reasons behind my detention. All the time, they were very rude, threatening and warning me of dire consequences. I also pleaded with them, even if they want to detain me, why at the house of Syed Ali Geelani and not at my own home or a police station? And why had they kept children away from us?

After five hours, I heard many voices from outside. One officer type person came and shouted that I am free and can leave this house. In the by-lane I saw my office people including bureau chief Saikat Dutta and some other friends including, Aurangzeb Naqashbadni of Hindustan Times. They had used every available contact in home ministry and Delhi police to make them see reason. When I reached my home, some 7-8 strangers were occupying drawing room and living room and they had locked up my children in a bed room that does not have even bathroom facility.

When I reached there with friend, the strangers started leaving one by one. Saying that my children were terrified would be an understatement. They recalled how these people in our absence banged the door and asked them to confine themselves in bed room. They were also shouting at neighbours why they allow person like me to live there.

I have no issue with what government wanted to do to maintain law and order in Delhi or elsewhere. Repeatedly in public domains, I have affirmed that I have nothing to do with the politics of

my father-in-law Syed Ali Geelani.

I owe my living to journalism for over past two decades in Delhi. I feel totally distraught with the behaviour of security agencies, particularly special cell of Delhi police. I feel so scared. I try my best to raise my children in an atmosphere of peace and compassion. I have no idea, what should I do to prove myself to be a peace loving and a law abiding citizen.

As Frederick Douglass says, the life of the nation is secure only when the nation is honest, truthful and virtuous. I may add, the subjugation, harassment, and trampling on rights only makes the nation weak and insecure in the long run, though it may address to the rhetorical class and accrue short term gains.

I have a bad experience of the same Special Cell of Delhi Police putting me in Tihar Jails in 2002 on false charges and forging documents of the Defence Ministry to convince the court that I am a Pakistani agent supplying sensitive information to its High Commission. The officials who then raided my house even cooked up my bank accounts to claim I was sending Hawala money to Kashmiri terrorists. Many fictitious stories were also planted by them in media tarnishing my reputation. The cooked-up charges under the Official Secrets Act were withdrawn and I was honourably acquitted by the court, but only after eight months of harrowing custody. At the time of my then arrest in 2002, the Intelligence Bureau also made the Income Tax Department fabricate tax charges against me.

I am continuously harassed by the Income Tax Department with recovery notices from time to time despite I moving the Delhi High Court to end my harassment as

it keeps on adding penalty and fine for not paying dues that now total up to over Rs 60 lakhs that I just cannot afford to pay with my present salary. I am bringing this

fact to your knowledge, just to draw your attention to various ways I am continuously hounded and harassed. With thanks,

- 10 February 2013

Justice Markandey Katju's letter to Union Home Secretary:

I am forwarding to you an email I have received from Mr. Iftikhar Gilani, Asst. Editor DNA, who is a Government of India accredited journalist and former Vice President of the Press Association.

I have carefully perused the email he has sent me and I have also read the news item in the front page of today's The Hindu newspaper. They reveal great high handedness and outrageous behaviour by the Delhi policemen concerned in harrassing and tormenting Mr. Gilani and his family, including his small children. These were the undemocratic and abhorrent methods of the Gestapo during Nazi rule.

If these allegations are correct, the concerned police officers, who committed these high-handed illegal acts, as well as those higher ups who were instrumental in ordering these shameful and odious acts are prime facie guilty of serious crimes under sections 341/342, as well as other provisions of the Indian Penal Code and are also guilty of gross and blatant abuse of their powers.

Hence, if the allegations in the email of Mr Gilani are correct, I call upon you to do the following acts within 48 hours :

(i) immediately charge sheet and place under suspension all police officers responsible for these high handed and illegal acts including those higher ups who gave the orders for them

(ii) immediately institute criminal proceedings against such officers under the relevant provisions of IPC and other statutes.

(iii) immediately sanction adequate and suitable compensation to Mr Gilani and his family and convey an apology to him

(iv) I am informed that Mr. Gilani is still being harassed and surveillance is being done on him and his family. This is a clear violation of the decision of the Supreme Court in Kharak Singh Vs State of UP and other AIR 1963 S.C.1295, 1964 SCR (1) 332, as well as violation of the right to privacy, which has been held to be part of Art 21 of the Constitution of India. Police surveillance seriously encroaches upon privacy of the petitioner and his fundamental rights under Art 21 vide 1999 (24) All Cr. R. 815 (817): 1999 (11).

I may mention that in the Nuremburg Trials held in after the Second World War the Nazi War Criminals took the plea that orders are orders, and that they were only obeying the orders of their superior Hitler. This plea was rejected by the International Tribunal which held that those orders were illegal orders and hence should have been disobeyed. Consequently many of the accused were hanged.

Hence all policemen in India are hereby warned that they should not carry out illegal orders of their superiors otherwise they will be charged for serious crimes, and if found guilty, severely punished.

**Acharya Javadekar
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FDI in Retail: For Whose Benefit?*

Neeraj Jain

On September 14, 2012, bowing to intense pressure from foreign corporations and foreign governments, especially the USA, the Union Cabinet of the Indian government finally decided to go ahead and implement a decision it had taken 10 months earlier to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) in yet another important sector of the Indian economy, multi-brand retail, with a cap of 51 percent on foreign equity that ensures majority ownership. (A multi-brand retail store is one which sells several competing brands of the same product under the same roof. Shopping malls like More and Spencer's are an example of multi-brand retail stores.)

The Foreign Hand

The Cabinet had first given its approval to the hitherto prohibited FDI in multi-brand retail on November 24, 2011. The decision led to a huge outpouring of protests all over the country, especially by traders' organisations. On December 1, 2011, crores of traders belonging to more than 10,000 traders' bodies across the country observed an all-India bandh and took out rallies protesting the government decision. Sensing an opportunity to score political points, the entire Opposition came out strongly in support of the protests. Finally, on December 7, 2011, the government announced suspension of its decision to allow FDI in multi-brand retail.

Giant international retail corporations immediately expressed

their deep disappointment with the government decision. They had spent millions of dollars on lobbying (a polite word for what is actually nothing but bribery) lawmakers in their home countries to help them set up shop in India: Walmart, a US corporation which is the world's largest retailer, alone had spent around \$25 million, or Rs. 125 crores, since 2008, on this, according to disclosure reports filed by it with US authorities. Obviously, quite a bit of this money must have found its way into the pockets of Indian politicians and parties.

The giant UK retailer Tesco commented: "The decision to defer FDI is a missed opportunity for Indian producers, farmers and consumers." Senior officials of the German retail giant Metro too stated that the rollback was most unfortunate. Foreign corporations and their concubine governments mounted pressure on the Indian government to push ahead with the economic reform. All the 'Big Three' international credit ratings agencies, Standard and Poor's, Fitch and Moody's, expressed doubts about India's policy making and governance abilities, and downgraded India's credit rating outlook. In July 2012, the Asian edition of the US magazine Time carried a forlorn image of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on its cover, under the headline "The Underachiever", and criticised him for "unwilling to stick his neck out" on reforms. In February 2012, the US Under Secretary of International

Trade Francisco Sanchez called upon India to open multi-brand retail to foreign investment. The British Secretary of State for Business, Vince Cable, too raised the issue when he visited India in January 2012; and in July 2012, George Osborne MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, UK, called upon the Indian government to be "more ambitious in retail liberalisation". In July 2012, the US President Barack Obama lent his voice to the chorus. Citing American business community's concern over "deteriorating investment climate" in India, he called upon the Indian government to remove the limits and prohibitions on foreign investment.

Buckling under the intense imperialist pressure, the Indian government finally acceded to the wishes of the foreign corporations and their governments and opened up the country's multi-brand retail sector to FDI. On September 20, 2012, on the very day when traders' organisations and opposition political parties had called a Bharat Bandh to oppose this decision, it issued the final notification for allowing global retail giants like Walmart to open stores in India.

The Propaganda

From the Prime Minister to the PM-in-waiting Rahul Gandhi to Mukesh Ambani and Ratan Tata, all are claiming that allowing foreign retail giants into India's retail sector will be an important solution to the deepening economic crisis gripping the country. They are asserting that it will benefit consumers as they will

* This essay is an edited version of a bigger booklet: "Fight FDI In Retail", published by Lokayat and available on our website www.lokayat.org.in. For sources to the facts given in this essay, please refer to the booklet.

get commodities at reduced prices; it will benefit farmers as they will get better prices for their crop; and it will lead to the creation of one crore jobs in just three years!

We examine these claims in this essay. But before we proceed, let us first take a look at the size and economics of the foreign corporations being invited into the country in the name of FDI in Retail.

How Big Are Foreign Corporations?

The world economy today is increasingly dominated by a relatively few giant multinational corporations (MNCs). A MNC is a corporation, which, though it has its management headquarters in one country, operates in several countries. In the main, MNCs are headquartered in the rich nations—the United States, European Union and Japan.

While mainstream economics discusses our era as one of intense and increased competition among businesses, the reality is quite the opposite. Each and every economic activity, in every conceivable sphere, be it manufacture of automobiles or semiconductors or medicines, or be it retail or transportation or the various sectors of agriculture, or be it banking and finance, is dominated at the global level by a handful of giant corporations. Note that here we are not talking of a few firms dominating a particular economic activity in a particular country, but their dominating that economic activity at a global level.

To give a few examples: today five MNCs produce nearly half, and the ten largest firms produce 70 percent of the world's motor vehicles; in the global soft drink

business, just three companies matter; just two names run the world market for commercial aviation: Boeing Co. and Airbus Industrie; four companies essentially supply all of the world's recorded music. The world's top 10 seed companies control almost half of the global commercial seed market; the top 10 pesticide firms control 84 percent of the global pesticide market; and the top 10 biotech companies account for almost three-quarters of the global biotech market.

Even these figures do not describe the full range of the monopoly power of the giant corporations, as they do not capture the strategic alliances and partnerships constructed by them to extend their tentacles all over the globe. These include subcontracting agreements, management contracts, turnkey deals, franchising, licensing and product sharing. For instance: MNCs extensively subcontract their operations either in part or sometimes entirely to subcontractors in third world countries to lower their labour costs. Thus, Nike does not manufacture even a single pair of shoes directly; it outsources all of its production to subcontractors in countries such as South Korea, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

A recent study starkly brings out the crushing grip the world's largest MNCs have come to acquire over the global economy. A study by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich that examined the relationships between 43,000 major MNCs discovered a vast web of interlocking ownerships that is controlled by a "core" of 1,318 giant corporations! These 1318 corporations represented 20 percent of global operating revenues; however, through their

shares, they collectively owned the majority of the world's large blue chip and manufacturing firms, and thus accounted for a further 60 percent of global revenues!!

MNCs and Competition

Classical economic theory assumes the existence of a very large number of small firms engaged in 'cut-throat' competition with each other. The rise of the multinational corporation completely changes this situation. Since MNCs have enormous financial power, if they indulged in price competition, it would be so destructive that the winner would also be considerably weakened. Therefore, instead of indulging in 'price warfare', they collude over prices. And if they have to collude over prices, why should they keep prices low? Therefore, they keep prices high, at a level which gives them the maximum possible profits.

That does not mean that competition amongst MNCs is eliminated. It is as cut-throat as ever. Only that it now takes other forms. They now compete with each other for reducing costs, over control of resources, for market shares through product differentiation and advertising.

Impact on India's Retail Sector

While there are no authoritative figures available, the size of India's retail sector is estimated to be around \$400 billion today. This sector is the second largest employer in the country after agriculture, and presently employs around 4 crore people.

According to the countrywide Economic Census of 2005, the country had a total of 1.5 crore retail outlets, the highest in the world.

India's retail sector is presently overwhelmingly dominated by small "unorganized retailers", consisting of the local kirana shops, general stores, chemist-hardware-footware-garment-cutlery-stationery shops, paan-beedi shops, hand-cart hawkers, etc. This sector accounts for around 93 percent of all retail sales. Organised retailing constitutes the remaining 7 percent. This includes the corporate-backed hypermarkets and retail chains, and also the privately owned large retail businesses.

The MNC Retailers

Like in all other sectors, the global general merchandise retail market too is controlled by a handful of powerful corporations like Walmart, TESCO, Carrefour, and Metro, mainly headquartered in the US and Western Europe. In 2009-10, the world's biggest general merchandise retailer Walmart had total global sales of \$405 billion. Among the other biggies, Carrefour (of France) had annual sales of \$163.8 bn, Metro (of Germany) \$91.4 bn and TESCO (of UK) \$90.1 bn.

These figures mean that Walmart alone sold more goods than all of India's 1.5 crore retailers combined! Obviously, once such giant mammoths start spreading their tentacles over the Indian retail sector, India's small retailers will just not be able to compete with them and will be destroyed. The modus operandi of these giants is simple. Because of their size and financial muscle, big retailers like Walmart are able to source their supplies from the lowest cost producers at the global level, like China. In the case of farm produce, they will be able to source it from Indian farmers directly. Therefore, they will be able to sell their products at

cheaper rates than the small retailers. If necessary, Walmart and other big retail MNCs which have incredibly deep pockets are even willing to sell at a loss for several years, till the competition from small retailers is wiped out. Not just the kirana stores and street vendors will be forced out of business, the entire network of wholesalers and distributors will be displaced. Meanwhile India's corporate retailers will enter into collaborations with the foreign retail chains, and become their junior partners.

Within a few years, India's vibrant small retail sector will be destroyed, to be dominated by a handful of giant MNC retailers.

Destruction of Small Retail

The corporate choirs are crooning that this is an exaggeration, that small shops and supermarkets/hypermarkets can co-exist. They are lying, it has not happened anywhere in the world. Small retail has virtually been wiped out in the developed countries. In the US, the top four firms account for between 55-73 percent of the total retail sales in several key areas like health and personal care stores, general merchandise stores, book stores and computer stores.

Obviously, this domination by the big retail chains has been at the expense of small retailers. One study by Prof. Kenneth Stone of Iowa State University, USA, found that small towns lose up to 47 percent of their retail trade after 10 years of Walmart stores nearby. The impact of big retailers, especially Walmart, on small retail and businesses in the USA has been so terrible that people in several cities and communities have organised and fought hard to prevent the entry of Walmart

supercentres in their cities (with varying degrees of success).

Likewise, in Europe, by 2005, the top 5 retailers accounted for around 65-75 percent of total grocery sales in several European countries, from Denmark to Sweden, Switzerland, Germany and the UK. In the UK, there are several postal areas where Tesco, Britain's largest retailer, has almost total control of the food market!

Destruction of Third World Countries

From Turkey to Brazil to South Africa, in each and every third world country that has permitted FDI in Retail, within just a few years of the entry of giant retailers into their economies, they have driven millions of small retailers out of business to capture a large share of the retail market. Walmart entered Mexico in 1991; within a decade (2001), it had taken over nearly half (45.6 percent) of the retail market! In East Asia, the supermarket share of retail food sales ballooned from less than 20 percent to around 50 percent over the decade ending around 2005; the impact on small retail was so devastating that it led to riots, forcing several countries to impose controls on mega-retailers.

With giant retailers now given permission to enter the Indian retail market, their impact is going to be no different; they will simply destroy India's small retail sector.

Job Creation Myth

While the giant retailers will employ a few thousand people, this is nothing compared to the millions of small retailers they will render jobless. According to one estimate, one Walmart supermarket can displace over 1,300 small retail

stores and render 3,900 people jobless. For every job created in a supermarket, around 17 jobs are lost in the unorganised retail sector. With more than 4 crore people employed in the retail trade in India, the entry of giant MNC retailers is going to have a devastating impact on the employment situation in the country.

Even the few jobs that will be created by these supermarket chains will be low-paid jobs. Walmart is known worldwide for paying wages far below industry standard; in the US, the average wage it pays to its workers is 6 percent below the US federal poverty level. Worse, the company has a long record of worker abuse, including forced overtime, punishing workers for the slightest infraction, illegal child and undocumented worker labour, discrimination against female employees, and relentless union-busting.

Will Farmers Benefit?

If this was true, the MNC retailers should have benefited farmers in the US and Europe! On the contrary, the giant agri-businesses and mammoth retail chains have wrecked family farms, especially the smaller ones, in America. Presently less than one million Americans claim farming as their occupation. That figure was over 25 million in the 1950s. Likewise, in Europe, every minute a farmer quits agriculture.

MNCs Cartelise to Lower Purchase Prices

The reason for this deepening agricultural crisis in the developed countries is simple. MNCs are gigantic, and so are able to monopolise the entire supply chain, from processing to trade to retail. Further, unlike what is taught in economics textbooks, they do not

compete with each other, and instead cartelise amongst themselves, so that they are able to dictate prices at which they buy goods from small producers and farmers. The farmers have no option but to sell their produce to these corporations at the prices offered by the latter. The giant retailers are thus in a position to drive down purchase prices at will, forcing farmers into ruin. This is the reason for the destruction of family farms in Europe and America.

A few examples. In 1970, hog producers (those who raise pigs) in the US got 48 cents out of each retail dollar spent on pork; three decades later, their share had fallen to only 12 cents out of every retail dollar. This, while retail prices stayed stable, implying that the supermarkets had kept all the gains for themselves, and had not passed any benefits to the consumers. In the UK, while it costs the consumer £1.45 to buy four pints (1 pint = 0.57 litres) of milk at a supermarket, the farmer receives just 58 pence (40 percent) of this. According to the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers, dairy farmers are suffering a loss of 3 pence for every four pints. As a result, many small farmers have closed their dairy operations.

Strangling Growers in the Third World

Neither has big retail helped farmers in the third world countries. A decade ago, third world coffee producers earned \$10 billion from a global market of over \$30 billion. Now they receive less than \$6 bn out of a global market of \$60 bn. Likewise, cocoa farmers of Ghana now receive only 3.9 percent of the price of a typical milk chocolate bar, while the retail margin hovers at around 34.1 percent. While the African producers as a whole get

only 9 percent of the retail price of an exported apple, the retailers in UK corner a 42 percent share.

Unfair Conditionalities

The big retail corporations marginalise small farmers in other ways too, like by imposing stringent criteria for supply of their produce. Producers are typically expected to meet exacting product standards for their goods, adjust production volumes at short notice to meet short-term market trends, make provisions for cold storage, and so on. The vast majority of smallholders do not have the resources to meet these demands, and so are being forced out and replaced by big farmers or the corporates themselves.

For instance, in Brazil, Nestlé (a Swiss-based MNC) and Parmalat (an Italian MNC) first bought up the country's milk cooperatives in a series of aggressive takeovers, and then imposed standards that small farmers found difficult to meet. Thus, they demanded that farmers install milk refrigeration tanks on their farms. Most small-scale farmers could not afford to install the coolers, which in any case were beyond their needs. Such conditions pushed over nearly 50,000 dairy farmers out of business altogether. Likewise, in Argentina, corporate transformation of the supply chain saw the number of dairy farms falling from 40,000 in 1983 to 15,000 in 2001. Walmart's overwhelming domination of Mexico's retail trade is one of the important reasons that has forced 25 percent of small Mexican farmers to quit farming over the last two decades.

MNCs take advantage of their monopoly power to even indulge in unfair trading practices with small farmers. These can include: delaying

payment for produce; lowering prices at the last minute; buying less than the amount agreed to; changing quality standards without adequate notice; and so on.

Impact on Small Farmers in India

Given all this evidence, it is obvious that the entry of the giant corporate retail into India's food market will have a devastating impact on India's 650 million farmers.

Presently, because of the APMC Acts, the farmer has the option to sell his agricultural goods in any mandi either himself or through any agent who gives him the best rate. Because there is no single buyer, farmers get a better price. Now, the Central government is pressurising the states to amend their APMC Acts, so as to allow agribusiness corporations to enter into direct contracts with farmers. One result of this is going to be that the mandis are gradually going to shut down. This is because MNCs have huge financial strength and will initially pay better prices to the farmers than the mandis (they are already doing this in many states that have modified their APMC Acts).

Once the mandis close down and the MNCs acquire monopoly over purchase, they will then start lowering procurement prices, as they have done all over the world. The farmers will have no option but to sell to them. Additionally, the giant corporations/retailers will also now be in a position to impose conditions like strict adherence to quality and schedule on the farmers, which will be very difficult for our small farmers to meet.

Over the last two decades, ever since the government of India has gradually opened up the country's

economy to FDI inflows, the agricultural sector has sunk into deeper and deeper crisis. It has led to a massive increase in the indebtedness of the peasantry, and has spurred the worst-ever recorded wave of suicides in the country's history. Apart from which 75 lakh people have abandoned agriculture in a decade. The latest of these policies, FDI in retail, will have even more catastrophic consequences.

Will Consumers Benefit?

The propaganda is that supermarkets will eliminate middlemen, leading to lower consumer prices. This is another myth. In reality, corporate retail establishes complete monopoly over the whole supply chain to become producer, wholesaler, distributor and retailer, all together. Thus, corporate retailers become giant middlemen themselves. Once they succeed in this, why will they transfer some of their huge margins to consumers and lower consumer prices? On the contrary, MNCs take advantage of their monopoly position to raise consumer prices and earn superprofits!

It may happen that initially, while the retail giants are taking on the existing small retailers, consumers may benefit from lower prices for a short while. But once the MNC retailers acquire a monopoly over the market, they will hike prices. Even when supplier prices fall due to cost economies, they do not lower consumer prices. This has been the experience the world over, from Nicaragua and Argentina to Kenya and Thailand and Vietnam.

An official report prepared in June last year (2011) by the French government's food price watchdog charged supermarkets

with squeezing producers by paying lower prices, but not passing on the gains to customers. With the result that the supermarkets were earning fabulous profits: margins on apples and bananas stood at around 140 percent, and for carrots and lettuce at 110 percent; the margin on pork loin had risen to 55 percent from 39 percent a decade ago.

FDI in Retail: For Whose Benefit?

Clearly, the government decision to allow 'FDI in Retail' is going to have calamitous consequences for India's dynamic retail sector. Lakhs of small shopkeepers and street vendors will be forced out of business, rendering millions of people unemployed. Not only that, it will have devastating consequences for small farmers too. Neither will consumers benefit; 'FDI in Retail' is not going to lead to lower consumer prices and help control inflation in any way.

If it is going to have such ruinous consequences, why is the government of India allowing giant foreign retailers to set up supermarkets-hypermarkets in India?

India on 'Sale'

It has actually been happening for the last two decades, since 1991 to be more precise. The Indian economy was trapped in an external debt crisis. Taking advantage of this, India's foreign creditors, that is, the USA and other developed countries, imposed stringent conditionalities on the government of India. Through the World Bank and the IMF (which are controlled by them), they arm-twisted the Indian government into agreeing to a restructuring of the Indian economy. The basic elements of this so-called 'Structural Adjustment Program' were:

- Removal of all controls on inflows of foreign capital and goods;
- Privatisation of the public sector, including welfare services;
- Removal of all controls placed on profiteering, even in essential services like drinking water, food, education and health.

This restructuring of the economy at the behest of India's foreign creditors has been given the high-sounding name of globalisation. Since then, governments at the Centre and the states have continued to change, but globalisation of the economy has continued unabated.

The essence of globalisation is that the Indian government is now running the economy solely for the profit maximisation of giant foreign corporations and their junior partners, India's big business houses. These corporations are on a no-holds barred looting spree. They are plundering mountains, rivers and forests for their immense natural wealth. They are seizing control of public sector corporations, including public sector banks and insurance companies, created through the sweat and toil of the common people, at throwaway prices. Privatisation is also enabling them to enter essential services—including education, health, electricity, transport, even drinking water—and transform these into instruments of naked profiteering. Because these are essential services, the profits are huge.

Continuation of Globalisation

Two decades of globalisation has pushed the Indian economy further into the clutches of India's foreign creditors. The globalisation conditionalities have led to a

rapid worsening of India's foreign exchange crisis. Import liberalisation has led to a sharp rise in our trade deficit. It has increased from \$2.8 billion in 1991-92 to a whopping \$189.7 billion in 2011-12. As a result, our current account deficit has shot up to \$78.2 billion for the financial year 2011-12, the highest levels since 1991; and our external debt has zoomed to an astronomical \$346 billion at the end of March 2012, a rise by more than 4 times over 1991-92!

This spiralling whirlpool of foreign debt has made the country more and more dependent on foreign exchange inflows (or FDI) to prevent the economy from once again plunging into foreign exchange bankruptcy. And so the foreign corporate armies and their concubine governments are able to impudently trample upon our honour and dignity, yankee-kick us into implementing more and more economic reforms, force us to open up more and more sectors of the economy for gigantic multinationals to invest and plunder.

And so they have arm-twisted the Indian government to open up the retail sector too for FDI inflows.

We Must Advance Our Struggle!

Friends, our nationwide struggle to prevent the entry of foreign MNCs into the retail sector has not prevented the Indian ruling classes from going ahead with their sordid agenda.

Clearly, a lot more needs to be done. We need to intensify our struggle. There are many amongst us who are gripped by a sense of despondency. A common refrain is that if the opposition parties couldn't prevent the policy from being implemented, what can we,

the ordinary people, do. We need to be clear that the opposition of the mainstream political parties to this policy was only out of opportunism, to take advantage of the tremendous public anger against this policy. Which is why they made no attempt to mobilise people for a determined struggle against this policy, and all they did was to give a call for a ritualistic one-day Bharat Bandh.

There is no need to be despondent about the fact that there are no tall leaders to follow. Leaders are not born in vacuum; they are born out of social movements. The biggest and tallest trees all ultimately sprout from the earth.

We need to deepen our struggle, involve more people in it. There are a very large number of common people who have been hoodwinked by the intense government and media propaganda and believe that this policy will indeed benefit Indian farmers and consumers. Therefore, it is important to continue with our campaign to educate the common people about the disastrous effects of this policy

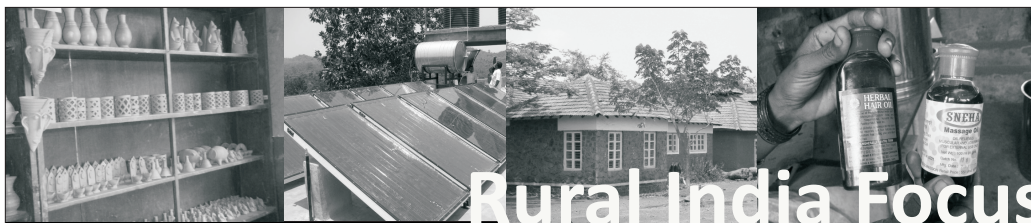
Of course, just increasing consciousness is not enough. We will need to organise various forms of creative protests and motivate people to join them in increasing numbers.

Ultimately, our struggle against FDI in retail is a part of the growing nationwide movement against globalisation, against the sell-out of our country to foreign and Indian big business houses by India's ruling classes. As more and more people join this struggle, it will strengthen and become a powerful force to transform society, and build a new India, where development does not

mean profit maximisation of a few big corporations, but fulfilment of the basic needs of all human beings—healthy food, invigorating education, decent shelter, clean pollution-free environment.

Friends, this may appear to be a utopia, but it is not so. Of course, it is going to be a long and arduous struggle, but it can be won. Every end needs a beginning, only if there is a beginning will there be an

end. We therefore need to take our own small initiatives. Let us make a beginning by trying to build a unity of small traders, farmers, and consumers in our areas...



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Nanashaheb Goray

The Pole Star

Bapu Heddurshetti

The history of the Socialist movement in India which started with the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 and had a galaxy of stars like Dr. Sampooranand, Acharya Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan, Asoka Mehta, Nabakrishna Choudhury, Achyut Patwardhan, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Rammanohar Lohia, Minoo Masani, S. M. Joshi, N. G. Goray, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Mohanlal Goutam, M. L. Dantwala, C. T. Narayanaswamy, Charles Mascaranhas and Purushottam Tricumdas is a story of diaspora.

While Mahatma Gandhi's ideology snatched Jayaprakash Narayan, some like Dr. Sampooranand, Nabakrishna Choudhury and Asoka Mehta drifted to the Congress, some others like E.M.S. Namboodiripad and Mohanlal Goutam went over to the Communist Party. Some like Minoo Masani ended up in a liberal party like the Swatantra Party, while some like Achyut Patwardhan and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya drifted away from politics itself and some others like Rammanohar Lohia split the party and went their different ways.

But right from the days of the Nasik jail in 1934 where the Congress Socialist Party was conceived till the Socialists merged with the Janata Party in 1977 and lost their separate identity – i.e., from *natalis* to *mortis* of the socialist party and the socialist movement - it was only Narayan Ganesh Goray, popularly known as Nanashaheb Goray, who remained in the mainstream party of the socialist movement - like a Pole Star.

A short stature with a tall intellect, small build with a broad mind, 'Goray' - the fair one - not only in skin colour but also in mind and heart, was a person who refused to be a legend, who remained self-effacing, refusing to be recognised, but always standing up at every call of duty at colossal personal sacrifices. He was a rationalist *par excellence*, not in the Kantian sense of the term but as one who made reasoning his *forte*. And that made him an incisive analyst of any situation. G. G. Parikh smells a 'peculiar arrogance' in Goray of his this capability – peculiar because it was an arrogance that would not show itself.

Once Goray had said that he never knew what defeat was in his life. One would wonder: what a conceit! He had been defeated in his very first election to the parliament. So what? It was not a success or defeat of the *Vyashti* that he was speaking about but about the *Samashti*. He explained, 'I fought for the freedom of the country and saw India become free. I fought for the freedom of Goa and saw Goa become free. I fought against dictatorship and saw it coming to an end. For whatever I fought in my life I saw success'. G. P. Pradhan has rightly encapsulated his personality – *neither elated at success nor depressed at defeat*. His was egalitarianism with equanimity.

In the nurture of nature

One need only spend a few days in any of the villages of the picturesque Konkan where nature is bountiful in its majesty, to experience the ambience in the midst of which Goray was born and grew, to understand how a politician like Goray, who became a member of the Lok Sabha, Mayor of Pune, a member of the Rajya Sabha, Indian High Commissioner to U.K., General Secretary and later Chairman of the Praja Socialist Party could also write poetry, write short stories, write plays for children and romantic travelogues and even draw sketches. Or else one should at least read his "*Shankh aani Shimpale*" – Conches and Shells – to verbally experience the beauty of the *Konkan*. The lush green thick *Sahyadri* mountains surrounding the villages of Konkan would make anyone a poet. Goray was born in one such village, Hindle, in Ratnagiri District of Maharashtra, on 15th June 1907. He would turn nostalgic whenever he referred to the games he would play with his only sister, Gangu, on the sea beach, collecting conches and shells and building castles of sand.

Goray was born in a religiously strictly traditional but economically relatively comfortable family of that remote village. So in his childhood Goray was seeped in traditional orthodoxy. His father was employed in the education department of the Government. In Goray's own words "Those days even my father who was getting a salary of 50-60 rupees per month was considered well off. Hence I could not experience studying under the street lamps or washing the clothes during the night so

that I could wear them in the morning. ‘Ask whatever you need for your studies and eat whatever is required to keep your body healthy (only vegetarian)’ – is what my father would tell me”. Goray himself admits that in his childhood perhaps he was more orthodox than many volunteers of the RSS.

The first turning point in his life came in 1922 when the school in which he was studying in 4th class, was closed down and he entered the New English School started by no less a person than Lokamanya Tilak in Pune. He had for classmates S. M. Joshi, R. K. Khadilkar and V. M. Tarkunde. Goray says “Had I continued in the same old school I would not have become what I am today, I would have perhaps become a scholar, perhaps an officer, but not an activist rationalist”. His baptism came soon thereafter.

By the time he came to the end of his secondary school, he had already read all the four Shakespearean tragedies - Hamlet, Macbeth, Romeo-Juliet and Othello -, novels of Walter Scot, Ramayan by Tulsi Das and the Marathi translations of Mahabharat and Arabian Nights. By June 1925 Goray entered the Ferguson College. While in college he read all the plays by Kalidas as well as his *Kumar Sambhav* and *Raghuvamsh*. He later even translated ‘*Meghadoot*’ of Kalidas.

In the Furnace of Freedom Movement

Goray’s tryst with his political destiny started at a very young age of 21 years when he joined the Youth League which was then led by socialist leader of Mumbai, Yusuf Meherally and Nariman. Goray considered himself a ‘radical nationalist’ and by radical nationalist he meant one who was for social transformation and against rituals and customs and was against capitalist society. The two dominant influences on him at the time were Gandhiji and the Russian Revolution. It would appear a contradiction to some, since Gandhiji was an apostle of non-violence and Russian Revolution was an epistle in violence. At the time, Goray perhaps would agree with Gandhiji that consistency was an ass, more because of his fiery youth than his intelligence. However, Goray, like many others of his time, thought that Russia was ‘building a new civilization based on Marxist principles and was hence attracted to it.

Goray, S. M. Joshi and Shirubhau Limaye had decided in 1927 itself to participate in the freedom struggle. So when Gandhi went on Dandi March for his salt satyagraha, They plunged into it by abandoning their

studies. A group of youth offered satyagraha at Alibaug, a small port on the western coast and S. M. Joshi was the first to be arrested followed by Goray. When Mahatma Gandhi was arrested and incarcerated in the Yeravada Jail, Goray planned a march on the jail. Sensing trouble police arrested Goray the previous evening, produced him before a magistrate who sentenced him to undergo imprisonment for four months. He too was lodged in Yervada Jail.

In an interview recorded by Parliament official Ram Sharma on 15.7.1970, Goray reminisces about his first incarceration and says “That was how my prison life started in 1930. At that time going to prison was a new experience and I must say that the British prisons at that time were very hard. All of us were classed as ‘C’ class prisoners and given very hard labour and extremely poor food and clothing. The whole of the prison term was like a nightmare.” He was made to grind grains, and to eat ‘salty *roti*’ which was a very stringent punishment in the jail, in which the prisoners were made to eat *rotis* mixed with a large quantity of salt, morning and evening. But there were ‘moments of exultation and excitement’ also. Gandhiji himself was in the same prison and “some times we could catch his glimpse” exults an excited Goray.

When he emerged from these four months in the prison, Goray was a totally different person. He says that he emerged from the Yeravada prison with a degree in humanism. He threw away his ‘sacred thread’ and decided to marry a widow and never looked back.

After serving his very first term in prison, Goray resumed his studies. But not for long. After the Round Table Conference failed, Mahatma Gandhi again started civil disobedience movement in 1932. Goray and his friends were this time not even allowed to offer satyagraha. They were just picked up by the police and detained for two months and thereafter they were produced before the Magistrate who sentenced Goray for a term of imprisonment of two years. Goray was lodged again in Yeravada prison.

However, after a few months he was suddenly shifted to Nasik Jail where he completed the remaining portion of his jail term. It is here that Goray met Jayaprakash Narayan, Asoka Mehta, Minoo Masani, Prof. Dantwala and others. About his term in Nasik Jail Goray writes “this period was full of events and some of the major decisions which shaped our political career in the future were taken in that jail... we spent our time in reading and

endless discussions, reviewing the national movement, reviewing the leadership that was provided by Gandhiji and his colleagues, critically evaluating the role that was being played by Soviet Russia and the Communist Party of India and trying to come to certain conclusions”.

Two serious questions faced this Nasik Group. As Goray and others were under the influence of the freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi and were hence part of the Indian National Congress, the first question was whether to break away from the Congress and start a new party based on socialist ideology or to remain inside the Congress and give it a socialist orientation. The second question was that since the authoritative interpretation of Marxist dogma could then be given only by the Soviet Russia, how far could they accept such Marxism totally. Goray says “the decision that we took at Nasik Jail was of historical importance”. They decided to launch a socialist party ‘within’ the Congress and decided to stay clear of Russia’s interpretation of Marxist theory.

When the Second World War started, Goray, along with other socialists, was hoping that Mahatma Gandhi would give a call for an all out fight against the British to seize freedom. Socialists had drawn plans to go underground and lead the movement. Goray writes “we would resist arrest, we would go underground, if necessary, and we would even take to violent action. The only saving clause was that we could try to avoid, as much as possible, violence against persons. But so far as the destruction of government property was concerned, we would not stay our hand”.

But then Mahatma Gandhi’s position was not to embarrass the British during the war and hence instead of mass civil disobedience he started ‘individual *satyagraha*’. Vinoba Bhave was chosen the first *satyagrahi*. While Jayaprakash Narayan opposed the individual *satyagraha*, Asoka Mehta offered *satyagraha* and was jailed. Goray also enrolled himself to be a *satyagrahi*. But Mahatma Gandhi was insisting on non-violence not only in action, but also in thought. Goray wrote to Mahatma Gandhi that he could not fulfil the condition of non-violence in both thought and action and sought his advice. Mahatma Gandhi immediately wrote back to say that if he did not believe in non-violence in both thought and action, he was free to go his way.

Goray had given a speech in Gulbarga, then in Hyderabad State ruled by Nizam, and now in Karnataka, that India could not side with the British in the War. Goray

was arrested and sentenced to one year’s imprisonment for the speech and lodged in Gulbarga prison. When the call for ‘Quit India’ was given in 1942, Goray was already in Nizam’s prison in Gulbarga.

Immediately after his release from the Gulbarga prison, Goray plunged into the underground movement from its headquarters in Bombay. But within three months the hideout was detected by the police and Goray was once again arrested. A case which later came to be called the ‘Maharashtra Conspiracy Case’ was foisted on Goray and 50 others. Goray says “the Government found it impossible to substantiate the charges, not because they were not true, but because it was not possible for them to produce any witnesses.” Still Goray and others were imprisoned and stayed so till April 1946. “Those were the glorious days indeed, when we lived the life of patriots in the real sense of the term” exults Goray.

Though Goray emerged from the furnace of freedom movement scalded bodily but honed intellectually, he would not countenance asking for either encomiums or for rewards, he would not ask for freedom fighters’ pension, for he was too modest. But as late as on 2.10.1987 the Government of India gave freedom fighters’ pension to Goray, without his asking for it.

From Pupa to Papillon

The ideological journey of Goray is like his emergence from darkness to light. In his childhood he was steeped in Hindu religious orthodoxy. As he grew up he became a rebel, threw away his sacred thread, married a widow much to the consternation not only of the orthodox society but also of his loving and caring parents, and passing through the straits of Marxism ended up a confirmed democratic socialist – not only in thought but also in action. That is why he calls his short biography “*Timiratuni Tejakade*” – from darkness towards light. But that was an understatement. It was not just a journey it was a metamorphosis – from being an orthodox Hindu, through being an adventurous and romantic patriot, he emerged as a confirmed democrat, a profound socialist and not just a secularist but an outright anti-communalist – a metamorphosis from Pupa to *Papillon*.

This metamorphosis in his ideological life did not come due to any angel or a miracle. It was a gradual process just like a democratic socialist transformation. Goray cites instances such as when he was going with his father, a young person coming opposite them suddenly sat down and after they passed him got up and went his way.

When asked by young Goray why, the old Goray said, because the person was a ‘mahar’ an untouchable and he sat down so that his shadow would not fall on Gorays who were *Chitpavan* Brahmins - not just Brahmins but Brahmins purified by fire. This must have made an inconspicuous small dent on young Goray’s foliating mind. While some girls of the neighbourhood would wear colourful saris ornately, a few other young girls would be wearing only white saris and would hesitantly beckon him and request him to get the barber from the city square so that they could get their heads tonsured, he would wonder why, and when he came to know that it was so because they were widows, that too must have made a small dent on his mind. Numerous instances such as these slowly chiselled at his innocent mind – chipping away his orthodoxy, a little at a time, ultimately leading to the metamorphosis and turning the orthodox adolescent into a fiery rationalist youth.

When Goray came under the influence of Yusuf Meherally and thereafter came to interact with persons like Jayaprakash Narayan, Asoka Mehta and others in the Nasik prison, his ideas started taking shape. Goray came under the influence of two ideologies – that of Marx and Gandhi. One faded and the other adhered. Perhaps, Goray had read Karl Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* during his first incarceration which left an indelible mark on his mind and life. Goray says that the *Communist Manifesto* made him look at his surroundings in a totally different perspective. “It was not a lifeless essay, it was a tempest” says Goray.

It is interesting that though he responded to the call of Mahatma Gandhi for *satyagraha* and was jailed for it, he was more fond of Marx than of Mahatma at the time. Of his earlier understanding of Marx and Gandhi, Goray says “As young socialists we used to take special delight in condemning those who differed from us either as reactionaries or utopians. Gandhiji’s thoughts were, according to us utopian, unscientific and reactionary, while those preached by Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky were scientific”.

But then the terror unleashed by Stalin in Russia eroded that consideration and as Goray’s analytical faculties worked overtime, he slowly realised that it was Marx who was a utopian and Gandhi, a scientific thinker. “I feel no hesitation in saying that some of Gandhiji’s thoughts I find more scientific than those of Marx and Engels. I go a step further and say that it was the latter two who have spoken or written more like utopians than

scientific political thinkers”.

Goray noticed the ‘fault lines’ in Marxian thinking. He realised that “those who conquer power by the use of arms will keep it for themselves and they will be reluctant to hand it back to the people” and hence “the dictatorship of the proletariat gets metamorphosed into a dictatorship over the proletariat”. He says that his studies of both comparative history and Freudian psychoanalysis also convinced him of the shortcomings of the Marxian theory.

But as Marx could not make him a Marxist, so could Gandhi also not make him a Gandhian. He accepted neither as his ‘master’, and as a corollary did not accept anyone as his disciple but his graduation from Marxism to democratic socialism came gradually through Gandhism.

While Goray’s democratic socialism did not make him an anti-communist, his secularism made him an anti-communalist. On 1st of May 1938 a huge May-day procession was taken out by the workers in Pune. It was viciously attacked by the communalists. The Congress Socialist Party was publishing a journal ‘Congress Socialist’ then. Goray thundered in an article in the ‘Congress Socialist’ of May 14, 1938, “Who attacked the May Day procession? Who assaulted men like Senapati Bapat and [Gajanan] Kanitkar? Who tore up the National Flag? The Hindu Mahasabhaites and the Hedgewar Boys did all this.... They have been taught to hate the Muslims in general as Public Enemy Number 1, to hate the Congress and its flag which is pro-Muslim, to hate socialists and communists who are anti-Hinduism.... They have their own flag, ‘the Bhagwa’, the symbol of Maratha Supremacy. And their leader is called ‘*Rashtra Dhureen*’, i.e *Fuehrer!*”

Reacting to a camp of RSS volunteers in Pune, Goray said “The *swayamsevaks* have gathered there in large numbers. What is surprising about it? When water stagnates in a pool, worms are bound to writhe in it” and about the parade of RSS volunteers, he said, “Let not the lathis of these 35,000 *swayamsevaks* fall on the heads of dalits”.

Even while throwing a brickbat at Nanasaheb, an RSS activist Ramesh Patange writes in his Marathi book ‘*Me, Manu Ani Sangh*’, “That a senior, elderly, learned socialist leader could react this way sent my blood boiling”. The activist narrates another incident that speaks volumes about Nanasaheb though from the point

of view of an RSS activist. "1988 was the birth centenary year of Dr Hedgewar. A committee called Hedgewar Birth Centenary Committee was set up in Maharashtra. Dr Shivajirao Bhosale, Chancellor of the Marathwada University (now Dr Ambedkar Marathwada University), gladly agreed to be the chairman of the committee. Socialists are adept at creating obstacles in any big programme organised by the Sangh, and naturally, Nanasaheb Goray, was the high priest of socialists in this respect. He opened a front against Shivajirao Bhosale...A meeting of the birth centenary committee was to take place in Pune. Dr Bhide, Vice-Chancellor of the Pune University agreed to chair the meeting. This incensed Nanasaheb Goray. According to him it was not proper for the Vice-Chancellor to accept the chairmanship of a committee of the Sangh, since the Sangh is wedded to the concept of Hindu Rashtra, which is against the spirit and ideology of our constitution, which is secular and socialist. Since the Sangh work is unconstitutional, those in government positions should not be chairmen of the committees of the Sangh. Prof. Bhide did not come to the meeting..." "Madhav Gadkari, editor of *Loksatta*, a Marathi daily wrote a long article supporting Nanasaheb Goray. Although socialists are small in number, their nuisance value is great. Dr Bhosale was in a quandary whether to keep the Vice-Chancellorship or the chairmanship of Dr Hedgewar Birth Centenary Committee. Finally, he renounced his position with the Dr Hedgewar Birth Centenary Committee of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh which was trying to realise the dream of Shivaji and Shahaji Bhosale. Nanasaheb Goray's destructive rancour and hatred won the day. Dr Shivajirao Bhosale's courage deserted him".

Goray was a member of the first National Executive Committee of the Congress Socialist Party formed in 1934. He was made a Joint Secretary in 1948 when the Congress Socialist Party left the Indian National Congress and became the Socialist Party. When the Praja Socialist Party faced turmoil in the Betul Conference in 1953 due to Nehru-JP talks and Asoka Mehta's thesis 'political compulsions of backward economy' Goray was entrusted with the responsibility of being the General Secretary of the PSP. He later became the Chairman of the PSP.

Goray always valued principles more than personalities. When the leaders of the PSP decided in the foundation conference of the Samyukta Socialist Party held in Varanasi in 1964 to leave SSP and revive the PSP, Goray was with them though it meant parting company with

his elder brotherly S. M. Joshi who chose to remain in the SSP. Interestingly while S. M. Joshi continued as the Chairman of the SSP, Goray had to take on the burden of becoming the Chairman of the PSP. His love for S. M. Joshi neither stopped him from following his principles, nor did his parting company with S. M. Joshi diminish his love and esteem for him. In Nanasaheb's own words "our lives are like parallel rails going in the same direction".

Goray presided over the Bombay Conference of the PSP held in 1965, the Bangalore Conference held between 25th and 28th November 1966 and the Kanpur Conference held between 30th December 1967 and 1st January 1968.

Goray was also active in the Trade Union field. He was the President of the Sakhar Kamgar Federation (Sugar Workers' Federation); President of Poona Electric Supply Company's Employees Union; President of the Hind Oil Kamgar Sabha and Oil Companies Depot Superintendents Association, India. He was elected to the Court of the University of Poona from the Trade Unions' Constituency for two consecutive terms.

If today the whole world considers the Rochdale Pioneers as the originators of the co-operative movement, India also can be proud of 'Naigaum Pioneers' - its own version of Rochdale Pioneers. Goray believed that constructive work was as essential as struggle in building a socialist society. Hence Goray wanted the trade union workers to be educated in the ideology of democratic socialism and undertake constructive work. So he used to conduct study classes for them. Once in 1948-49 a group of youngsters from Naigaum ward in Bombay employed in the mills were discussing with Goray, one worker asked Goray to give them a programme so that they could implement it. Goray immediately said that the co-operative movement was an integral part of the socialist movement and hence they should each contribute Rs. 10 and start a co-operative food grains store for themselves. Thus began an experiment in consumers' co-operatives which blossomed into "Apna Bazar", now a household name in Mumbai and Maharashtra.

Goray goes to Goa

"The Goa Freedom Struggle is a colourful episode in my political career" says a cheerful Goray. Goray would often visit Karwar, Savantavadi and Belgaum in connection with his political work. There many people from Goa would meet him, and amongst them in particular, Peter Alvares, and would narrate the miseries

of the Goans living under the Portuguese rule. Goray started wondering what he could do in the matter. In 1954 the Goanese Literary Conference met in Karwar which was presided over by Goray. In his presidential speech Goray announced that if the Government of India was not going to do anything about liberating Goa then people of India will have to take necessary steps in that direction.

After going to Pune, Goray met S. M. Joshi and told him that he wanted to take a batch of volunteers and enter Goa to offer *satyagraha*. S.M. agreed with Goray and immediately called a meeting of all political parties in Pune. Thus in April 1955 the Goa Vimochan Sahayak Samiti, (Goa Liberation Aid Committee) was formed in Pune with Tatyasaheb Jedhe as the President and Goray and Jayantrao Tilak as the General Secretaries.

The Committee decided to send batches of volunteers to Goa from May 1955. Goray says, "I led the first batch in May 1955. It consisted of about 56 volunteers and I had the privilege of having as my colleague Senapati Bapat, the veteran freedom fighter of India. The batch was pounced upon by the Portuguese police. Every one of us was mercilessly beaten and excepting myself, every one was thrown out again into the Indian territory and I was singled out and taken to a Portuguese jail".

The second batch of sixty-eight *satyagrahis*, under Madhu Limaye, was severely beaten up while trying to cross over and Limaye was also arrested on 28 May. Both Goray and Madhu Limaye, with many others were tried by the military court and sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment and a heavy fine and on failure to pay the fine to undergo imprisonment for a further term of two years. They were confined in Fort Aguada. On 15th August scores of volunteers were shot dead by the Portuguese police. The batch led by Madhu Dandawate was also beaten up and pushed back into the Indian Territory.

Later Goray wrote about his experiences in the Portuguese prison in a book entitled "Behind Portuguese Prison Bars". Later, on the intervention of the Amnesty International the prisoners were released in February 1957 after serving about 18 months in the prison.

Even after his release from Portuguese prison, Goray continued his efforts to secure the liberation of Goa. *The Hindu* dated May 29, 1957 reported that the 'Prime Minister Nehru had a 90 minutes discussion with the socialist leaders Nanasahab Goray, Acharya Kripalani, Nath Pai and communist leaders S.A.Dange, Prof. Hiren

Mukherji and A.K.Gopalan on 27th May. However Nehru was non-committal on the question of liberating Goa'. It took another three years for the Government of India to throw the Portuguese out and liberate Goa.

Goray also campaigned for liberating Tibet from the Chinese occupation. PSP held a public meeting to rally Indian support for the Tibetans. Goray, who was then the General Secretary of the party, said that the uprising in Tibet was a national struggle against Chinese 'colonialism' and that the Chinese assertion that the uprising was confined to Khampa tribesmen only was a deliberate attempt to mislead the world. He said that the whole of Tibet was fighting bare handed against the military might of the Chinese.

Goray in Parliament

In the first general elections for the Lok Sabha held in 1952 Goray contested from Ratnagiri South constituency as a Socialist Party candidate and lost to Moreshwar Joshi of the Congress by 19,257 votes.

Not losing heart by his defeat in the first general elections, Goray contested in the second general elections in 1957 as a candidate of the Praja Socialist Party, but this time from Pune (then known as Poona). Goray had just then been released from the Portuguese prison in Goa and his popularity was high. He won with a thumping majority defeating his Congress rival N. V. Gadgil, who was then a Cabinet Minister in Nehru's government, in a straight contest. He polled 143822 votes, i.e., 59 percent of the total votes polled. In Parliament Goray had for his colleagues stalwarts like Surendranath Dwivedi, Asoka Mehta and Acharya Kripalani.

Goray contested in the third general elections held in 1962 also from Pune as a candidate of the Praja Socialist Party. However, this time around, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh put up a candidate and ate into the opposition votes. While the Congress candidate S. S. More polled 115402 votes, Goray polled 66996 votes and the combined votes of the opposition candidates – one independent and the BJS – were 219609 votes. But then the people of Pune elected him the Mayor of Pune Municipal Corporation in 1965.

When the 1967 elections came, Goray was in the Praja Socialist Party and his colleague S. M. Joshi was in the Samyukta Socialist Party. Joshi was also leading the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti formed to agitate for the inclusion of Marathi speaking areas of neighboring states

into Maharashtra of which SSP was a part. The SSP and the SMS decided to field S. M. Joshi from Pune. Joshi was a former colleague and a fellow socialist, albeit in SSP. Goray did not contest the elections.

Goray was then elected to the Rajya Sabha from the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly constituency with the help of the surplus votes of the Congress which were given in return for the support the PSP was giving to a Congress government. He was in Rajya Sabha from 03.04.1970 to 02.04.1976, the years which proved to be apocalyptic to Indian democracy. India was in turmoil. Congress had lost ground in the 1967 elections to the Lok Sabha and had lost power to the opposition parties in eight states. It was more a defeat for the Congress than victory for the opposition parties. Even then the opposition parties were in a hurry to form alternative governments without the requisite preparations that are required to make a government succeed. But then due to defections by the elected representatives in the coalition governments formed by the parties in opposition to the Congress fell like nine pins.

When the elections were announced in 1971 for the Parliament some opposition leaders felt that it was the opportune time to defeat the Congress at the Centre also, by forging an alliance of all opposition parties irrespective of their ideologies. Congress(O), Swatantra Party, SSP and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh formed what came to be called a 'Grand Alliance' to defeat the Congress. The PSP under the leadership of Goray refused to join the alliance. Goray said "For me defeating the Congress is not the main objective. It is important to politically educate the masses. More important is as to who will replace the Congress?"

When the PSP met in conference at Baroda from 3rd to 6th of February 1970 presided over by Goray, the then Congress President Jagjivan Ram sent a telegram to the Conference asking for the co-operation of the PSP in the elections. The conference decided to have a 'meaningful dialogue' with the Congress. But then the PSP could not accept the number of seats which the Congress was ready to concede to the PSP. By then S. M. Krishna and K. Lakkappa who had won the 1967 elections to the Lok Sabha from Mandya and Tumkur constituencies of Karnataka as the PSP candidates had gone over to the Congress. The Congress claimed to contest from the two seats by fielding S. M. Krishna and K. Lakkappa on the ground that they were now in Congress. The PSP also claimed to contest from the said seats on the ground that

socialists had won from there. The two parties could not come to an agreement. Hence the 'dialogue' failed to become 'meaningful'.

Between 1967 and 1971 the political scene in India had undergone a sea change. In 1969 Indira Gandhi split the Congress in an effort to isolate the old guard of the party which was trying to control her. In the Presidential elections she proposed the name of Sanjeeva Reddy but sensing that he may dismiss her government if elected, she prompted V. V. Giri to contest and supported him and as a result Giri won the elections. The rise of Mujibur Rehman in East Pakistan and the Pakistan's efforts to suppress him and the resulting emergence of Bangladesh with Indira Gandhi boldly marching the Indian Army to liberate Bangladesh brought her once again centre stage. From the 'Dumb Doll' as some opposition leaders had ridiculed her, she had emerged as 'Goddess Durga', the demon slayer.

PSP met again in Sakarwadi of Maharashtra between 31st December 1970 to 1st January 1971 presided over by Goray and decided to go alone in the elections. Thus PSP contested the 1971 elections to Parliament alone whereas SSP contested as part of the Grand Alliance. Congress swept the polls. While the SSP got three seats PSP got only two seats. Both parties stood the risk of losing recognition by the Election Commission as national parties. The PSP then met in Bulandshahar of Uttar Pradesh on 7th and 8th August 1971, presided over by Goray, and called for the merger of the PSP and the SSP. And when the two parties merged, Goray gladly gave up his presidentship to facilitate the merger.

In Defense of Democracy

Sweeping the 1971 elections to the Parliament, Indira Gandhi became drunk with power. She started behaving like an autocrat. Goray watched Indira Gandhi's rise to power from the floor of the Rajya Sabha and predicted her ascent from thence to absolute power of a dictator. He was not an astrologer, nor a soothsayer, yet with his acumen of political analysis he predicted the coming of dictatorship years before it actually arrived. He wrote an editorial in *Janata* of 22nd July 1973 and said "The difference between a dictator of admittedly totalitarian country and the head of a democratic federal union, whose federating units have ceased to function, can be only notional. In fact when major States like Andhra Pradesh and U.P. have come under President's rule and so many other States are rapidly qualifying for it, is not Smt. Indira Gandhi already functioning like a dictator?..

one fine morning the Indian people will wake up to learn that they are under a dictatorship, limited or otherwise”.

As predicted by Goray, the Indian people woke up on 25th June 1975 to learn that they were under a dictatorship as Indira Gandhi imposed internal ‘emergency’ on the country. Thousands of opposition and even ruling party leaders like Chandrasekhar who were opposed to Indira Gandhi’s policy were arrested and imprisoned without trial.

The fact that Goray had been elected to the Rajya Sabha on the support of the surplus votes of the Congress did not deter him from criticizing the Congress for imposing emergency. He had once earlier called Gandhi, Nehru and Patel as the Triad of the Congress after the triad of the Hindu Pantheon, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, but that had not stopped him from asking for the resignation of Nehru. Goray wrote critically about emergency in *Janata*, of which he had become the editor, and hence *Janata* was banned by the government which had imposed censorship on news papers and periodicals. Then Goray started editing a smaller version of *Janata* clandestinely under the title ‘*People*’ and circulated it. He toured Maharashtra extensively from village to village and campaigned against the imposition of emergency.

Goray became the rallying point for the rump of opposition that remained in the parliament. On July 22, 1975, Goray spoke in the Rajya Sabha on behalf of the opposition. Addressing the Chair, Goray said “Sir, let me begin my speech by making a candid admission that our perception of the situation and your perception of the situation differ in a fundamental manner... what has happened is considered by some of you as the dawn of a new era while we on our side consider that it is the beginning of a long night of authoritarian rule, of suppression of liberty and, may be, even of disintegration of this country”.

In his speech, Goray answered each of the charges made by the government against the opposition in general and against Jayaprakash Narayan in particular. Criticising the press censorship imposed by Indira Gandhi, Goray said “Is this the tryst with destiny about which Jawaharlal Nehru had spoken?” Answering the charge that JP had asked the police and the army not to obey illegal orders of the government, Goray said “If JP made a statement like that you send him before a court of law, send him to 5 years’ or 10 years’ imprisonment. Lokmanya was sent for 6 years. Mahatma Gandhi was sent for 2 and half years.

Jawaharlal himself was sentenced for three years. ... If you say that Jayaprakashji’s forces are running amuck, are you as a counter measure running amuck yourself?”

Then he said “So, Sir, my plea is that it is really an action and reaction. You are angry with us, we are angry with you. I know that we have differed. Still there is no other way for us. If you think that the only way is to shut the mouths of all the Opposition, then, I tell you, you are not only harming the opposition, you are not only harming democracy, you are harming yourself”.

After reading out a joint statement of the DMK party, Congress(0), Jan Sangh, BLD, CPI(M), PSP, Socialist Party, Akali Dal and independent members Umashankar Joshi, K. S. Malle Gowda, U. K. Laxman Gowda and Dwijendralal Sen Gupta, which said “Taking all relevant facts into consideration and bearing in mind in particular the fact that leading members of Parliament have been incarcerated, we are satisfied now that no useful purpose will be served by our taking part in the further proceedings of this session of Parliament, for it is clearly in no position to discharge the functions of a free and democratic parliament,” Goray led the opposition withdrawal from the House.

After JP’s release from the prison, Goray played a crucial role in coordinating between opposition leaders and in forging the Janata Party. The Congress Socialist Party had its first conference in Bombay in 1934. Its progeny, the Socialist Party met in conference for the last time also in Bombay on 27th and 28th November 1976, presided over by Goray, and decided to merge with the Janata Party launched by Jayaprakash Narayan, obliterating its independent existence as a socialist party. Goray and the socialists sacrificed even their identity in defense of democracy and both had no regrets for it.

The Blossom Face

Pu. La. Deshpande, the famous Marathi literati says “if those who read Nanasaheb expect that he ought to have written more, they are not at fault, as it is no fault of Nanasaheb that he could not write more. Nanasaheb should be congratulated for what he wrote because he could write so much while living in a society which feels that on every moment of his life the public has a right”. Politics and poetry harmoniously rubbed shoulders in Goray.

Goray was not only a prolific reader, for he read ‘Baburnama’ when he was 80 years old, but also a

prolific writer, for he wrote about his ideological journey “*Timiratuni Tejakade*” also when he was 80. His writings extended from a critique of Karl Marx, to the skits for kids to poetry.

Goray’s literary career began when he translated the biography of Jawaharlal Nehru into Marathi. He then went on to translate ‘Divided India’ written by the first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, ‘Why Socialism’ by Jayaprakash Narayan and ‘Our India’ by Minoo Masani. He also translated Dr. S. Radhakrishnan’s book on Mahatma Gandhi. And his talent for translation extended to Sanskrit poetry too. He translated Kalidas’s *Meghdoot* also in Marathi..

Goray’s political writings include books on ‘Imperialism’ and ‘Acharya Narendra Deva : Father of Democratic Socialism’. He also wrote a history of the United States of America. He wrote about his experiences and feelings within the four walls of a prison when he was incarcerated for the first time in the Gulbarga jail. In the evening of his life when he used to visit his only daughter who was staying in USA, he wrote ‘*Pittsburgh Diary*’.

Goray, who wrote critically about Karl Marx, also wrote stories and plays for children. “I knew about the plays on the households of men but until I read Goray’s ‘*Bedukwadi*’ – House of the Frogs’ - I did not know that even the households of frogs could be so interesting” wrote a critic on reading the play which Goray had written for children. His short stories written for children are collected in ‘*Chimutai Ghar Bandhatat*’ – Sister Sparrows build houses. The letters he wrote to his 10-year old daughter Shubha and her friends are collected in ‘*Karwande*’.

Goray was also a journalist. In 1947 when the Socialist Party of Maharashtra decided to publish a weekly named ‘*Janavaani*’ – People’s Voice – Goray was chosen to edit the same. He also used to write regularly for ‘*Rachana*’ a magazine started by his cousin Bandu Goray. He edited Marathi weekly ‘*Sadhana*’ from 1981 to 1984. He also edited ‘*Janata*’ weekly from 1967 to 1977. Even when he became India’s High Commissioner to the United Kingdom in 1977, he regularly wrote a column in a Marathi daily newspaper ‘*Loksatta*’.

His urge for poetry was such that even when he was writing about Islam and Koran his pen would scribble verses. That may be the reason why another well known Marathi literati Vasant Bapat calls Goray ‘a sculptor of

letters’.

When Goray reached four score years, his admirers, for he had no disciples and followers, brought out a souvenir – ‘Goray Gourav’. His colleague G. P. Pradhan asked him to write his own biography. Goray refused and said “Poet Bilhana has written an epic entitled ‘Rajatarangini’ on the royal families of Kashmir. I am not born in any royal family. I am not a royal person. On the contrary like *Nripasadane naama kevalye* - ‘who are we in a royal palace’ – I rather fall in that category. So when my friends suggested to me that I should write something centred round myself I was in a fix. I had decided long back that I should not write my autobiography. Whoever writes autobiography must at least be feeling that there is something ‘special’ in him, because it is not possible for any one to feel like writing his own autobiography, only to criticise himself. Self-respect and self-righteousness are the inseparable parts of autobiography. In some autobiographies it surfaces defiantly and in some others it may appear wearing the mask of humility – that is all the difference. But I did not want to do any of these”. But Pradhan was more than a match for him. Pradhan suggested that if not biography, Goray should at least write the story of his ideological evolution. And Goray did it and titled it ‘*Timiratuni Tejakade*’ – ‘from Darkness towards Light’.

Any writing on Goray would be incomplete without mentioning about his ‘*Narayaneeyam*’ an interlocution with the Bhagawadgita with 301 verses. But to the misfortune of many, of whom fortunately I am not one, the verses are in Marathi. In Goray’s understanding, whether of human nature, or of human society or even of the universe, there was no place for God. Goray believed more in science as the deliverer of the human race than religion or God. If Krishna i.e., Narayana enunciated his philosophy through the medium of Arjuna, i.e., Nara, Goray says that it would not be inappropriate if he also enunciates his philosophy through the medium of the very same Arjuna - but caveats that the fact that his name is also Narayana is only a coincidence.

Goray once had told G. P. Pradhan “If only Sumatibai’s health was good today I would have gone and lived in Hindle for a year or two. Gardening in the backyard of the house, sitting on the shore of the sea watching the waves and reading and writing in the serene atmosphere of the house in Hindle were my wishes which have remained unfulfilled”.

A son, a father and a husband

French Existentialist philosopher Jean Paul Sartre says that one is what one wants to be. He tells about an incident in which during the Second World War a few French resistance soldiers who were being chased by the German soldiers hid in the house of a French farmer. The German soldiers tell the farmer to inform them where the resistance soldiers were hiding or else they would rape his daughter. Sartre says that by betraying the resistance soldiers and protecting his daughter the farmer can become a 'good father' and by letting the German soldiers rape his daughter but not betraying the resistance soldiers, the farmer becomes a 'good patriot'. The choice is his.

Was Goray a good son to his father and mother, a good husband to his wife and a good father to his children? Goray was confronted with such hard choices all his life. His decision to marry Sumati came as a shock to his orthodox father and mother. Their only son had decided to marry a widow – an unthinkable taboo amongst Chitpavan Brahmins. Goray had to live separately from his loving parents and in poverty. By refusing to marry Sumati, Goray could have become a 'good son' but he chose to be a good 'socialist'.

Only the birth of Goray's child made his parents relent. Even then Goray lived on the first floor of the house with his wife and child and his orthodox parents lived on the ground floor of the same building. The elder Gorays did not leave their orthodoxy and the younger Goray did not leave his socialism.

When his four month old son was very sick, Goray had to go on a political tour. Entrusting his wife with the responsibility of taking care of the child, Goray went on his tour only to return on hearing that the child was no more. Perhaps that is the reason why Goray showered his daughter Shubha with so much of love. By not going on that tour perhaps Goray could have become a 'good father' but then he chose his call of duty over the health of his baby.

Leaving Goray free to do his political work Sumati took up a job as a teacher and took the financial burden of running the household on her feminine shoulders. And once during the Emergency Goray had to go to Patna and see Jayaprakash Narayan. Goray went on to Patna and when he heard that Sumati was on her death bed, immediately started back but learnt on the way home that Sumati had breathed her last. By not going to Patna to

see JP, Goray could have stayed with his wife in the last moments of her life and become a 'good husband'. But Goray chose once again his call of duty over the fatal ill health of his wife.

Not that Goray did not shed tears at the tragedies that befell him but that still would not deter him from answering the calls for duty.

Once when I had been to Pune I wanted to see Goray's house. I was surprised that Goray did not even build a house, let alone a palatial one like many other politicians, but lived in the same old ancestral house, he had inherited from his father. He had donated a portion of the house for the Samajavadi Mahila Sabha for running their social counseling centre. While his daughter lived with her husband in USA, his foster daughter, Radha Shirsekar, lived on the first floor and the ground floor had been let out. Of course, all socialists of that era lived very simple lives, and Goray was no exception.

The unfulfilled wishes

Goray was not my Guru, for he neither accepted any one as his Guru nor let anyone accept him as his Guru. He was a Dronacharya with no Arjuna but many Ekalavyas - I being one of them - the difference being that since he did not accept any one as his disciple and hence the relationship was one sided, there was no question of his asking for the Gurudakshina of the right hand thumb of any of his Ekalavyas.

Some time in early seventies a study camp was held for socialist workers in Khadakwasla, near Pune. I was very young then and was proud to be one of the invitees. When I spoke in the camp many eyebrows were raised but Goray defended me and said that they should listen to the young man. In the evening when he was going for a walk, he beckoned me and took me along. With his hand on my shoulders he said, 'Bapu, no use you continuing as a lawyer. You leave all that and devote yourself for socialism'. How much I also wanted to do so! But that remained my unfulfilled wish and still hauntingly continues to be so. Was it also one of his unfulfilled wishes? How presumptuous of me.

In 1980 Goray decided to retire from active politics. But he continued to guide party workers. In 1984 he decided to retire from active life. Goray was now 86 years old but was still active not only in spirit but also in flesh. He was invited to speak at a May Day function in Pune on the 1st of May 1993 and he promised to speak.

He was a socialist and in spite of his age he had wished to speak. But he could not keep his promise. He died on the morning of 1st May 1993. He had made a will donating his body for medical research. But then his only daughter

Shubha could not countenance it. She wished a decent cremation for her affectionate and illustrious father. The living won over the dead.



अपना बाजार को-ऑप.

मुंबई कामगार मध्यवर्ती ग्राहक सहकारी संस्था मर्यादित

(बहुराज्य ग्राहक सहकारी संस्था)

गोविंदजी केणी रोड, नायगांव, दादर (पूर्व), मुंबई - ४०० ०१४

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अपना बाजार सर्वांसाठी

आपले सहकारी

अनिल गंगार
कार्याध्यक्ष

श्रीपाद फाटक
उपकार्याध्यक्ष

ज्ञानदेव दळवी, सुहास बने
भारती शिरसाट, संतोष सरफरे
एक्झिक्युटिव्ह कमिटी सदस्य

एस. टी. काजळे
मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी

Selection from N.G. Goray

Getting Ready for a Dictator?¹

Shri Shashi Bhushan, a prominent young Congressman, has been repeatedly saying that the situation in India has become so desperate that only a "limited dictatorship" can help the country to tide over the crisis. Some have ridiculed it while some others have poked fun at him. But by pouring ridicule could this suggestion be killed? Should we not inquire whether this is his brain wave or some one else is inspiring Shri Shashi Bhushan to put it forward so that the consequent debate would reveal the mood of the people? We shall not be surprised if in the absence of a serious debate and a credible alternative emerging, what Shri Shashi Bhushan has been advocating as his personal opinion might turn into the government decision and one fine morning the Indian people will wake up to learn that they are under a dictatorship, limited or otherwise.²

That our country is in a bad mess, cannot be disputed. With every day that passes it is sinking deeper in the bog and there are no signs of this inexorable process getting reversed or of being halted. The legislators of the various suspended State legislative assemblies seem to enjoy the suspension of their respective houses and they seem to have forgotten that they were elected to govern their States and not for drawing their salaries as sinecures. The only occupation they seem to enjoy or to know is that of Ministry-making and faction fighting.

The plight of the common man who is literally groaning under the crushing burden of prices, the breakdown of law and order, the closure of universities and schools, the growing unemployment and the all enveloping climate of frustration, none of these creates any impact on them. The fact that India has the biggest number of unemployed legislators does not shame them into adopting a more constructive approach. They do not realise that the problems of food, industrial development, inflation and unemployment are too big to be solved by putting "X" as the Chief Minister in the place of "Y". Are we today witnessing the last but one act of Greek tragedy, which will soon end with a dagger into the bowels of our parliamentary democracy? "Whom the Gods wisheth to destroy, they first make them mad".

All parties in India have been reduced either to impotence or irrelevance. The parties in opposition can do nothing because they are either too small or too much in disarray. The Congress, too, has become impotent like an over corpulent individual who loses control over his flabby limbs. The nerve centre of this leviathan is Smt. Indira Gandhi, to whom every conceivable dispute is referred to for solution. The difference between a dictator of admittedly totalitarian country and the head of a democratic federal union, whose federating units have ceased to function, can be only notional. In fact when major States like Andhra Pradesh and U.P. have come under President's rule and so many other States are rapidly qualifying for it, is not Smt. Indira Gandhi already functioning like a dictator? Why blame Shri Shashi Bhushan then for calling a spade a spade and suggesting that what exists de-facto be made de-jure?

Our efforts to evolve a two-party system in India have miserably failed. The Opposition parties with the sole exception of an exclusively regional party like the DMK, have wilted and withered. On the other hand the ruling party has quickly turned itself into a band wagon hitched to some charismatic personality but ready to stoop down to any level for a party with solid majorities almost in all the legislatures, just disintegrating as the Congress had done in State after State. Therefore, it is necessary to understand very clearly that no party in India, not even the congress, has the capacity to contain the crisis, let apart mastering it. A new party structure, ready to learn and unlearn from the new realities, prepared to shed the old slogans and shibboleths, intent on cutting out the dead wood from existing party organisations having the courage to build its own model of social development, such a party alone will have the strength to face the situation and safeguard the democratic form of government as well as its egalitarian content.

The time has come, if it has not already passed, for the progressive or radical democrats in the country, no matter to which party they belong, at least to meet in a serious deliberation session. Can they not for a while forget their party labels? Without hesitation we admit

1. Editorial written in Janata of 22nd July 1973.
2. And they did on the morning of 26th June 1975.

that there are a number of genuine radical democrats in the ruling Congress also. We have no doubt that leaders like Shri Chandra Sekher and Shri Krishna Kant, to name only two, who must be feeling quite worried over the fast deteriorating situation. We know a few in the CPI, too, who share this anxiety in spite of their party's present political line. Besides there is enough technical know-how in the country, enough expertise, to draw up a progressive but workable program of industrial, agricultural and social development.

Those of us who fail to make an earnest effort to build a political alternative to the existing party organisations cannot have the right to criticise individuals like Shri Shashi Bhushan who in their wisdom feel that limited dictatorship is the only answer because it is the only unexplored alternative. It will be of little use to point out that the sort of dictatorship Shri Shashi Bhushan is advocating will fail to deliver goods because no where

there exists a hard, dependable core of devoted men and women. The pity of it is that we have in India neither a cadre of determined totalitarians, nor of convinced democrats in sufficient strength. Probable or certain failure of a dictatorial regime at a future date will not detract from its attraction to a people thoroughly fed up with our parliamentary escapades. Therefore, if the expectation is that the masses will rise in revolt against a dictatorship we will be disillusioned very soon. The Opposition by its infantile politics, call it politics of unending demands of negative approach, and the party in power by its insatiable power hunger has turned the masses into cynics whose attitude is "plague on both the houses". No better concatenation of stars for the birth of a dictatorship could be imagined. The nation is set on that inexorable course. Have the radical democrats in India the wisdom and the courage to reverse the process? For them this might be the last chance to save our parliamentary system.

In defense of democracy³

Shri N.G.Goray: Sir, let me begin my speech by making a candid admission that our perception of the situation and your perception of the situation differ in a fundamental manner. There is a wide gap between the two perceptions. It seems that all of you on that side have come to the conclusion that the best and the safest place for the people like me is in jail. And, we have come to the conclusion that an egalitarian democracy is impossible which we should not try to hide, because if you hide this, it will be difficult to understand the developments that have taken place during the last three or four years.

Sir, without meaning any disrespect to the speakers who have spoken from that side, I would like to single out three speeches. One, that of Shri Brahmanand Reddy, who initiated the debate, then that of Shri Raju who was frank enough to tell us that there is no question of going back to where we were so far as democratic rights were concerned and the last, but not the least, that of my friend, Professor Dutt, who told us that what is necessary is to speak honestly and I am assuring him that.

I shall try to be honest. I shall try to present to you my point of view as frankly and as honestly as possible. Sir, I begin with the speech of Shri Brahmanand Reddy. He presented to us a long charge sheet in which the accused

No. 1 was, of course, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. I would like to ask him if he would allow me to publish a white paper, as they have published, detailing all the shootings and all the butchery that they have indulged in during the last 25 years, or is it going to be only a one-side affair and I have to listen time and again on the radio, on the TV, in the press that we are the people who have stood in the way of progress, who have stood in the way of democracy, who have stood in the way of social reform. I would like to ask him whether such a liberty of the press, liberty of expression, is available.

Just now, Sir, I pointed out to the Chairman that only what the Minister has spoken will be published and that what we have said here will not be published. The Censor has given guidelines to the press that only the names of those who participate will be mentioned not the contents. Is this the ideal democracy? Is this the trust with destiny about which Jawaharlal Nehru had spoken?

Therefore, Sir, let us be very frank and let us admit, that what has happened today is considered by some of you as the dawn of a new era while we on our side consider that it is the beginning of a long night of authoritarian rule, of suppression of liberty and, may be, even of disintegration of this country, I do not know.

3. Text of the speech delivered by N.G.Goray in the Rajya Sabha on July 22, 1975

Now coming to the various charges that have been leveled against this movement as such, let us try to understand what the charges are. Charge No. 1 is that those who have been duly elected are being deprived of their rights to continue in the Legislatures for the full term of five years. I would like to ask you: Who has given you the right to prolong their tenure? You say under the Constitution you have the right. Just now you have heard that the Kerala Legislature is being extended by six months. What was the mandate? The mandate of the people was only for five years. Now under the Constitution you are going to extend it for six months. Under the constitution, if you like it, you can cut it short. What is your authority? No authority at all. It is as if under the constitution you have a right to subvert the constitution and if we say that the people have lost faith in you and therefore you should resign, then you say, "What atrocity are those people committing? How can they ask us to vacate the seats?" But you can ask them to continue you in the seats for one year more, two years more or three years more as it suits you. There is no ban on you. You do not want to go to the people.

Sir, this particular instance is being flung into our face again and again even by so eminent a person as Prof. Dutt, and I would ask him: Why is it that elections are not held in Kerala? Is the Kerala population in revolt? What is happening in Kerala? Because you know that this emergency is not accepted by the people of Kerala and it will be very difficult for Achutha Menon and his group to come back to power, you give them six months more.

Now the charge is about violence. I would like to ask you: How many people your police and your Border Security police have killed by shooting innocent people? Jayaprakash Narayan had asked for a judicial inquiry which was never granted. I have been to the places in Bihar where young students who had committed no offence at all were shot at sight simply because they were on the road when they should not have been on the road. Have you got any remedy against it? Will you please publish your records and say how many times after independence, police opened fire and how many people were killed? Without any fear of contradiction I will tell you that the British never shot at people like this.

I am not saying that they were angels. But how many times you fired without the least provocation - when the police opened fire, and they opened fire to kill? Will you give account of that? Is it not true that in West Bengal - if there is anything wrong in what I am staying, I would

say the representatives from West Bengal should stand up and contradict me - the finest flower of youth has been liquidated under the pretext that they belong to the Naxalites?

A Hon. Member: I stand to support you.

Shri N.G.Goray: I would like to ask this from our Professor from Jadhavpur University. Simply because you did not want them, the finest flower, the first class students who always topped in the examinations, they were shot. I say this is nothing short of genocide. Therefore, when you practice this violence, when the police shoot like that, has not a man like Jayaprakash every reason to appeal to the police to consult their conscience, not to shoot whenever the orders are given, because they are shooting their own brothers and sisters? Don't forget what happened in My-Lai in Vietnam. There also the American soldiers were carrying out orders, but American society is a comparatively free society; the press brought out everything and those who indulged in those atrocities were punished.

Near our home, what did the Pakistani Army do in Bangladesh? Were not terms and conditions laid down by Mujib that all those people would be tried for genocide? Were not the Army people carrying out the orders of the superiors? They were. They were not acting on their own. Therefore, if a man like Jayaprakash says that whenever an order is given to you to shoot, don't shoot; you try to understand whom you are shooting; try to understand who those people are; don't shoot on innocent people, what is wrong? And the question that has been asked again and again - and I was sorry to hear it from Dutt; he was again and again repeating it - was: What have you to say when Jayaprakash appealed to the Army?

Shri V.P. Dutt: That is only one of the things.

Shri N.G.Goray: I am dealing, with other aspects also. Therefore, I am saying that is simply - because Jayaprakash appealed to the Army to exercise its conscience.

Shri V. P. Dutt: I did not want to interrupt the Hon. Member, but I want to respectfully submit that we should not be misrepresented; I did not say that just because he said 'Don't shoot on innocent people' therefore he was arrested. Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan said that the time has come, when you should regard our struggle as your struggle. He also said that the appropriate time has

now come, when the Government should be removed by force. Now I did not want to interrupt him. I am a democratic person. I believe in the full expression of opinion. The only thing I request is that we should not be misrepresented.

Shri N.G.Goray: I have not the least intention to misrepresent you. But I am telling you that if JP made a statement like that, as you said just now, all right you send him before a court of law, send him to 5 years' or 10 years' imprisonment. Lokmanya was sent for 6 years. Mahatma Gandhi was sent for two and half years. Jawaharlal himself was sentenced for three years. I do not mind if that is done. But simply because Jayaprakash said something to the Army, to the people, to the students, you hold the entire country to ransom. Why do you prevent me from speaking? Why do you prevent the press from publishing whatever we say? The press is duty bound to publish what you say, but they will not publish all that we say.

A Hon. Member: It is a responsible press.

Shri N.G.Goray: What is a responsible press? I am coming to that point. I say the Indian Press has played a very prominent part in our national struggle, and after Independence also I remember I was in the other House and my friend was also there in the other House. The Chinese aggression at Ladakh was first reported by our press and there is a record of Jawaharlal saying that he did not want this news to leak to the people because he wanted friendship between China and India to continue. Who were the people who told us of the Chinese aggression? It was they, the press. Who told us about the arms supply that was resumed by America to Pakistan? It was the press. At that time, Sardar Swaran Singhji was the Defense Minister. He did not know and then he made enquiries and he come to know that what was reported in the press was true. Why are you afraid of that press? I would like to ask my friends like Dr. Dutt: Are you going to make democracy a woman in purdah that nobody should look at her nobody should touch her and nobody should speak to her and only you people will speak to her? Is that democracy?

Many of you must have read that the Japanese Prime Minister was knocked down while he was going to a meeting and was presented with a dagger and a request that he should kill himself. That was an attack from the rightists. They did not like his signing the non-proliferation treaty. Did the Japanese Parliament declare

emergency because the Prime Minister was attacked? There is a photograph: he is lying on the ground and the attacker is with a dagger. Just imagine what happens in England. Dr. Dutt has asked: Can you imagine Wilson leading a morcha against the Parliament? Certainly not. But can you imagine Heath shooting down the coalminers when they declared a national strike? He will not and did not do it and, therefore, Wilson also does not do it. Both sides must play the game.

When you cannot answer the people, all the answer that you have is to put them in jail, throw them in jail and put them behind the bars. Is this the answer? And even what we speak here, I know will not be allowed to go out. When we come to attend Parliament session, you arrest us. Sir, I am reminded of an incident when I attended the British Parliament in a delegation. I was taken aback. Sir, it was a Conservative Government and one member from the Labour Party got up and said: "A man, who was avoiding arrest, came to me in the morning because he belonged to my constituency and he was arrested at my doorsteps. Why did you arrest him when he was approaching his M.P.?" And, Sir, to my surprise, the Conservative Minister for Home got up and said: "I apologise for what has been done and I assure you that this thing will not happen again."

Sir, yesterday, I pointed out to you, the President calls us here for attending the Parliament and as soon as we come here, we are arrested. You ask us to go to a meeting and when we go to the meeting, we are arrested. My friend Madhu Dandavate was arrested. Mr. Advani was arrested. Mr. Mishra was arrested. Why? Because they were attending a meeting which you yourself had called. What is this? Is this democracy? I wanted Mr. Dutt and others to raise their powerful voice and say that while we would like to have emergency we would not have this sort of emergency which is running amuck. If you say that Jayaprakashji's forces are running amuck, are you as a counter measure running amuck yourself?

So, Sir, my plea is that it is really an action and reaction. You are angry with us, we are angry with you. This will not save democracy. This will not take our country anywhere except towards chaos and, therefore, I am appealing,...Sir (Interruptions)...

Shri Ranbir Singh : Not to us

Shri N.G.Goray: I never appeal to you because I am sure that tomorrow if Indirajji releases Jayaprakash and

has talks with him and says: "All right, you cooperate with me", you will say: *Dekho kaisa kiya*. You have already stopped exercising your intelligent judgement. Therefore, I do not talk with you at all. I know what you are and, therefore, I am appealing to those people who still have their heads on their shoulders. That is the point.

What I am saying is you take this 20-point programme. Let us come to the brass tacks. What is new in that? You have been announcing this programme from the house tops ever since there was a rift in the Congress. There is nothing new. What prevented you from implementing this programme? What are the main characteristics of this programme? Give land to those who have no lands. Who has prevented you from doing it? Complete the land registers. Who has prevented you? In Bihar there is no land register at all and in Bihar ever since independence it is your Ministry which is functioning. Who has prevented you? It is you.

I am coming to the point of right reaction. Mr. Dutt yesterday talking about the RSS said that it is a Brahmin-dominated organisation. Who are these people on the front benches? Mr. Uma Shankar Dixit, I suppose, is the greatest Sudra. Then, this gentleman, Mr. Kailashpathy Tripathi, is the most secular of secular people. Mr. Dutt, if you are engaged in a really serious discussion, I will tell you that in this unfortunate land everything has been decided by twenty percent people. It is they who fight and it is they who rule. It is they who build and it is they who destroy. It is they who legislate and it is they who dispense justice. This is what has happened for centuries.

Only once during the last three thousand years the genuine voice of a Sudra was heard when Dr. Ambedkar spoke. It was only once during the last three thousand years. Otherwise, whether you look at the communist party or the socialist party or your party or the Jana Sangh, they are the Brahmins and the higher castes.

Speaking about Gandhiji I would not put him on the same pedestal as Dr. Ambedkar so far as speaking on behalf of the down-trodden is concerned. I am sorry to say that, but I have to say it. Therefore, do not say that this is what you are doing for the downtrodden. You are doing that for yourself, including this twenty-point programme. If you are really serious, then it is not by eliminating us who have been, all the while for the implementation of this, but it is by eliminating many of your side that you can fulfill this programme. I ask you a straight question: Are you ready for such a show down

with your own people? I am not blaming anybody, but it is these people who have stopped all these programmes from being implemented. Now they say that there is no land for distribution. It is because they have distributed land to a grand child, which is yet to be born. This is what is happening.

I have not said against Indira Gandhi. Since I came here or even outside I did not say anything against Indira Gandhi because it is not personal. You say that "she is being attacked". Naturally it is because she is the Prime Minister. If she is not the Prime Minister, nobody will mention her. Therefore, when she is the Prime Minister of this country and she is leading the party that is ruling this country for the last so many years, naturally the attack will be on her. Naturally they attacked Mr. Wilson because he was trying to take his country to the European Common Market. He had to go and plead with his people and he conducted a referendum. He never said: you people are opposing me. I will put you in jail. This is not the way of democracy. Democracy ought to be a sturdier plant which can stand all the blows and all the winds, however harsh they may be.

Therefore, before I conclude I would say about this twenty point programme. Why does not the Prime Minister propose that this is the programme? Let all the parties come together and discuss it. May be we shall have to add two more or subtract two and make it a shorter programme. It does not matter. In fact, as I have said, have five or six main items. Hammer them out and complete them and then move to the next issue. Why not ask Jayaprakash Narayan, why not ask all those people whom you have incarcerated? Bring them round the table. Say this is the programme and anybody who goes against it you will set him aside. Do not put him in jail, but set him aside. Do not suppose that all the bridges need to be blown up. Do not think that you will be able to manage India with only Shrimati Indira Gandhi and your party behind her; it is too vast a country, with so many people, so many shades of opinion, and so many religions.

Sir, I know that the contradictions are glaring. I know that we have differed. Still there is no other way for us. If you think that the only way is to shut the mouths of all the Opposition then I tell you are not only harming the opposition, you are not only harming democracy, you are harming yourself.

Shri N.G.Goray : Madam, on behalf of the **DMK party, Congress(0), Jan Sangh, BLD, CPI(M), PSP,**

Socialist Party, Akali Dal and Independent members Shri Umashankar Joshi, Shri K. S. Malle Gowda, Shri N. K. Laxman Gowda and Shri Dwijendralal Sen Gupta, I have to make a statement before the House before we withdraw:

“It was after a great deal of deliberation that we in the opposition parties, excluding of course the CPI, and some Independent members decided to attend and participate in the present session of Parliament. Our reluctance arose from the fact of the press censorship, and even more so from the resolution standing in the name of Shri Om Mehta, the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, asking the House to suspend all rules relating to questions, calling attention and any other business to be initiated by private members. We could not but take note of the fact that apart from Government’s business, Parliament has to perform other duties such as debate on Government policy, exercise effective supervision over executive action in various ways.

Only by putting a question or giving a Calling Attention notice, or initiating a debate can a member focus the attention of the House and through it of the country, to matters of public importance. And that is why constitutional authorities have held that the right to put the questions and the question hour are among the most vital rights of an ordinary member. If all these were to be abandoned unceremoniously, we would really be acquiescing in something that cuts at the very root of the role of the Parliament in its time honoured functions.

Nevertheless, it was felt that perhaps the proceedings in this session of Parliament will be conducted in a normal manner and that speeches made on the floor of the House will be allowed to be reported freely and faithfully in spite of the press censorship. To our dismay, we find that, the reporting on the AIR of yesterday’s proceedings of the House is such that it can only mislead. It mentioned only the names of the participants whereas

Shri Brahmananda Reddy’s speech was reported fairly fully and highlighted. This morning’s newspapers’ reporting of the proceedings is also on the same lines. We cannot but protest most emphatically against such unfair reporting of the proceedings which tells the country the Government’s point of view in regard to the emergency without indicating what the opposition has to say on the floor of the House on this very vital subject.

It is clear that this has been done in accordance with the instructions issued to the Press and the AIR by the Chief Censor on the 20th July under the heading “Guidance for the covering of Parliamentary proceedings”. It is not indicated in these instructions that the speeches of Members of Parliament participating in the debate shall not be published in any manner or form though their names and party affiliations may be mentioned were issued with or without the approval of the Chairman. We have therefore been compelled to ask ourselves the question whether continued participation in the further business before Parliament on those terms would serve any useful public purpose.

The decision to amend the Constitution to make the proclamation of emergency non-justiciable makes the consideration of this question more urgent and immediate. It is evident that the Government, having already denied the entire people of the country the basic fundamental rights, is now determined to ride rough-shod over the rights of the members of Parliament. Taking all relevant facts into consideration and bearing in mind in particular the fact that leading members of Parliament have been incarcerated, we are satisfied now that no useful purpose will be served by our taking part in the further proceedings of this session of Parliament, for it is clearly in no position to discharge the functions of a free and democratic parliament.”

Madam, with this, we, all of us, withdraw from the House.

Marx and Gandhi : A Revaluation⁴

As young socialists we used to take special delight in condemning those who differed from us either as reactionaries or utopians. Gandhiji’s thoughts were, according to us utopian, unscientific and reactionary, while those preached by Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky were scientific. It was the brutally dictatorial regime of Stalin that came to many of us as an eye opener.

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Since then we have been witness to many a change, unexpected, cruel and climactic, and though we in India continue to organise and plead for the underdog and are proud to call ourselves socialists, we now refuse to make use of the slogans, the clichés and the labels we freely used in those days.

It is necessary, however, to probe a little deeper into Gandhiji's contributions to the socio-political thought. I therefore in the following paragraphs offer a reconsideration or a revaluation and I feel no hesitation in saying that some of Gandhiji's thoughts I find more scientific than those of Marx and Engels. I go a step further and say that it was the latter two who have spoken or written more like utopians than scientific political thinkers.

Let us, for instance, take up the Marxist idea of "the dictatorship of the proletariat" for a closer analysis as that happens to be the central theme of Marxist revolutionary practice. Marx himself had repeatedly stressed that the earlier revolutionary attempts on the continent had failed mainly because of the serious failure on the part of the revolutionary forces to establish, after overthrowing the government, their own dictatorship and their neglect to crush out ruthlessly the reactionary elements in the old social order. This grave error in the application of revolutionary science provided, according to Marx, an opportunity to the reactionaries, who had temporarily gone underground, to mobilise and reassert themselves in a counter revolution, no sooner they got a chance.

Now this recipe was flawless so far as the immediate objective of revolution, viz, the seizure of power, was concerned. But what was the ultimate objective? It was the withering away of the State - an objective that has been emphasised ad nauseam by every brand of Marxist communists. Three pertinent questions arise in this context; one, who are the reactionaries and the bourgeois whom the revolutionaries must necessarily crush out? Two, who is this "proletariat", in whose name the dictatorship is to be proclaimed and continued? And three: by what political logic the highest concentration of power, economic, cultural and political, which every dictatorship implies, is expected to bring about its own dissolution? Fifty years of Marxism in power in the USSR have, if anything rendered the soviet state apparatus stronger, more autocratic than ever and more centralised than anywhere else. I dare say neither Moscow, nor Peking nor Belgrade will demur on this point.

The Frankenstein, the Stalinist purges created during the period 1930 to 1939 is well-known. It not only eliminated the anti-communists but everyone who was or who was likely to be anti-Stalin. These ruthlessly planned campaigns, one after the other, were carried out in the name of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and with monotonous regularity. The world was assured

after every purge that the communist party of Russia, the leader and vanguard of the world proletarian revolution stood more united and cleansed than ever before. In spite of the fact that Khrushchev, while exposing the Stalinist regime, admitted the fact that a large number of good communists were also liquidated by Stalin, he could not provide a different orientation to the Soviet state. It continued to be and it is still very much the same old dictatorship and that it will have to remain so for years to come in the future, has been made obvious by the recent armed intervention in the Czechoslovak affairs and the harsh sentences given to those Soviet citizens who condemned the intervention as un-Marxist.

The lacuna in the thinking of Marx is obvious. He did not understand the dynamics of a dictatorship. His ignorance in this field appears colossal. How could a scientific thinker of the stature of Marx, who went to the extent of describing the European bourgeois governments as little more than executive committees of the then capitalist class, in spite of the fact that they allowed revolutionary critics like Marx to function openly and their political systems did not prevent the opposition parties to unseat them, provided they had the necessary vote, failed to comprehend the omnipotence of a dictatorship in whose hands all the means of repression (the army and the police), of production (industry as well as agriculture), of mass propaganda (newspapers and radio) and of administration were concentrated, passes one's understanding unless one were to presume that Marx, too like other minor and major prophets who preceded him had developed a blind spot in his own theory. Moreover, the East European experiment only provided confirmation, that the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat is nothing but another name for the dictatorship of the politbureau of the communist party. Capitalist England never sent Marx to jail but Milovan Djilas had to suffer imprisonment for pointing out this simple truth! And that too in a society which Marshal Tito has described as humanistic as well as socialistic.

With the same credulity Marx proceeded to prophesy that the dictatorship of the proletariat will ultimately blossom into a classless and stateless society. Most probably he thought that the period of dictatorship would be a short one, just as long as was necessary to crush the bourgeoisie. What could be more unscientific than this presumption, or was Marx and his esteemed colleague Engels, too, at heart a romantic, no better than Tennyson the poet, who dreamed of the "Parliament of Man and the Federation of the world?"

Compared to this, Gandhiji who advocated the dissolution of the Congress party on the eve of independence and refused to identify himself with the party in power, appears to be a far better political scientist. It was not an accident that while his lieutenants were celebrating accession to power in New Delhi on August 15, 1947, he, the father of the nation, was away in Noakhali, thinking of the communal holocaust that had taken place in Bengal. Gandhiji had clearly understood the necessity of having a counter-sanction to the party in power, though it happens to be the party he himself had built, brick by brick, with his own hands.

The conclusion, therefore, is inescapable that either Marx did not mean by the dictatorship of the proletariat the sort of state-machine Lenin invented for the communists or he was indulging in double-think of the most reprehensible nature. If in spite of the scientific atmosphere that surrounded him in the British Museum and outside, Marx permitted himself to imagine that out of the destruction of civil liberties, of independent means of livelihood and avenues of independent thought, a brave new classless and stateless world of complete freedom will be born, then what his argument amounted to was that there need not be any connection between the cause and the effect, between the means and the end. You could sow tare and reap wheat, you could expect deadwood put out green foliage. In short, Marx was betraying scientific thinking itself.

Gandhiji, a humanist and a man of religion, seems to have been aware of these social realities. His abhorrence of violence and bloodshed was, of course, primarily due to his religious faith but his native shrewdness and his vigilant eye must have told him that those who conquer power by the use of arms will keep it for themselves and they will be reluctant to hand it back to the people. Therefore, any non-violent political programme which by its very nature admits of wide-based participation by the masses was most likely to usher in a government for, of and by the people. Even while advocating the non-violent way to power he never ceased to insist that the people who wanted to remain free must forge a sanction apart from the state apparatus. In the Gandhian formula there was at least no contradiction between the means and ends and there was a built-in safeguard against totalitarianism. The three excerpts quoted from Gandhiji's writings leave no doubt as to his thinking on the subject under discussion:

“True democracy or the swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means,

for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated.”

“I hope to demonstrate that real swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. In other words, swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.”

“What we want, I hope, is a government not based on coercion even of a minority but on its conversion. If it is a change from white military rule to a brown one, we hardly need to make any fuss. At any rate the masses do not count. They will be subject to the same spoliation as now, if not even worse.”

Moreover Satyagraha of Gandhiji's conception was a weapon that could be used even after the capture of power. He had premonition of the downfall of Congress. In fact, he warned Congressmen of a time when they would become the targets of people's wrath. I am afraid Marx could never imagine the dictatorship of the proletariat abusing its unprecedented authority or becoming an anathema to the very people in whose name it professed to rule. The unvarnished truth is that against any dictatorship, Marxist or fascist, the people are helpless. When dictators get changed, it is because of a coup, not because of the people's verdict and whatever the change once occurs the people have no choice but to accept their new masters. Thus the dictatorship of the proletariat gets metamorphosed into a dictatorship over the proletariat!

Another aspect of Gandhiji teaching that deserves closer attention is his insistence on “*anaasakti*”. This doctrine in my opinion looks far ahead into the future when the human race will be suffering from a surfeit of worldly amenities and pleasures. So far as countries like India are concerned where the common man is yet to get an assurance of even one square meal a day, this problem would sound unreal. Even to raise it might appear like adding insult to injury. But is it not very much relevant in regard to those societies which are known as affluent? They have already coined a word ‘affluence’, a cross between affluence and affliction to describe the mood of the people. The beatniks, the hippies and L.S.D. are

the end-products of a civilisation that appears to have reached almost a dead end.

I remember to have met two young men from Sweden who had come out to India and were roaming about with unshaven beards, matted hair and torn clothes because they said they were tired of a civilisation where nothing ever went wrong and no one knew what it was to be really hungry. A car for every member in the family, a T.V. and a telephone in every room, for every person unemployment benefit, old age pension, holidays with pay, free education and medical help, cheap housing and in a few years perhaps a free trip to the moon. Where do we go from there? What new pleasures shall we seek? That in a nutshell is the problem. The story of Midas needs no longer to be treated as a mythological yarn. Science has succeeded during the last fifty years in turning everything into gold and it threatens to turn even men and women into gold if we continued to remain complacent. The Midas-nations would rather get choked with affluence than share it with other retarded and impoverished societies in the world.

Tradition and Modernity⁵

India is a country with traditions and faiths reaching back almost to pre-historic times and she has provided during the past three millennia very favourable soil and climate for the growth of numerous religions out of which Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism are known throughout the world. Islam and Christianity came to India rather late, but they too prospered in the sub-continent, so much so that India was ruled for decades by emperors professing Islam and Christianity. There are yet other religions in India like the Lingayat and the Sikh which, confined to a small well-defined region though they are, exercise powerful influence on their respective flock. Buddhism in India had to go through a veritable saga of vicissitudes: it was first preached in India by Lord Buddha, then after having held sway over the Indian mind for centuries it was exiled and now after 15 centuries it has come back to India and has been embraced by a section of the untouchable community, the Harijans, as their own.

It is just a coincidence that I have ended this paragraph with a sentence containing the words “untouchable community”. But it has provided me with a key that in my

Nowhere in the Marxist literature have I seen this question discussed in its proper perspective. Marxist Governments seem to be preoccupied with only one goal: that of encouraging the working class to rise to higher levels of material prosperity. When ‘catching up with and surpassing the U.S.A.’ in every field comes to be cherished as the highest national objective, the poverty of philosophy as well as the philosophy of poverty stand revealed. This could be considered pardonable or justifiable in the Victorian age when science was still moving forward with cautious steps. But now in this age of moon rockets and the go-go-go society, man must show himself capable of evolving an alternative in the form of voluntarily accepted ceiling on man’s worldly goods. Unless they accept the Gandhian concept or the ‘*daanam samvibhag*’ concept of Vinoba, the only tantalising alternative will be the Maoist one: the conquest of urban nations by the rural ones, which as we have seen will only result in a world totalitarian regime of the Chinese variety. It would not mean and cannot mean the liberation of the man.

opinion unlocks the main problem we have to deal with in this seminar. Representatives of other distinguished denominations who have gathered here would be surprised to hear that there is even today a community in India which has to be described as untouchable. This cruel custom cannot be reconciled by any stretch of imagination with the ‘advaita’ philosophy of the Upanishads and consequently those who have learnt to equate the Hindu view of life with that philosophy would find it difficult to believe it, but it is a fact, however, unfortunate. India, perhaps because she happens to be a cradle of so many religions, has accumulated such a huge junk of inhibitions, customs and traditions that modern thought has to fight hard to get a few square inches of living room where it can live, breathe and grow. This naturally raises the question: what is the position of religion in India vis-à-vis modern world, which India is keen to enter?

It is necessary first to understand what meaning the word ‘religion’ conveys. It seems that religion exercises its appeal to the human mind at two levels. At one level religion means the search for truth, for the basic principle

5. Extract of the speech delivered at the seminar on “The ethical and social demands of World Religions for a Modern Society” organised by The Frederich-Ebert-Stiftung at Tokyo between 23rd and 28th of October 1968

lying at the root of the phenomenon we describe as the Universe. At the other level the meaning of religion is a body of rituals, a code laying down norms of behaviour, rules of conduct and defining the relationship between man and man, man and woman and between community and community. So far as religions are confined to the pursuit of knowledge, or to the study of the human psyche or to the quest of the ultimate, a religion need not lead to any conflict with other religious systems. In such a pursuit nobody can be extolled as a believer, nor can anybody be denigrated as a heretic. Nobody becomes a Shankaracharya or a Pope or a Moulvi nor can anybody be condemned to hell or burnt at the stakes.

In his delightful discourse on the Zen philosophy Dr. Suzuki quotes Basho's haiku : "when I look carefully I see the Nazuma blooming by the hedge!". ... and then quoting Tennyson's well known poem "Flower in the crannied wall' delicately brings out the difference between the Western and Eastern understanding of the natural phenomena and the relationship between man and nature. Obviously a dialogue between religions carried on at such a level could never lead to bitterness, estrangement or divisive tensions in any society.

But unfortunately for all of us religion is not generally accepted at this level. For the 99 per cent of the people, religion means unquestioning acceptance of a particular deity or particular form of worship or prayer, a particular way of life and adherence to a well defined set of values which are accepted as valid in perpetuity. Religion in this mundane form has such tremendous influence over its followers that as between followers of two religions any dialogue becomes almost impossible. The result is that a society like the Indian society gets atomised into so many religious sects and subjects with as many iron curtains dividing community from community that any attitude or any policy on a national level goes automatically beyond the pale of the possible. It becomes difficult to evolve a rational, comprehensive community outlook and a homogeneous social life. The multi-coloured and multi-patched pattern of our society might attract the sociologist or the tourist but it needs to be pointed out that the very bewildering heterogeneity of the Indian milieu precludes utilisation of the traditional religio-cultural moulds to create a modern social fabric as could be attempted in Japan by the Meiji reformers in the second half of the last century.

Analysis of the conflicts between religions in India will reveal that it is not the fundamental issues at the

core, but their peripheral ritualistic aspects that lie at the root of these antagonisms. It may be at one time music before the mosque, at another time killing of a cow that has invariably started the mischief resulting in arson, loot, criminal assault and even bloodshed on a large scale. Once a stray spark like this is ignited, it quickly develops into a prairie fire of ugly hatred making the whole atmosphere foul and inhuman. Another source of conflict is to be found in the claim of various religions to control the total life of their respective communities. Religion is not satisfied with providing guide lines to a person in his quest of the eternal truth or serving as a bridge between him and his maker. It is not even satisfied with its unquestioned authority in matter sacerdotal, such as religious education, management of the church or the temple property, but it tries to expand the frontiers of its authority much further and to encroach on fields like education, health, sex relations, inheritances, etc, which should properly belong to the civil administration. It becomes inevitable, therefore, that these religions should come into conflict with the established government of the country. The citizen as it were has to serve under two flags, one belonging to the temporal state and the other belonging to the spiritual state.

"Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's" was a very wise directive indeed and as it was uttered by no less a person than Jesus Christ, it had the highest possible sanctity behind it. But it has not succeeded in restraining the church in India or anywhere else. The latest instance is the directive from the Pope condemning family planning in unequivocal terms. In my young days, there was the Khilafat movement in India running parallel to the freedom movement in which large masses of Muslims participated not because they were directly connected with the issue but because being Muslims they considered that they had a duty to rise in support of the religious head in far away Constantinople.

From the point of view of the problem under discussion in this seminar my country presents a unique case of a nation in which continuing efforts have been made to bring about an integration of people belonging to different faiths without in any way destroying their loyalties to their respective religions. These efforts have continued for centuries and they still persist, though Mahatma Gandhi could be considered to be the last of the saintly persons who throughout his life struggled for the unity of all faiths and ultimately laid down his life in the pursuit. Prof. A. B. Shah of the Cultural Freedom Centre has described Gandhiji's approach as the Ram-Rahim

approach. In this, the Mahatma failed just as others had failed before him and it is worthwhile remembering that it was not only the holy men who had no temporal power who had to accept defeat, but even emperors like Akbar who had supreme authority almost over the entire sub-continent had not fared any better. The point I am trying to make out is that this Ram-Rahim approach, or call it by any other name of your choice, is bound to fail until all religions are shorn of their superfluous authority or they themselves voluntarily stop interfering in the non-religious life of their followers.

How religious and temporal authorities clash with each other and the former either defeats the process of modernisation or succeeds in putting brakes on it, could be easily illustrated. I am deliberately trying to avoid reference to any other country, because in such a discussion it is always better to speak about one's own. To show, however, how religious traditions have affected the process of modernisation in South-East Asia I need only refer to the very informative papers read out in the Conference on "The Cultural Motivations to Progress in the South and South-East Asia" which was convened in Manila in 1963.

The chronic scarcity of food grains in India is a problem known throughout the world. One obvious way of tackling it is to produce more and to preserve what you produce from wild animals, pests, rodents etc. The other way is to limit the mouths you have to feed. Both are undisputable economic measures. But so far as the question of controlling the growth of population is concerned, the Catholic Christians have now been told by the Pope that artificial family planning methods are to be eschewed. The Muslim religious heads in India have not as yet officially stated their stand, but by and large they would not be very enthusiastic about it. Their anxiety to increase their numbers is dictated by political reasons in as much as they would like to make up for the loss that the Muslim community in India has suffered on account of the division of India and the creation of Pakistan. This could be one of the reasons in addition to the religious one why the Muslim community is against uniform civil code which is likely to deprive them of the concession given to them by Islam, viz. that of taking four wives. As can be easily imagined this, however, gives rise to a constant complaint from the Hindus that they have been discriminated against by the State, as they can no longer marry more than one wife.

As for the preservation of crops we have been told

by experts that as high a percentage as 10 to 15 gets destroyed annually by pests, rodents and stray cattle. The monkeys also are a great nuisance to the orchards. But because the monkey and the cow have a special place in the Hindu religio-cultural tradition, any effort to destroy them is resisted. Similar is the case with India's cattle whose population is so notoriously big that unless we brought it down there could be no proper breeding nor adequate fodder and pasturage for them. But look at the hue and cry raised at the time of the last General Elections when "Save the Cow" could be turned into the most effective vote catching slogan.

In this context, how to compel the different religions in India to withdraw within their legitimate boundaries appears to my mind to be the most relevant and the most urgent question. The social democrats in India have not only to fight their class war but the caste and the communal war which is ten times more difficult because it cuts across all parties and classes which are after all of recent origin. The Indian social spectrum stretches all the way from the caste at one end to the computer at the other. The sophisticated machines, the laboratory know-how, the federal structure, the parliamentary system – all these we have imported from outside but can one import the social discipline, the community outlook and the rational mind that alone can give them the strength to strike roots in the soil and put out blossoms in the sky? I fail to understand how a new social soil could be created in India without modernising the minds of her teeming millions; without liberating them from the shackles of the past which makes them believe in all sincerity that the poverty, the disease, the hunger they see in their midst is the result of what they did or failed to do in the past?

To define modernity is certainly difficult but one can state what is broadly implied by the term. It is an attitude of mind which for instance:

- (a) refuses to believe that the fate of man or the community he belongs to is preordained; on the contrary it has confidence that with the help of modern science man's lot could be improved in many ways and with the help of rational thought a community could lead a life of peace and contentment;
- (b) is capable of distinguishing between metaphysical investigation and the abracadabra of rituals which goes in the name of religion;
- (b) while it respects philosophers, thinkers and prophets,

refuses to accept whatever they say as gospel truth and reserves to every generation the right to think and act in complete freedom; and

- (c) refuses to accept anything as religion which tells a man to hate another human being or to look upon him as an untouchable or a heretic or a slave.

In my humble opinion, India and her neighbouring countries too will not be able to climb out of the bog unless they adopt this attitude towards life. This in brief is the challenge of our time.

May I hope that at least the delegates from the Asian countries will take up this challenge in right earnest?

The inevitable partition⁶

Many times, looking back, I have asked myself this question whether the partition of India could have been avoided at all and I am forced to give the reply in the negative. After all, if we wanted to keep the country together, how could we have done it? In the first place, the British were no longer involved in the Great War. Not only that, they had come out victorious and they had decided, whether it was the Conservative or the Labour Party, that they could not hand over India to the Congress Party and leave the Muslim League in the lurch.

Looking back to the history of 100 years, particularly after 1857, I have no doubt whatsoever that it was the deliberate policy of the British rulers to keep these communities apart. It is on record that the Muslim League was encouraged, if not actually gave birth to, by the British rulers. And wherever and whenever the occasion arose, they tried to impress on the Muslim community that their fate would not be safe in an independent India, and it is the British who would protect their interests and see to it that no harm came to the Muslims.

This attitude of the British has been at the root of the tensions that developed in India during its struggle for freedom and you will find that Lokmanya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and all the national leaders had to struggle hard against this hurdle and they really had to bend backwards to appease the Muslim sentiments every time that they thought of achieving progress, so far as the freedom of India was concerned, whether it was Morley-Minto Reforms or Montague-Chelmsford Reforms or the Simon Commission Report or the transfer of power in the forties. Every time the clash was between the representatives of the Muslim interests and the Indian National Congress, with the British holding the balance and the British always out-bidding the Congress. The culmination of this was the partition.

Whether this was a correct policy or not, I do not want to say, but the fact remains that this was their decision. The other factor was that the Muslim League had grown from strength to strength and the Muslim opinion throughout India had got whipped up to a point of frenzy. It was obvious from these facts that, if they wanted to keep India together, the Congress would have to fight not only the British as before but the Muslim League also. And there was a third factor of the Princes.

It is worthwhile to recall in this connection that Gandhiji had suggested to the British that they should either hand over the Government to the Muslim League or to the Congress and allow them to settle it amongst themselves. This was not agreed to by the British. Then a time came when under the leadership of Jinnah, the Muslim League refused to join the coalition government and the Congress was willing to run the whole show without the co-operation of the League. But Jinnah realised his mistake. And the British government also realised that it would be wrong on their part to allow Mr. Jinnah to keep the Muslim League out of the Coalition Government. And it was Lord Wavell who gave them a chance to revise their stand and come back to coalition.

Though I agree that the Hindu-Muslim tension is not the creation of the British, I have no doubt in my mind that the British have done their best to aggravate it and to perpetuate it.

Had we the strength, that is, had the Congress leadership, which again meant Mahatma Gandhi, the confidence to fight all these three elements together? Civil Disobedience Movement had come to a close and Gandhiji's lieutenants, like Sardar Patel, on whom he relied, so far as the organisational strength of the Congress was concerned, were determined not to launch

6. Excerpts of an interview with a parliamentary official on 15.07.1979

any more struggles. Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru were not very keen at any time on a struggle. We must remember that even this 'Quit India' movement had not their whole hearted support and it was only the firm resolve on the part of Gandhiji to launch a movement that ultimately persuaded them to give their consent, though grudgingly.

Subhas Babu was no more on the scene and the Azad Hind Fauz that he had collected was scattered. It must be also admitted that though the Congress Socialist Party and other radical nationalist elements had greatly contributed to the 1942 movement, they on their own, were not in a position to launch fresh struggle. So we had reluctantly to come to the conclusion that we had to find a way and we could not think of one more struggle immediately after 1945.

Could we continue our experiment of a coalition Government at the Centre? To that also the answer was in the negative, because Pandit Nehru and Sardar Vallabhai Patel had come to the conclusion that it was impossible to sit in coalition with the Muslim League. And it is this daily experience, the experience of non-co-operation from the Muslim League in the coalition Government, the unending communal strife in the country and the inability of the Central Government to cope with the situation that almost forced the leadership to accept partition.

I am reminded of a story that was told to me by Shri N. V. Gadgil who was, at that time, a Cabinet Minister. He told me that though Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister and Shri Liaquat Ali Khan was his Finance Minister, days passed without these two exchanging a word and he said that it was our daily experience that orders got stuck in the Secretariat and nothing would move. It was very obvious that the whole plan of the Muslim League was to bring about a break-down of the

Government machinery and create conditions of chaos in which it would be difficult for the Congress to deliver the goods and the Congress would be compelled to agree to the demand of partition.

And I have a feeling that had we insisted on not accepting a partition, it would have been impossible for India to make even the progress that she had made during the last 25 years. There would have been incessant, bitter, bloody, communal riots and the Muslim League and the Congress would have been at logger heads all along the line and the country would have never come out of the bog. Therefore, though I am sorry that the country was divided, as a realist, I feel that there was no other alternative before the nationalist forces at that time.

We are a free nation now and nobody is going to come in our way if we wanted to remould ourselves and if we sincerely desire to eliminate the communal tensions that exist today. But I am also sure that only talking of national integration will not take us very far. If we are really sincere about national integration we shall have to take some drastic steps, which in my opinion are not at all inconsistent with the democratic way of life. We shall have to eliminate some of our traditions and loyalties which are inconsistent with our ideals of democracy and secularism. I would therefore say that any government which is sincerely loyal to its profession of secularism will have to do away with all denominational institutions like schools, hostels, scholarships, universities, etc. I cannot say how integration could be brought about so long as a Hindu University and a Muslim University continue to create in the minds of our younger generation a sense of separateness. These and national integration are incompatible and therefore sooner we eliminate all the elements that create fissiparous tendencies and communal loyalties the better.

Sri Lanka: Democracy Eclipsed⁷

For the last many centuries, the relations between India and Sri Lanka are so close that even the relations with Arunachal Pradesh, which is an integral part of India, appear to be comparatively farther. Let it be decided as to where exactly was the Lanka of Ravana, as and when it would be, but we know that for you and me, it is permanently associated in our minds with the Ayodhya of Rama and that the name of Mandodari is

taken along with that of Sita in the line of women loyal to their husbands who deserve to be remembered first thing in the morning. If the Palk Strait, which came within the jumping distance of Hanuman, was not there, Lanka would have been another State within India like Tamil Nadu or Kerala. Instead, Lanka has become an independent and sovereign state. But then so what? Is it going to end the close relations existing from ancient

7. Translated editorial of Marathi weekly Sadhana dated 1st January 1983

times? How can it end? Because, like as even today the minority but not insignificant Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka have not forgotten their relations with Tamil Nadu, even the Sinhali speaking majority of the people in Sri Lanka do not feel inferior in saying that they come originally from Rajasthan.

Because of this historical background, whatever happens in Sri Lanka affects India also at times very subtly and at times very substantially. Hence it is necessary to take cognizance of the important events that have taken place in Sri Lanka's political affairs under the leadership of Jayavardhane during the last six months. There is a possibility that the turn of events in political affairs of Sri Lanka may prove to be the pointers to the future for Indian politics. Whether it is Jayavardhane or Smt. Bhandarnaike, who was the Prime Minister before him, or for that matter whether it is Smt. Indira Gandhi or Zia ul-huq, all of them have basically the same totalitarian political views, and in this context, it may not be appropriate to treat them as insignificant.

In fact the United National Party of Jayavardhane had secured indubitable absolute majority in the 1977 elections and he had got the reins of political power in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka Freedom Party was routed completely and the dreams of Smt. Bhandarnaike becoming the Prime Minister once again and of anointing her son, that is Anura, as the Prime Minister had been shattered just like the dream of Indira Gandhi of crowning her son Sanjay Gandhi as Prime Minister of India. But in the lust for power, Jayavardhane proved himself worse than Bhandarnaike. Hence with a view to remove permanently the thorn that was Smt. Bhandarnaike from his path, using his majority in the Parliament, he terminated her Civil Rights. Not just only the termination of the Civil Rights of a former Prime Minister but the termination of the Civil Rights of any common citizen amounts to, in common parlance, hanging them to death. But then Jayavardhane did not stop even at that. He effected various self-serving amendments to the constitution of Sri Lanka. He became the President of Sri Lanka and to avoid the elections due in 1983, enacted the drama of getting an opinion poll on the question of extending the life of the Parliament to six years. I am terming the recently concluded opinion poll as drama for the reason that the elections were held after a state of emergency was first declared. Even then the votes in favour of extending the life of the current Parliament to six years were 31 lakhs whereas the votes against it were 26 lakhs. That means the votes against were certainly not insignificant but also

indicate that had Jayavardhane not used the weapon of emergency the opinion poll would have gone against him and endangered his Presidency itself. The only meaning the opinion poll renders is that Jayavardhane, his rule and his party have been somehow saved from such a situation.

Even after winning the 1977 elections and capturing state power, why was Jayavardhane not satisfied? Why did he feel that he should cut down on the powers of the Sri Lankan Parliament, that he should distort the basic structure of the constitution to enable him to become the President, that he should declare emergency even when there was no justifiable reason for it, and to cap it all snatch away the Civil Rights of his political opponent Smt. Bhandarnaike? People say that of late the economic condition of Sri Lanka was improving and had elections been held as usual in 1983 there would have been no difficulty in Jayavardhane's party getting majority. So even when there were such favourable conditions, why did Jayavardhane exhibit such unjustifiable and unpraiseworthy haste? If the desire to run the government without any hassles was at the root of all these acrobatics then on what basis does Jayavardhane think that the next six years could be spent without hassles?

According to me, there are two powerful motivations behind the present politics of Jayavardhane. The first motivation is the inevitable lust for power which is inconsistent with all the principles of democracy. The throne of Sri Lanka that came into his hands in the elections of 1977 should permanently remain with him and if, for that reason, all the principles of democracy and the constitution have to be trampled underfoot, so much the better, such is the supreme selfishness. The second reason is the opposition parties that do not want to get out of the present morass in Sri Lanka. At one end there is the party of the Tamil speaking people wanting to split from Sri Lanka and establish a separate state and at the other end is the party of the Trotskyites who dream of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat in Sri Lanka. And in between these two are the parties of persons like Smt. Bandaranaike which at times temporarily joins hands with the Tamilians and at other times with the Trotskyites. These parties at the two ends do not understand that by this impractical behaviour they are only strengthening the hands of Jayavardhane but are helpless.

If we compare the situation in India, the events from 1975 and the ambitions of the important persons taking part therein, with the situation in Sri Lanka,

the events from 1977 and the desires and ambitions of Smt. Bandaranaike and Jayavardhane, we can find many similarities and many parallel ambitions and their consequences. It is then that we can realize that what has

happened in Sri Lanka is not impossible in India also.

Sri Lanka is not far from India. It would be better not to forget that the people in India are also not very different from people in Sri Lanka.

The deceptive slogans of Hindu Unity!⁸

Whenever we see the continuous killing of Harijans in India it is not possible to remain without remembering the Sarpa Yajna - Snake Sacrifice - performed by Janamejaya. History does not record for how many centuries the conflict between the Naga Tribes which inhabited the Kuru-Panchal land originally and the Aryan Tribes that were trying to newly inhabit the land must have continued. But the author of Mahabharat, Vyasa, tells us that since land was needed to establish the township of Indraprastha, the Krishna-Arjuna duo burnt down the entire Khandava forest and in that inferno hundreds of Naga families were incinerated and this conflict ended in such a way that, Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna was slain by a Naga youngster, and to avenge the same, Janmejaya, the son of Parikshit searched for Nagas in all four corners of the world, caught them and threw them in the sacrificial fire, as he would the dried logs of wood.

But the shameful part of the story is that the enmity that we, belonging to the three upper Castes – Varnas – nurtured during the time of Mahabharat against the Shudras, or Nagas or the non-Aryans, have continued to hang on to it and till today have continued our despicable vocation of burning them, killing them or even stripping them naked. We have by our deeds rendered meaningless all the philosophy of the Upanishads, all the teachings of the Bhagavadgita to perceive God as all encompassing, all the stands of equality taken by the Saints of Lord Vitthal, all the generosity of Eknath, all the teachings of social revolutionaries starting from Mahatma Phule, and all the provisions of our Constitution and the Penal Code. The feeling of hatred in us towards Harijans is so deep rooted and so rigid that not only temporal ideas have no effect on them, but even the spiritual values appear to have no effect. Now, we are not taking out our anger on one or another person, we burn down the entire colonies or we massacre the entire families of these downtrodden people. The objective of these acts is so explicit that once we behead an antyaja – the last-born – in a place like Deuli or Sadhupura, the news spreads far and wide and thereafter no Mahar or Maang or Jatav should have the

courage to speak up against the upper castes with their heads held high, the dominance of the upper castes is re-established and everything becomes calm and peaceful.

During the period after independence, in the five Five-Year-Plans, in howsoever distorted and incomplete manner they might have been implemented, only the privileged and the prosperous classes have grown more privileged and more prosperous and the reins of state power also have gone into their hands only. But along with it, since literacy and the feelings of self-respect have also permeated in all the layers of society, the conflict between the 'neo-privileged' and the 'newly-awakened' also has become inevitable. Wherever the so-called tradition was deep rooted in Hinduism, the intensity of this conflict became very sharp and wherever the society had accepted the new ideas of new humanism this conflict became latent and even if it got expression it was not so cruel.

We generally consider the land mass consisting of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar as Central India. Gods like Rama and Krishna, cities famous since ancient times like Ayodhya, Mathura, Kashi and Avantika and rivers considered sacred like Ganga, Yamuna, Narmada and Chambal are situated in the same land mass. The Ramcharitmanas of Tulasi Das is read in every household and its couplets are daily recited here only. The fortress of tradition here is so profoundly established that till today even a ray of mature new thinking cannot penetrate into it. The importance that this land mass has secured in Indian politics because of its large population can be gauged by the fact that during the last 35 years, if only we exclude two years, only the persons from Uttar Pradesh have occupied the office of the Prime Minister of the country, and if we exclude the period of two years when Lal Bahadur Shastri was the Prime Minister, then this chair has remained with the Nehru family all these years. On the basis of only this fact, it should be possible to understand that even the anti-democratic thought that the Prime Ministership should remain with the Nehru

8. *Translated editorial of Marathi weekly Sadhana dated 6th February 1982*

family also originates from this area only. In the area where the mindset of the people is not at all moulded on the basis on modern ideas, the arrogance and hooliganism that people get is to be considered as a natural outcome of their desire for political power and wealth. That is why in this area, the demonic outcry that that which has to be under foot, should remain under foot, will continue. Hence there, not only the Jatavs, but also women and the tribal people will be oppressed as all of them are considered to be footwear only.

Hence in order to hide and digest this great injustice, now onwards, the deceptive slogans of Hindu Unity are going to be shouted loudly. They are being shouted today also. As though Hinduism is not aware of untouchability, as though Rama had, only in an unconscious state, cut off the head of Shambuka for having committed the sin of doing some penance. And as though even in the eighteenth century the gang that made the Mahars wear a pot around their neck was not a staunch follower of Hinduism. As the drums would be beaten loudly to mute the screams of the woman forcibly pushed into the burning pyre of her dead husband, in the same way, in order to see that the screams of the dalits do not reach out to the outer world, the drums of Hindu unity are being beaten loudly. Otherwise, what is the reason for suppressing the fact that this slogan of Hindu unity has germinated in the womb of the fear that the population of the Muslims will grow because of the conversion that took place in Meenakshipuram? Hence the real motive is not the emancipation of the dalits but is only a strategy for self-preservation. Hence no dalit is going to be deceived by this. On the contrary, the dalit community will smile in their minds seeing that the conversion of a few hundred dalits is causing so much of an upheaval in the Hindu community and an illusion is likely to be created in their minds that conversion is the only way for their social emancipation.

Should they not bother about what the people from other provinces of India who are not assimilated in the Hindu culture, to be precise in Maratha culture, would think when they choose the auspicious occasion of the Republic Day for flying their Hindu flag and the

proclamation of their Hindu nation? Leave aside the people from Kashmir or from the eastern borders of India, what do you think will be the effect of this proclamation at least on the people of Punjab? Are not these people who are declaring that India is a Hindu nation, watering and nourishing the demand for independent Kashmir, Khalistan, Nagaland, Mizoram and Dravidistan? Or are they dreaming stupid dreams of oppressing all these people and hoisting their Hindu flag on the chests of these people? Have we decided not to learn anything from the past history of the Marathas?

These slogans of Hindu unionism, Hindu nationalism, Hindu universalism and the emancipation of the fallen ones, though appear different, are the outcomes of the same proclivities of which the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh is the product or the Bharatiya Janata Party is the product. Hence as it is not possible for them to have sincere conviction in Gandhian Socialism, it is not possible for them to have sincere conviction in federal polity and in the democracy which inheres civil liberties and secular values. Even if they are thorough nationalists, the nation of their focus will only be a Hindu nation and even if people of other religions are the citizens of this country it will not be as a matter of birth right but as a matter of courtesy of the Hindus, as a matter of favour of the Hindus. There is a fundamental difference between the concept of nation as envisioned in the constitution and this concept of Hindu nation and this difference cannot be hidden by the sloganeering about Shiv Chatrapati.

This twentieth century is drawing to a close. Have we not created our secular, democratic and socialist state through our written constitution keeping in view the waves of new ideas, new systems of governance, new social transformations and new science that have swept our country during the last two or three centuries? When we have still to realise many of these goals, by giving the slogan of Hindu unity, are we going to prepare ourselves to lose what we have gained with our efforts in the last two hundred years and reverse the hand on the clock of time or are we going to move seriously towards true equality and true democracy. That is the present challenge before the new generation.

Hooliganism or Warning bell?

It may not be proper to term the hooliganism unleashed last week by some policemen at Dadar-Worli in Mumbai

as a revolt. It was hooliganism only, as it had no wider aims or objectives. These days the behaviour of police

in various parts of the country, whether it is beating up of Sarvodaya worker Dandekar or molesting helpless women in police custody or raiding the dwellings of Harijans, is so contradictory to the image that we nurse of the police as the protectors of people that a question arises in ones mind as to what is the difference between the thieves and dacoits and the police. It is proper to call the behaviour of the Mumbai police as hooliganism as it is similar with the behaviour of the police elsewhere in the country.

As a matter of fact, the police officers should have known earlier only that there was unrest brewing in the police force. Particularly after some police personnel sported a black band during the parade on 15th August to give vent to their unhappiness, there was no reason for the Government not to become alert. But the Government of Maharashtra, hailed at one time as a very efficient government, has of late gone into the hands of such people that while some of them are stupid, others are senseless. Their main business is to plan the toppling of one another or at the drop of a pin visiting Delhi and standing in front of Smt. Indira Gandhi wagging their tails. They also have a third business, which is trying to pocket as much money as possible from out of every plan fund. When they are busy with not one but three businesses, it would have been a wonder had they been aware of what is cooking in our police force.

On seeing that the policemen in Dadar-Worli area are themselves rioting, creating obstructions on the road and stopping vehicles, many gangs of anti-social elements rushed to their aid and within the batting of an eye-lid they destroyed the life in Mumbai. I am not at all surprised that the police and the anti-social elements joined hands like this. Because the group within the police force and the anti-social elements keep shaking hands quite often. Is it not quite natural that the anti-social elements felt like carrying on their business unhindered when they saw that the policemen themselves are rioting in the middle of Mumbai? In the rioting of these two days, or may be we can even say in the rioting of a single day, hundreds of private vehicles were damaged, many buses were burnt, thousands of shops were looted and every belonging of Shri Hoshing and Shri Mohite of the Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangha were looted.

When the situation appeared to be going out of control, Army was called in, and it is only when the army came that it was possible for the Administration to get control of the situation. On the basis of the rioting that took place for two days in a city like Mumbai which is important from all points of view, and on the basis of the reaction

expressed by the ruling and the opposition parties, many conclusions suggest themselves. But before considering those conclusions, it is necessary that all of us note that the whole world has come to know very clearly as to how precarious the situation has become in the country because of this rioting by the police. The country is poised on a dangerous cliff and if we do not try to pull it back from that place in time it cannot be predicted as to when it will collapse. That is why this incident in Mumbai is like a warning bell. The unrest that is simmering inside our society, this incident is only one explosion of that unrest. Sooner all of us take stock of it the better.

At such times it is very difficult to say anything about the ruling party. Because it appears that it has lost its ability to govern. In 1980 people slipped on the slogan of Smt Indira Gandhi that the Janata Party is a party of non-performance and that hence people should elect her and they gave her an unprecedented victory. But the experience since 1980 is such that engrossed in the power game and in filling their pockets the party plain forgot that it has been elected by the people to solve their various problems. Black marketing, corruption, bribery and favouritism are all worms that are born in the cow dung of administration-less-ness. Hence one feels like making a serious allegation against

Smt. Gandhi's administration that the social and moral values to enrich whom our national leaders from Raja Rammohan Roy to Gandhi took great pains have all been destroyed by the Congress from their very roots. As the adage in English goes 'everything is fair in war and love', in the same way there appears to be no reason to worry about fairness in capturing power and amassing wealth. It appears that every one has become a worshipper of power and wealth. If the people in whose hands the reins of administration come, start ignoring the values, if no other aim remains for them excepting selfishness then how can they expect values like patriotism and social commitment from people working under them in different fields? What right do they have to so expect also? In such a value-less atmosphere, if the civil servants or police or army start moving on the wrong path, disregard discipline, and start rioting, the administrators will neither have the moral right nor the ability to bring them back on the right path. Hence, even if the rioting by the police force is suppressed by using the army, if tomorrow the army indulges in rioting, with whose help are we going to control them?

In this context, I remember the rioting that took place during 1947. Lord Mountbatten was the Viceroy of India then and was trying to suppress the rioting by the

Hindus and Muslims in Delhi and Punjab with the help of the armed forces, but to douse the communal fire in Bengal, Gandhiji was moving from village to village on foot. Then, Lord Mountbatten had written in a letter to Gandhiji, “the work you are doing alone, I cannot do it even by sending four battalions of soldiers”. I only hope that our politicians are still capable of understanding the meaning of these words of Mountbatten who was the Supreme Commander of the South-Eastern Sector during the Second World War.

I am also surprised by the reaction of the opposition parties. When the Mumbai was burning due to the indisciplined behaviour of the police and the joining of hands by the police and the anti-social elements, the call for ‘Mumbai Bandh’ given by the opposition parties can only be termed as the climax of childish one-upmanship. I do not understand if they equated this rioting by a few policemen with the revolt by the Navy in the Mumbai port in 1946. Did they think that the looting and arson in the Dadar, Mahim, Worli area was the precursor to the people’s revolution that we were looking forward to? As some opposition parties gave a call for ‘Mumbai Bandh’, some other opposition parties called for the dismissal of Babasaheb Bhosle or imposition of President’s rule

in Maharashtra. It is not necessary to probe deeply to understand how useless these demands were. Can it be said that it made a fundamental difference when Barrister Antuly went and Bhosle came? And if it made no such difference, what could have happened, if instead of Bhosle some other stooge of Indiraji had come in his place.

Those who really think that there should be fundamental difference in the politics of Maharashtra or of the Nation should have to grab the power from Indira Congress, and for that it is necessary that the like minded political parties should come together. Only then there is a possibility of bringing about a change in the situation. But since no body wants to talk about this necessary and clear task such meaningless slogans are being given.

I feel that the incident in Mumbai speaks for itself and is also a warning to us. It has given expression to the fact that unrest and instability have permeated in all the layers of society and not through such means as President’s rule but by creating a value based and capable alternative democratic administration that the present situation can be changed is the clear message of the present incident.

Western Railway Employees’ Union

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The Western Railway Employees’ Union (“WREU”), earlier known as Bombay Baroda & Central India Railway Employees’ Union was established in 1920 at Parel, Mumbai. WREU is one of the oldest trade unions not only in Railway but also in the country, its registration number being 5. After enactment of the Trade Union Act, 1926, the WREU got itself registered on 30.10.1927.

WREU is a founder member of All India Railwaymen’s Federation (“AIRF”) and All India Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), WREU, AIRF and HMS are free, independent and democratic trade unions.

WREU fought for upliftment of railwaymen and their family in particular and labour class in general for the last 87 years. WREU-AIRF is instrumental in creation of Permanent Negotiating Machinery (“PNM”) for solving the grievances of railwaymen in 1951. Productivity Linked Bonus, large scale upgradations, etc. To the Railwaymen, these are some of the major achievements of WREU. WREU is the most popular union amongst the railwaymen on implementation of modified recommendations of the 6th CPC w.e.f. 1.1.2006

WREU was led by prominent trade union leader, late Miss. Maniben Kara and in memory of her, WREU established “Maniben Kara Foundation”, a charitable trust fighting against the evils of the society.

Apart from trade union activities, WREU along with Maniben Kara Foundation is conducting various non-bargaining activities such as organizing Health Checkup Camps, Blood Donation Camps, Family Planning Camps, Anti-Dowry campaigns, HN-AIDS Awareness Campaigns, Trade Union Education Class, etc. for the benefits of the railwaymen and the general public.

Umraomal Purohit
President

J.R. Bhosale
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No end to corruption

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The Rs.3600 crore VVIP helicopter scandal has surfaced at a most inopportune time for the UPA government. The exposure has assailed the government's waning credibility and dealt it a body blow to its overall image. Reports from Italy have suggested that Indian officials were bribed to finalise the chopper deal and an amount in the region of ten per cent of the deal's worth (Rs.3600 crore) was paid by way of bribe. The scandal broke when the head of the contracting Italian firm, Finmeccanica was arrested along with another top official last week. However, unlike past exposures of bribery and corruption in the government, the latest exposure has some redeeming features. This time the government has not tried to hide behind excuses and alibis. Nor is it trying any hush-hush cover-up strategies. It has even agreed to an enquiry by a Joint Parliamentary Committee. It says it is willing to share every bit of information with Parliament and the nation. This turn in attitude is welcome.

Fortunately, the minister concerned is A. K. Antony who guards his well-earned and well-merited reputation for personal and official probity very

zealously. He lost no time after the Finmeccanica chief Guiseppe Orsi's arrest to order a CBI probe and to announce that he was prepared to scrap the deal even at the cost of defence preparedness. The arrest must have taken Mr. Antony by surprise and given him a jolt. This is because Mr. Antony was quite aware of the stories circulating in Italy and India for the last one year hinting at irregularities in the deal. Since Mr. Antony failed to respond to those reports, the sudden arrest of the Italian head of the contracting company must have brought home to him the fact that one cannot assume that things are all right. Defence deals call for continued vigilance before the deal is struck and after. It is no secret that middlemen roam New Delhi's power corridors searching for greedy and cash-hungry officials.

The deal, one of the big ones which the defence ministry has concluded is for the supply of 12 AgustaWestland helicopters for VVIP transport. Its suspension or cancellation would have no immediate impact on defence preparedness though in the long run such safety-oriented choppers are vital for VVIP transport.

Initially the Italians seem reluctant to share information with India on the role of both Italian and Indian officials. Mr. Antony has deputed a CBI team to Italy and it is to be hoped that Italians will be more amenable to co-operation in the long-term interest of the two countries' bilateral relationship. Fortunately, the visiting British Premier David Cameron has assured Dr. Manmohan Singh fullest co-operation in investigations into the kickbacks paid in the deal. AgustaWestland is a UK-based subsidiary of the Italian firm Finmeccanica. Mr. Cameron has assured that Brittain will respond to any request for information by the Indian government.

The government will do well to ensure that the CBI completes its investigation speedily, and that it is allowed to operate freely and transparently. In its own interest the government must see to it that the guilty are identified soon and are brought to book. Any attempt at cover-up will boomerang on itself and further damage its credibility. The people of India are resentful of the fact that corruption is seeing no end under the UPA government.

Unfortunately, the latest exposure has brought home the fact that the policy not to have middlemen in defence deals has not been implemented seriously. Middlemen cannot be avoided, true. But there is obviously need for greater and more comprehensive vigilance to curb their activities and to ensure transparency. Crores of rupees are usually involved in defence deals and temptation to make easy money is always there. It also seems to be true that middlemen have easy access these days to those who take final decisions in the various

(Continued on Page 6)

Dialogue and Democracy

D. K. Giri

Having celebrated the 64th year of our Republic, we need to reflect on our democracy, which has been our glorious achievement. We have sustained our democracy despite various social and economic impediments whereas many other countries failed to do so. There are various explanations for our success, but I do not intend to sing praise for it here by analyzing the factors for sustenance of democracy. There are also criticisms and concerns about our democracy not functioning well. Some decades ago, J. K. Galbraith went to the extent of describing India as "a functional anarchy". Well, that could be an extreme observation. But, it underlines the need for a lot of improvement in our democracy, in any democracy for that matter. That's because, democracy is an ever-evolving process to realize its principles. Also democracy is a difficult political process, although it is supposed to be the best form of governance as it provides for self-rule by citizens. Columnist Gursharan Das in his book, "India Unbound", writing about democracy and capitalism makes an interesting comparison, "democracy is easier to understand but more difficult to achieve, capitalism, in contrast, is easier to achieve (because exchange is natural to human beings), but more difficult to understand". True, indeed, there are several versions, interpretations, and perceptions of democracies in the world. In fact, it will not be an exaggeration to say that democracy is seen by many like the proverbial elephant seen by six blind men. In India too we believe that democracy is all about

elections and some institutions. In fact, Indian voters and leaders get so excited about the elections with sound, colour and ornamentation of electioneering that they are reported in a leading newspaper as "dance of democracy". This razzmatazz happens once in five years or more often, if there are mid-term elections, for the local governments, State Assemblies and the Parliament. Since all these elections in all the states are not concurrent, India is always agog with election festivity in some part or the other of the country. A commentator said, "Indian politics is electionised, not democratized". But, democracy is not just elections; it is fundamentally about people – people's participation in democracy and democracy delivering for the people. The question, therefore, we must raise, is "what happens in the five years between one election and the other". Rammanohar Lohia, the leading Democratic Socialist thinker of India, once said, "*zinda kaume paanch saal tak intejar nahin karti*" (translated in English, "live communities do not wait for five years" (the term of the legislatures). What he meant then was that "a government that misruled should be thrown out by the people, even before the term ended." In that it could also mean that government need not ignore people's problems and aspirations until they come back in five years for re-election, or the people should not resign to the whims and fancies of their representatives until the next elections. Both the leaders and the voters should constantly engage in dialogue with each other for better

governance. The scope of this article is to discuss the role of dialogue as a participatory tool to improve democratic functioning.

Why Dialogue?

When there are many stakeholders with different perspectives, when issues are complex and evolving, dialogue becomes necessary to arrive at common understanding and acceptable solutions. On the contrary, absence of a dialogue resulting in conflicting understanding and controversial decisions can cause huge material, financial and emotional costs.

The founders of Dialogue Associates, an England-based consultancy organization with whom I had the opportunity of working in the grassroots development projects, view dialogue as a way of exploring the roots of many crises that face humanity today. In the modern culture, it is not difficult for people to interact with each other socially or culturally. But “their inability to talk together about the subjects that matter deeply to them seems invariably to lead to disputes, divisions and often to violence.” They further suggest that dialogue is a way of observing how hidden values and intentions can control our behaviour and how unnoticed differences can clash without us realizing it. Dialogue is therefore a process which generates collective learning, increased harmony, fellowship and creativity. It is exploratory in nature as its meaning and purpose continue to unfold. Dialogue is not to test a preconceived idea, but a part of unfolding process of creative participation between stakeholders. We must make it clear that dialogue is loosely used to mean a form of interaction between people. Dialogue is derived from

the two roots – ‘dia’ which means through and ‘logos’ which means “the word” or more specifically, the “meaning of the word”. The image it gives is of a river that is flowing around and through the participants. Dialogue is not a discussion – which means scoring a point or winning an argument, therefore involving break up. It is not also a debate, where points and counter points come up. It is a form of an interaction to explore a thought and understand the thought-process. Dialogue is essentially a conversation between two equals; any controlling by either of the party will hinder and inhibit the free play of thought and the other delicate and subtle feelings that would otherwise be shared. Any attempt to manipulate a dialogue process is thus self- defeating.

How does dialogue work, in a broader scale, in a democracy? Dialogue is one of the keys to participatory governance. In a genuine dialogue process, people listen and learn to foster a constructive environment of active and inclusive participation. It enables stakeholders or community members to address issues that affect them in their daily lives. Dialogue, conducted effectively as suggested above, helps the leadership and policy makers to be informed of community concerns, needs, and priorities. Although dialogue is not a conflict resolution technique, problems get resolved during the dialogue, or later, as a result of increased understanding and fellowship that occurs among the participants. It also serves to find ways in which community demands can be addressed meaningfully. Dialogue enables participatory communication which helps in effective social change and formulating development strategies, dialogue gives space to voices of

those unheard and marginalized and helps create an inclusive process, build consensus, and promote cohesion. With such ideational understanding, let us look at some cases, success stories, in India and other democracies, which may serve to improve the functioning of our democracy.

Northern Ireland Peace Accord

One great success story that resulted from a carefully managed dialogue is the peace accord in Northern Ireland. Many are unaware that Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom and there is a long-drawn fight within Northern Ireland between the Catholics and Protestants on its unification with Ireland (Southern Ireland). Since 1969, over 4000 people have died as a result of political violence in Northern Ireland. The conflict has its origins in the 1921 division of Ireland. The Protestant majority (53 percent) which is called Unionists, would like to stay with UK, and the Catholic minority (44 percent) considers itself Irish (Nationalists) and desires a United Ireland.

After years of political negotiations, on 10 April 1998, political parties in the peace talks announced an agreement, the Good Friday Agreement, also called Belfast Agreement. This was secured through an arduous dialogue process. The lessons learnt were cited by me in an article called “Negotiating with the Naxals”, carried in the journal *livenewsbee.com*. For the purpose of this article, let us recall the relevant principles for dialogue. First, one must have a framework for negotiation, which was “peace” in Northern Ireland. Acceptance of peace as a pre-condition for dialogue was important. Second, dialogue brings up conflicts and

controversies, so it should not be given up, it has to be relentless. Third, in search of bigger objective, emotions, attitudes, hurt feelings; so-called small things should not be ignored. They can derail the whole dialogue process. We deal with human beings in dialogue, not machines. Fourth, the dialogue could not be left to the contending parties alone. If they could resolve their differences, they would have done so long ago. So, they need a third-party assistance, a facilitator, but the third party should be committed and capable, and should have confidence of all. Finally, dialogue is a process, a journey together, not a one-off event. People need to co-create ideas by sharing their thoughts for the ultimate objective.

The Naxal issue

The kidnappings and killings by Naxalites like those of Italian tourists, an MLA, a district magistrate in Odisha last year, have exposed our limitation in dealing with the Naxals. The Naxalites in Central and Eastern India have become a major obstacle to development. The Prime Minister once said, "The Naxal problem is the greatest concern today". It is also true that the violence-ridden Naxal problem is proving to be a major contradiction for our democracy which is appreciated all over the world for its tenacity and elasticity. How can we initiate a dialogue process on the Naxal issue? The government has appointed mediators, but how can the Naxals be brought to the dialogue table? Is the government competent to initiate this dialogue? Can it not appoint a third party within the country to facilitate the process?

Naxalism has been treated as a law and order problem, police dealing with it with force. Although,

admittedly, many vested interests have crept into the ideological Maoist movement, which believes in physical elimination of capitalists class enemies, the roots of naxalism lie in social and economic deprivation of particular segments of society. Their problems could be identified and solutions found through a dialogue process. Why is government shying away from such a dialogic engagement?

The Civil Society Upsurges

In recent times, there have been sporadic upsurges in the civil society on various issue of governance. Let us take just two examples - the movement against corruption by Anna Hazare, and the spontaneous protests by the students and the youth against Delhi gang-rape on 16 December 2012. In the movement led by Anna, students, youths and common people rallied behind him throughout the country against wide-spread as well as deep-rooted corruption in the system, and for institution of Lokpal, kind of an ombudsman to check it. The government decided initially to ignore the movement, and when it reached the doorstep of the Parliament, they hurried to placate Anna by including some of his nominees to the drafting committee on the Lokpal Bill. But the dialogue in the committee was not conducted methodically, the spirit was antagonistic, and it fell through. Anna's team walked out and went back to the agitation - it is another matter that Anna's movement later split on a strategic issue. At no point, there was any serious attempt to engage the movement leaders in a serious dialogue.

During the last one month, there was unprecedented self-mobilization of students and youth to protest

against violence against women in general, and for punishment to those who committed the brutality on a young woman student on 16 December in Delhi. The students and youths gathered in front of the President's house and on Rajpath on their own as they were moved and agitated by what the young girl went through, and their own feelings of insecurity. It was a genuine and legitimate protest, although some of the leaders tried to run it down. The Chief Justice of India strongly endorsed the movement by saying, "I wish I could join the protesters on Rajpath". But sadly, there was no attempt by the government to engage with the students in a dialogue in order to find out their concerns and solutions. It was treated again as a law and order situation, left to the police to maintain order. The consequence of such an approach was not encouraging for our politics. The students ran out of patience, some violence followed as a consequence, one policeman died in mysterious circumstances and the whole thing left a bad taste in the mouth for everybody. No leader from the ruling coalition came up to meet them. It would not have been difficult for a leader to come out and address the students in and initiate the dialogue and diffuse the situation. On the contrary, in the name of freedom of assembly, and for the sake of a genuine cause, the students were allowed to gather but left alone to try out their patience and tenacity. This was not the best course of action. Engaging them in a dialogue process was.

There are several such cases where absence of dialogue is causing huge loss materially and otherwise. In many states, industries could not be set up as the people are protesting against displacement and reckless

exploitation of the environment. In the resource-rich state like Odisha, people are locked in conflicts with the government and the industries namely- Tata, Vedanta, and Posco. In case of Posco, the Korean steel giant, which is making a big FDI is unable to deal with just one village and set up its operation. It is relying on the government to deal with those villagers protesting; even the government has not succeeded so far. Similar is the story with Tata, who is accused of being a party to the killing of villagers protesting against taking over of their lands by manipulation, is not able to start its plant. Vedanta is in and out of the courts to start mining bauxite in Niyamgiri, a mountain with tremendous ecological value. Some of the primitive tribes are attached to this mountain as the “children would be with their mothers”. Both the government and the industries are convinced that their operations will be good for the revenue of the state, it will bring in prosperity to the people of Odisha, but people are not persuaded. The deadlock continues. Is there no scope for initiating a process of dialogue and come up with solutions acceptable to all? There surely is. But the government is perhaps indifferent to or ignorant of the process, where as the industries are helpless, and over-dependent on the government. This must change, and the civil society must be engaged, it can no longer be ignored.

International Day of Democracy

On 15 September, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) celebrates the International Democracy Day, declared by the United Nations in 2007. The last year, the IPU declared that dialogue

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Autonomous Council for North Andhra

K. S. Chalam

The perception of an autonomous council to administer certain specific areas in the country came up for discussion during the Gorkhaland struggle. Interestingly, there was little public debate on this issue except among the people who are concerned with the problem and few bureaucrats. The subject has cropped up once again in the present context of Andhra-Telangana squabble.

The Constitution has provided for autonomous councils for tribal areas. But, it is very specific. Under Article 244 a mention is made about administration of Tribal areas in two distinct settings: the fifth schedule and the sixth schedule. The fifth schedule is meant for ‘Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes’ while the sixth schedule is provided for administration of ‘the Tribal Areas’ in the North East. There are differences between the two. While the provision in the fifth schedule covers both the geography and the tribals living there, the sixth schedule is related to the region of the whole of North East where a stipulation is made for autonomous council.

We need to understand the history of the region to appreciate the significance of some of the struggles particularly of the Nepali speaking ethnic group - Gorkhas. It is important to recognize that the demand for Gorkhaland is present in the district of Darjeeling and in parts of the neighboring Jalpaiguri district. Both the districts are in West Bengal. The division of Bengal was archaic and arbitrary when we look

at the 21 KMs length of passage to North East through Darjeeling. We have very little information on the Tea Gardens and how are they still under the control of certain dominant powers. Interestingly, all the Gorkhas are not tribals and some of them have mainland castes like Bahun, Chhatri, etc. In other words, Gorkha region is distinctly different from North East. This seems to be the real problem as they live in the fifth schedule area and have been demanding special status like that of the sixth schedule. However, their struggle seems to have yielded some result in the name of Gorkha Land Hill Council through an Act of the Parliament with Bengal state legislative action. In our system Parliament is supreme and it can take any decision in the interest of the country.

It is necessary to keep in mind that the whole population of Gorkhas is about 10 lakhs and even as per the statements of some leaders, not even 50 percent of the population of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. Darjeeling district has a population of 18.42 lakhs and Jalpaiguri, 38.67 lakhs in 2001. Therefore, we cannot compare an issue like Telangana or some other region in the mainland India with Gorkhaland as it would be laden with several intricacies.

In this context, the reckoning of the most neglected region in the country is found to be old Visakhapatnam region consisting of KBK in Odissa and Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam districts of Andhra Pradesh. They

are found to be most neglected and underdeveloped in terms of every parameter of the economists. The state has a coastline of 950 KMs and half of it is in North Andhra, without any development except devastation in recent times. The matter is mooted here to show, if there is any region in the state that deserves an autonomous council like that of Darjeeling, it is North Andhra. Because, the three districts including the tribal areas of Khammam (till recently part of Araku Parliamentary constituency) constitute the largest concentration of tribal population in the state under the fifth schedule.

The total tribal population of the three North Andhra districts is almost equal to the Gorkhas of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. The forest and unused land coverage in the three districts is about 55 percent and the tribal population is about 15 percent of the state. If the socio-demographic parameters of the region are taken, 90 percent are backward with the highest outmigration. The irony is that there are no voices from this region in the current dialogue except, I am told about a brief memorandum submitted to the Srikrishna committee. This is because of the hegemony of leadership that does not allow the local voices to be heard from this region. The political leadership of North Andhra is so weak that the voices from Visakhapatnam are dominated by some of the advanced districts signifying the pathetic situation there. In fact, late Dronamraju Satyanarayana, leader of the region used to argue in our seminars that outsiders have made politics in the district a costly affair so that the poor locals would be naturally sidelined. Thus, I am told that out of five legislators of the city, four are settlers and the locals have

never been elected for the Parliament seat for about a quarter century. The newly emerging voices are either sidelined or rebuked. Does the dumb region deserve a Council?

After having said this, I am of the opinion that most of the emerging issues of underdevelopment, inequality and political empowerment arise as a result of a policy framework. This would continue even after the formation of political or geographical or even historically recognized regions. It would again create problems after some time. The issue of Telangana is unequivocal, and by this time everyone seems to have reconciled to the fact that separation is going to be a reality sooner or later. The problem appears to be about Hyderabad. I have already said something of a parallel situation in Visakhapatnam. The city is swamped by outsiders through a process of marginalization of the locals. But, the wealth created in the cities with the help of local resources does not belong to them nor do the locals have access to it. In fact, the problems of North Andhra are amplified only after the advent of liberalization and marginalization of public sector. It appears that in an underdeveloped region like North Andhra or Telangana or Rayalaseema, the (over) expansion of cities like Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Tirupathi should be regulated by the state and private ventures should be allowed only outside the swelling metropolitan centers.

We have an interesting proposal from Vizag. If the properties in Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam are transferred to state (like in China) and access to locals are given first priority (as they were earlier public or state properties and grabbed by

private individuals), half of the problem would be solved. This would also give protection to public/private properties from mafia control and the clamour for Hyderabad or Visakhapatnam or Tirupati would soon disappear as the notion of property has undergone a change through capitalization of market. One can live anywhere in the world and still own property. What is left is Telugu culture and identity, that is beyond state and national boundaries and we should all strive to accomplish it as our common property. Bengalis living across the border in Bangladesh and West Bengal have shown during the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore that language and culture band together humans more than religion. It is also reflected in the hegemonic culture of Anglo-Americans and therefore the Telugu speaking people need not worry about the division of state on administrative or other grounds.

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ministries. It is these middlemen who work on the greed of decision-makers and operate in secrecy. The CBI probe is for the present hampered by the non-co-operative attitude of the Italian bureaucracy and police. The Italian courts initially refused to share information. A CBI team is currently in Italy and hopefully it will succeed in ferretting out more information.

The government must realise that there have been too many scams in the last four years. In its own interest, it needs to allow the CBI to probe the latest exposure and bring the guilty to book. The 2014 elections are drawing near, and any more blows to the UPA credibility will impact adversely on its electoral fortunes,

India Today In European Views

Take the pains to read the following piece by Mohan Maruti, former Europe Director, CII, who lives in Cologne, Germany..., it is usually too much for us to face the truth...

–Suhaz Khale

A few days ago I was in a panel discussion on mergers and acquisitions in Frankfurt, Germany, organised by Euroforum and The Handelsblatt, one of the most prestigious newspapers in German-speaking Europe.

The other panelists were senior officials of two of the largest carmakers and two top insurance companies - all German multinationals operating in India.

The panel discussion was moderated by a professor from the esteemed European Business School. The hall had an audience that exceeded a hundred well-known European CEOs. I was the only Indian.

After the panel discussion, the floor was open for questions. That was when my moment of truth turned into an hour of shame & embarrassment when the participants fired questions and made remarks on their experiences with the evil of corruption in India. The awkwardness and humiliation I went through reminded of The Moment of Truth, the popular Anglo-American game. The more questions I answered truthfully, the more the questions got tougher. Tougher here means more embarrassing.

European disquiet

Questions ranged from - Is your nation in a coma?, the corruption in administration, even in judiciary, the possible impeachment of a judge, the 2G, telecom scam and to the money in billions, parked illegally in tax

havens.

It is a fact that the problem of corruption in India has assumed enormous and embarrassing proportions in recent years, although it has been with us for decades. The questions and the debate that followed in the panel discussion was indicative of the European disquiet. At the end of the Q&A session, I surmised Europeans perceive India to be at one of those junctures where tripping over the precipice cannot be ruled out.

Let me substantiate this further with what the European media has to say in recent days.

In a popular prime-time television discussion in Germany, the panelist, a member of the German Parliament quoting a blog said: If all the scams of the last five years are added up, they are likely to rival and exceed the British colonial loot of India of about a trillion dollars.

Banana Republic

One German business daily which wrote an editorial on India said: India is becoming a Banana Republic instead of being an economic superpower. To get the cut motion designated out, assurances are made to political allays. Special treatment is promised at the expense of the people. So, Ms Mayawati who is Chief Minister of the most densely inhabited state, is calmed when an intelligence agency probe is scrapped. The multi-million dollars fodder scam by another former chief minister wielding enormous power

is put in cold storage. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh chairs over this kind of unparalleled loot.

An article in a French newspaper titled 'Playing the Game, Indian Style' wrote: Investigations into the shadowy financial deals of the Indian cricket league have revealed a web of transactions across tax havens like Switzerland, the Virgin Islands, Mauritius and Cyprus. In the same article, the name of one Hassan Ali of Pune is mentioned as operating with his wife a one-billion-dollar illegal Swiss account with sanction of the Indian regime.

A third story narrated in the damaging article is that of the former chief minister of Jharkhand, Madhu Koda, who was reported to have funds in various tax havens that were partly used to buy mines in Liberia. Unfortunately, the Indian public do not know the status of that enquiry, the article concluded.

In the nastiest business scam in Indian records (Satyam) the government adroitly covered up the political aspects of the swindle predominantly involving real estate, wrote an Austrian newspaper. If the Indian Prime Minister knows nothing about these scandals, he is ignorant of ground realities and does not deserve to be Prime Minister. If he does, is he a collaborator in crime?

The Telegraph of the UK reported the 2G scam saying: Naturally, India's elephantine legal system will ensure culpability, is delayed.

Blinded by wealth

This seems true. In the European mind, caricature of a typical Indian encompasses qualities of falsification, telling lies, being fraudulent, dishonest, corrupt, arrogant, boastful, speaking loudly and bothering others in public places or, while travelling, swindling when the slightest of opportunity arises and spreading rumours about others. The list is truly incessant.

My father, who is 81 years old, is utterly frustrated, shocked and disgruntled with whatever is happening and said in a recent discussion that our country's motto should truly be changed to *Asatyameva Jayate*.

Europeans believe that Indian leaders in politics and business are so blissfully blinded by the new, sometimes ill-gotten, wealth and deceit that they are living in defiance, insolence and denial to comprehend that the day will come, sooner than later, when the have-nots would hit the streets.

In a way, it seems to have already started with the monstrous and grotesque acts of the Maoists. And, when that rot occurs, not one political turncoat will escape being lynched.

The drumbeats for these rebellions are going to get louder and louder as our leaders refuse to listen to the voices of the people. Eventually, it will lead to a revolution that will spill to streets across the whole of India, I fear.

Perhaps we are the architects of our own misfortune. It is our *sab chalta hai* (everything goes) attitude that has allowed people to mislead us with impunity.

No wonder Aesop said. 'We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to high office.'

Invisible World of Domestic Workers Exposed at Public Hearing

The hand that feeds, cares for children, keeps the house clean and shining is often left unattended, uncared for and at times bruised and beaten. That's the world of domestic workers working in lakhs of Delhi homes, striving to earn a dignified living and raising a family in the 21st century rising India. Domestic work, an increasing necessity in this era of globalisation, expanding horizons for women, opening up opportunities but also creating a class of working slaves in mills, offices and homes. The emerging reality is contradictory like capitalism itself where a certain class of women have gained prominence, access to diversified jobs and equality in jobs and pay but on the other hand, the women in domestic work and in the unorganised and unprotected sector have to strive for basic facilities like minimum wages, fixed hours of work, holidays, bonus and most importantly value of their work, respect and recognition, something which workers of the world struggled to achieve in the 20th century. These issues were raised by 30 women who deposed before a panel comprising of Kalyani Menon Sen, Kalpana Mehta, Subhash Lomte, Bilas Bhongade, Tarun Kanti Bose, Aneema and Neelima in a public hearing on the theme 'Women in the Unorganised (Unprotected) Sector in the Era of Globalization' organised by Shahri Mahila Kaamgar Union, an affiliate of National Alliance of People's Movements at Indian Social Institute on February 11. The hearing was attended by nearly 250 domestic workers from Gautampuri, Rohini, Faridabad, and other colonies of Delhi and some others from Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

"I have been working for 28 years and only get Rs. 1200. When I fell sick, my employers did not give me leave to go to a doctor. I am close to 50 years and find it difficult to continue doing this work. I do not get any medical benefits nor pension. What will happen to me I wonder? How will I survive?" asks a disillusioned Asha, one of the deponents in the gathering.

Anita who is now part of the Shahri Mahila Kaamgar Union narrated how she was brought to the city by a placement agent. "I come from a poor family. In 2011, a placement agent convinced my parents to send me to Delhi for a better life. I was only 14 years and had to leave school. I did not want to do this work but had no option. Many times I wanted to leave but the agent forced me to continue working. Finally, I was rescued by the Union"

From the panelists, Subhash Lomte throwing light on how young girls are brought from villages to city with the promise of a better life and education said that "we must continue to fight for equal wages and pension". The minimum wage should be adjusted to inflation and the pension amount should be at least Rs. 2000. The age for women pensioners should be 50 years and for men it should be 55 years. The pension amount for woman should get directly transferred to her bank account so that it is not misused by her husband. He urged the domestic workers from Delhi to gather at Jantar Mantar on 6th March and raise the issue of a 'minimum wage' with the government.

“We all have to sell our labour but we cannot sell our labour without your labour” said Kalpana Mehta, a panelist from Indore as she addressed the gathering. “Always remember that the work you do is extremely important without which our homes will not function” she added while stressing the need to give value and respect to domestic work.

The gathering passed the following resolutions at the end of the hearing:

A uniform law needs to be made for the welfare of domestic workers. Until then Minimum Wages Act and other Labour laws must be applied to this category of workers too.

A body comprising of representatives from the government and domestic workers needs to be set up to monitor their real situation.

The minimum wages, working hours and time of remuneration should be fixed for Domestic Workers.

Complete profiling of all urban workers, their employers and all organizations linked to them should be done. A government agency should be set up for this purpose.

Other than weekly, monthly, yearly and sick leave, provisions should be made for emergency leave also for domestic workers. Pregnant workers should be given special leave of three months. All these leaves should be paid.

Strict punishment should be given to all those employers, placement agents and police personnel who subject domestic workers to physical, sexual and other kinds of abuse.

Other than financial aid, the government should provide other kinds of human support to those

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Reforming the State

Harsh Mander

India’s higher civil services are today in conditions of grave decline, both in public estimation and in its outcomes of tangible public service. In an engaging recent study for the National Social Watch, scholar-administrator N. C. Saxena suggests an imaginative but eclectic range of solutions for administrative reforms, including a greater focus on policy outcomes; linking transfers of funds with performance by state governments; and enhancing accountability outward to society and citizens, rather than inward and upward within the government. In this and a later column, I will look at some of his more important suggestions in his monograph, especially ways to make it more responsive and accountable to disadvantaged populations.

Saxena often stresses that it is not the size of public expenditure on pro-poor services, but the effectiveness with which it is ‘translated into public goods and services that reach the poor’ that creates impacts on poverty and social outcomes. He does a simple back-of-the-envelope calculation: “Government of India transfers close to Rs.6.5 lakh crore rupees every year to the States. If even half of it was to be sent to the seven crore poor families directly by money order, they would receive more than Rs.130 a day!”

Saxena suggests first that the central government uses fiscal transfers, which he estimates (excluding major subsidies) to be currently around Rs.6 lakh crore, to pressurize states to

undertake governance reforms. He proposes a “good governance index” based on ‘infant mortality rate, extent of immunization, literacy rate for women, sex ratio, feeding programmes for children, availability of safe drinking water supply, electrification of rural households, rural and urban unemployment, percentage of girls married below 18 years, percentage of villages not connected by all weather roads, number of class I government officials prosecuted and convicted for corruption, and so on’. Fiscal transfers to States should be based on their performance on this governance index.

The difficulties for me with this suggestion are two-fold: one is that it presumes that governance is better in the Centre compared to states, for which there is little consistent evidence. Some states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala have consistently outpaced central governments in pro-poor governance. And I find it doubly unjust to punish people living in poorly governed states with lower allocations, because of the sub-optimal performance of their governments for which they cannot be blamed. However, his related suggestions, of expanding allocations for the social sector, and improving budgetary processes to ensure timely and transparent budget and fund flows are unexceptionable.

He further suggests the simplifications of laws and policies which affect the poor. “It is a sad commentary on our laws,” he points out, “that the informal sector, which

provides maximum employment, is mostly declared as illegal and subject to the whims of law enforcing agencies. Almost all occupations in the urban informal sector, such as hawking and small manufacturing in residential areas are illegal!" He further observes that "de-regulation has made almost no impact at the State level", on buying and selling land, getting a ration card, renting one's house, all need a thorough revision. "One can set up an industry worth billions of rupees in India without any license today, but a farmer can neither set up a brick kiln unit, nor a rice shelling plant, and not even cut a tree standing on his own private field without bribing several officials. A simple operation of converting prosopis (a shrub occurring everywhere in states like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, the more you cut it the more it grows) into charcoal, which can give employment to thousands of people requires four different permissions!"

Saxena lists a large menu for civil service reforms. There are many redundant positions, especially at senior levels, which should be eliminated, and "only such posts where people can contribute" retained. In addition, key public services — education, healthcare, police and judiciary — are starved of people, whereas many wings are overstaffed: about 70 per cent of all government employees are support staff unrelated to public service — drivers, peons and clerks. He suggests that efforts should be made to identify surplus staff, set up an effective re-deployment and skill up-gradation plan, and devise a liberal system for exit.

He suggests many other personnel reforms. One which would be politically resisted, but is critical

for the morale and protection of upright officers, is ensuring stability of tenure and a committee system to decide transfers. The perks attached to all postings should be the same, and preferably monetized, so people do not cling to some positions even at the expense of their conscience. Officers are also tempted by post-retirement sinecures, which he suggests should be severely curtailed. Many departments are fragmented and should be rationalized. The number of officers at higher levels should be reduced by encouraging lateral depositions to NGOs, educational and research institutions.

There is also need to reduce official discretion, in matters such as awarding contracts. Where discretion is necessary,

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is the best way to resolve problems in a democracy. In fact, it is the only way to reach decisions which are acceptable to everybody. It further asserted that dialogue is primary meant for building consensus, avoiding conflicts through collective efforts. What separates democracy from other political philosophies is the principle and practice of solving differences first and foremost through dialogue.

It is therefore important for believers and practitioners of democratic politics to adopt the political culture of dialogue. This practice could be followed within and across the organizations, between the leaders and the masses. With the rising consciousness and activism among the civil societies, it will be unwise for the leadership in any democracy to ignore the masses, the common people. As has been evident

this should be accompanied by strong systems of transparency and social audit. Technology can be deployed to improve transparency and predictability, such as by computerizing land reforms.

Saxena also proposes institutional measures to encourage greater professionalism and career-long learning of civil servants. In the absence of this, there is "exponential growth in both, his (or her) ignorance and arrogance". He adds with wry humour: "It is said that in the house of an IAS officer one would find only three books — the railway timetable because he is always being shunted from one post to the other, a film magazine because that is his level of interest, and of course, the civil list that describes the service hierarchy!"

—The Hindu

recently, the civil society unrest is making the leadership helpless. Therefore, sooner the leadership is attuned to the dialogue process, it is better for them and for democracy.

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domestic workers who are crisis-struck.

All kind of middlemen and contractors should be removed between domestic workers and their employers.

To ensure security of livelihood, domestic workers and their families should be given insurance by the government

Along with an annual bonus and future investment options, annual wage increase adjusted with inflation should be given to these workers.

—Anita Kapoor, Poonam,
Madeena Begum

Kejriwal, Ambani and media

I am enclosing below an important letter by Arvind to Mukesh Ambani in the context of their threat to the media for airing our PCs against Ambani. You will find it interesting. It needs to be circulated widely through email and the net, since barring the Hindu, most of the mainstream media appears to be afraid to carry it.

–Prashant Bhushan

Dear Mr Mukesh Ambani,

You have recently sent a defamation notice to a number of TV channels. Their “crime” is that they aired the press conference held on the 31st October 2012 and 9th November 2012, by Prashant Bhushan and me, live. In our press conference, we presented before the country how you had illegally pressurized the government into increasing gas prices. We also told the country that your associates and your companies have accounts in Swiss banks where black money had been stashed away. Many TV channels aired our expose live. All these TV channels have now received defamation notices from you.

I find it quite perplexing. If you felt that you have been defamed by what Prashant Bhushan and I said, then we are the real culprits and, if you had to send a defamation notice, it should have been to us. The TV channels merely broadcast what we said. Despite this, instead of sending us the defamation notice, you have sent it to the TV channels. It is evident that your sole purpose of sending this notice was to steamroll the TV channels into subservience.

The people of India want to ask you some straight questions:

Is it not true that the list of those who have accounts in Swiss Banks, as received by the Government

of India, includes your name and the names of your relatives, your friends and your companies?

- Is it not true that a balance of Rs. 100 crores is shown against your name in this list?
- Is it not true that you have paid the tax on this amount after this list was received by the Government?

If the above is true, as we suspect it is, it proves that you have admitted your guilt. As per the law of the land, you should be tried and, if the charge of tax evasion is proved, you should be sent to jail.

However, this would never happen. Why? Because the Government of India is intimidated by you. You have been reported as saying that the Congress Party has been bought by you – it is your *dukaan*, to be precise. You are right. according to some media reports, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi sometimes travels by your personal aircraft. People believe that Mr. Jaipal Reddy’s ministry was also changed because of your influence.

Why only the Congress? Even BJP and many other parties are in your pocket. Earlier, Mr. Advani used to make a lot of noise about Swiss Bank accounts, but since your accounts have been exposed, BJP has suddenly gone quiet. BJP has not mentioned a single word in

the Parliament about your accounts.

It appears that almost all parties are afraid of you. Most leaders are scared of you, too. However, the citizens of this country are not scared of you. All parties could be your *dukaan* but India is not up for sale. India is ours, it belongs to the people of this country. You can purchase political parties and political leaders with your money but we will not let India be sold.

You say that the TV channels have tainted your reputation by airing our press conference live. That’s wrong. I would urge you to answer this question honestly - Did Prashant Bhushan, myself and the TV Channels defame you or did you defame yourself through your own misdeeds?

1. In 2002, you gave 1 Crore shares with a market price of Rs. 55 per share to Mr. Pramod Mahajan at just Rs. 1 per share. This was a straight bribe to get “Full Mobility”. When you were caught, you took back the shares. Presently, the matter is *In court*. Didn’t you defame yourself by doing this?
2. You have made your multistoreyed residence on Wakf land. This land had been set aside for an orphanage. You have stolen the right of poor and orphaned Muslim children. Didn’t you defame yourself by doing this?

3. A few gas wells belonging to the Country were allotted to you in 2000. You were supposed to extract gas and give it to the government. The gas belongs to us, the people of India. We are the owners of this gas. You were only a contractor appointed to extract the gas. However, cleverly you became the owner of the gas. You started “selling” the gas to the government.

Because the Congress is in your pocket, it always bowed before your bullying. The Congress kept increasing the price of gas under your pressure and the nation kept wailing. Because of you, the prices of electricity, fertilizer and cooking gas kept rising. When it crossed all limits, Mr. Jaipal Reddy opposed you. He was the Minister for Oil and Gas at that time. You got Mr. Jaipal Reddy transferred. Because of you many things have become increasingly expensive in India and the people are groaning under the load of these high prices. Do these shenanigans suit you? Do such acts not defame you?

The list of such illegal acts done by you is quite long.

The majority of the traders, businessmen and industrialists want to do their work honestly. But the system forces them into wrongdoings. But when a businessman like you brazenly subverts the system for his personal benefit, the entire industry and business world gets a bad name.

You are on one side with immense wealth. On the other side are the people of this country. The people have now awakened. Fire is raging in their heart. History is witness that whenever there has been a clash

(Continued on Page 16)

Strange spectacle

Pannalal Surana

Rich people clamouring for State aid and concessions.

Scams after scams are coming to light. Some MNCs and Indigenous capitalists are being taken to task for evading taxes and failing to repay loans of crores of rupees taken from the nationalized banks. Prudence demands that stringent action be taken against the defaulters. Frightened capitalist lobby is raising the bogey that all this will spoil the investment climate and flow of foreign capital will further shrink. They are appealing to the rulers to be more liberal and accommodative, which means the defaulting moneybags be left alone. No punishment to be meted out to them.

Feeling anxious that a few taxes on the rich sections will be enhanced in the ensuing budget, various chambers of commerce and industries are advancing spacious pleas for not doing so.

And some proponents of free trade are asking for laws that would facilitate allocation of lands, public as well as those belonging to the farmers, to the industrial enterprises. Labour laws must be amended substantially so that the employers can hire and fire the labourers at their sweet will. When all this would be done by the State, then the capitalists will perform miracles of accelerating growth in GDP.

We the socialists who subscribe to Dr. Lohia's slogan of “Equality with abundance”, should exert pressure on the policy makers not to be carried away by the prodding of the rich. Strict financial discipline within

administration and in the market at large must be enforced. Tax collection should be scrupulously done. Evaders must be severely punished. As also all those involved in various scams. The wealth is created not by the moneyed people but by the toilers in the fields and factories and the vast unorganized sector. For their benefit, PDS must be run vigorously. The scheme of cash transfers should be restricted to petrol and cooking gas. It should not be applied to the PDS. That scheme is to be carried on for enabling the farmers to get reasonable, if not remunerative, prices for their produce. It embodies their sweat, tears and also blood. We demand of Jairam Ramesh, Union Minister for Rural Development, not to effect cut in the budgetary provision on that head because, as it is already much less than what is required to be done for accelerating agricultural production and providing social services to the rural poor.

The policy-makers should pay more attention to the problem of greatly increasing deficit in the balance of payments. It is reported that the exports have increased a little over the last year; but imports have increased manifold, thanks to oil and gold. Stringent steps must be taken to curtail consumption of fossilized fuel and much more attention be paid to harnessing solar and wind energies.

The obsession with the development model of the West is
(Continued on Page 16)

Political Economy of Gender and Climate Change

Vibhuti Patel

Gender Concerns in Climate Change need serious attention of all interested in sustainable development. Women in many developing countries are responsible for climatically sensitive tasks such as securing food, water and energy which ensure the life and well-being of the households. The effects of climate change have been droughts, floods, coastal erosion, sea level rise and rising temperatures. Devastating impact of climate change puts greater pressure on women to shoulder the adverse consequences on the households.

Economics of Gender and Development sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women. Ecofeminism emerged in the mid-1970s alongside second-wave feminism and the green movement. Ecofeminism brings together elements of the feminist and green movements, while at the same time offering a challenge to both. It takes from the green movement concern about the impact of human activities on the non-human world, and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that subordinate, exploit and oppress women. It is both an activist and academic movement which see critical connections between the domination of nature and the exploitation of women. Ecofeminist activism grew during the 1980s and 1990s among women from the anti-nuclear, environmental and women's rights movements.

"Ecofeminists say 'no more waiting'... We are in a state of emergency and must do something about it now... around the world, economies, cultures and natural resources are plundered, so that 20 percent of the world's population (privileged North Americans and Europeans) can continue to consume 80 percent of its resources in the

name of progress." Our aim is to go beyond this narrow perspective and to express our diversity and, in different ways, address the inherent inequalities in world structures which permit the North to dominate the South, men to dominate women, and the frenetic plunder of ever more resources for ever more unequally distributed economic gain to dominate nature... Everywhere, women were the first to protest against environmental destruction. It became clear to us, activists in the ecology movements, that science and technology were not gender neutral. As with many other women, we began to see that the relationship of exploitative dominance between man and nature (shaped by reductionist modern science since the 16th century) and the exploitative and oppressive relationship between men and women which prevails in most patriarchal societies, even modern industrial ones, were closely connected."

Male Domination in the Discourse

The impacts of climate change on women are not a mainstream focus in the key international agreements on climate change such as the Kyoto Protocol and the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change). All key decision-making institutions related to climate change have a male-dominated

hierarchical structure.

The report, *Facing a Changing world: Women, Population and Climate*, released on 9-11-2009 by the UN highlights "With the possibility of a climate catastrophe on the horizon, we cannot afford to relegate the world's 3.4 billion women and girls to the role of victim," United Nations Population Fund chief Thoraya Ahmed Obaid said. "Wouldn't it make more sense to have 3.4 billion agents for change?"

Gender as a Factor of Vulnerability

The UNFPA study reveals that the poorest populations while having contributed the least to climate change are the most vulnerable to the crisis. Women are the poorest of the poor. It is estimated that women produce over 50 percent of all food grown worldwide. Climate disaster is perhaps the most inequitable threat of our time. Worst sufferers are women because they constitute major share of agricultural work force and also because they tend to have access to fewer income-earning opportunities.

The impact of climate change on women is of particular significance in Pacific Island Nations Climatic conditions and extreme events - droughts, floods, sea level rise and coastal erosion, rising temperatures

- will hurt food security and the well-being of Pacific Islanders, with women bearing the brunt of the impact due to the responsibility held by women with Pacific communities in relation to food security and the well-being of a household.

Plight of Asian women has been aggravated by climate change. Noting that about 2.2 billion Asians rely on agriculture for their livelihoods, the sector is now threatened by falling crop yields caused by floods, droughts, erratic rainfall and other climate change impacts. The UNFPA Report avers, "Current climate models indicate food prices may increase sharply, rice prices by 29-37 per cent, maize prices by 58-97 per cent and wheat prices by 81-102 per cent by 2050". In this context, women are forced to shoulder the heaviest burden of food inflation as provider of food in the family.

Indian Experience

In India, more than 84 percent of women are involved in agricultural activities, and as a result they become the greatest victims of climate change's impact. In addition, gender inequality makes them disproportionately vulnerable to environmental alterations.

Indian women are extremely vulnerable to climate change. As women are often responsible for providing daily essentials such as food and water, when climate-related disasters strike the poorest families, the workload of women and girls increases and they tend to miss out on opportunities. Studies have shown that Indian women born during a drought or a flood in the 1970s were 19 percent less likely to ever attend primary school. As climate change intensifies India's

poorest women and girls are at risk of losing opportunities to participate equally in development. At the same time, many poor women are involved in "climate sensitive" activities such as paddy cultivation or fishing. Climate change has affected their livelihoods.

Differential Impact

It is predicted that climate change will lead to increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather conditions, precipitating the occurrence of natural disasters around the globe. A London School of Economics study in 2007 examined natural disasters that had occurred in 141 countries from 1981-2002. The study found that natural disasters lower the life expectancy of women, and as the disaster intensifies so too does this effect.

Women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men during natural disasters and are otherwise disproportionately adversely affected and 85 percent of people who die from disasters are women. (<http://www.wedo.org/category/learn/campaigns/climatechange>). It was reported that 70-80 percent of casualties in the 2004 Asian tsunami were women and 90 percent of the casualties in the 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh were women. It was found that 83 percent of low-income, single mothers were displaced in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Increased Workload

Because of women's role in the household, women have to cope with swift environmental changes for centuries. However, climate change is lessening women's capacity to cope with these changes. And when women are not able to adapt to their environment entire communities suffer. (Source: WEDO)

Climate change exacerbates issues of scarcity and lack of accessibility to primary natural resources, forest resources, and arable land, thereby contributing to increased workload and stresses on women and girls as well as increased conflict and instability which often leads to increased violence against women and girls.

Women possess a unique capacity and knowledge to promote and provide for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, but often have insufficient resources to undertake such initiatives.

Women are constrained by a lack of economic freedom, property and inheritance rights, as well as access to financial resources, education, and new tools, equipment, and technology. Women are underrepresented in the development and formulation of policy and decision-making in regards to adaptations and mitigation of climate change.

Political Inequality

Compounding this reality is the widespread gender inequity existing throughout the policy-and decision-making spheres, leaving women to struggle against restricted access to information and education, restricted mobility, and in many cases laws restricting or prohibiting land ownership.

Women are producing 60 percent of food in Asia and 80 percent in Africa, yet women have access to 1 percent of agricultural credit worldwide. (Source: WEDO)

Martina Longom, Village Woman, Karamuja, Uganda states, "we travel further and further for firewood every year, and it takes us to less safe places...". Deforestation

in Uganda amplifies already dire conditions. The local women's group in Caicaoan addresses this problem by planting evergreen and mango trees to replace ones cut down for fuel and charcoal reducing erosion and helping people earn a living. Martina Lungom is a strong advocate of the role education can play in the fight against climate change. States Blogger Pricilla Stuckey, in *This Lively Earth*, "Discrimination against women also plays an enormous role in how women experience the effects of climate change. In India, for example, where women have seen their crop yields cut in half and the quality of grain diminishes because of climate changes, women's health is impaired from the double whammy of inferior crops and inequality.

Climate Change has made the search for livelihoods tougher, created greater food insecurity, caused sharp declines in the quality of life, and triggered mass migrations. The HDR also highlighted micro-level studies which had revealed that Indian women born during floods in the 1970s were 19 per cent less likely to have attended primary school. So clearly the vagaries of climate change have the potential to make life a high-risk venture for those whose capacity to manage these risks, in terms of both personal choice and personal income is minimal.

Lessons of Chipko and Appiko

The women of Reni village in Chamoli district who took on the forest mafia through their Chipko movement in the mid-70s, or the Bhil tribal women of Madhya Pradesh's Sondwa Block, who are today patrolling their forests to defeat the designs of those intent

on denuding them. With able-bodied men searching for livelihood opportunities in the cities, more women than ever are left to do low paying agricultural jobs, including activity earlier prohibited to them, like ploughing.

Gouri Bai belongs to a small hamlet in Bundelkhand. Being a part of the farming community, her life and livelihood depend on agriculture. But changing weather and decreasing water for irrigation are threatening her survival. The vagaries of nature have left her steeped in debt and poverty.

Shyamali Das from the Sunderbans in West Bengal has been witness to many cyclones that have struck the area in recent times. Cyclonic storms flooded vast tracts of farm land, which remained inundated for a long time. As member of a fishing community, she has suffered losses of 20 fish species. "Accept us and our knowledge as a base to adapt and mitigate climatic changes."

Global Success Stories

Wangarai Maathai, Winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize successfully implemented The Greenbelt Movement in Kenya, one of the leading worldwide climate change projects.

Sahena Begum spearheads community efforts in her village in Bangladesh and focuses on preparing women for disasters, giving them tools and basic skills to survive and prepare for the floods and cyclones that frequent her village and that are getting increasingly worse and more unpredictable.

Women are pivotal to the efforts to control erosion due to land degradation in the rural community

of Keur Moussa, Senegal under the framework of the Agrobio Niayes Program by ENDA Pronat.

Women are also involved in building vegetation fascines, infiltration ditches, and open trenches to slow water speed. This has not only helped to save the agriculture but also reduced the time women spend getting water and women have been able to trade herbal plants. Adaptation programs like these that specifically target and involve women allow women to develop capacity as well as increase the capacity of the communities these women support.

Gender economists firmly believe that aggregating local knowledge and recent breakthroughs in agricultural and environmental R&D, and using the insights so gained for better management of natural resources. The sharing of information as efficiently as possible emerged as an urgent and pressing requirement, whether it was in the form of advance bulletins on weather patterns or timely data on market trends. Farmer Sita Debi says in blog *Find Your Feet*, "When there is no rain, we women have to work really hard in the fields to try and grow crops. Our nutrition also suffers because we are the last to eat at the family table. A lot of us are anemic as a result. Women have to walk long distances for potable water, Fodder becomes scarce and Fuel wood cannot be availed."

As primary caregivers, women may see their responsibilities increase as family members suffer increased illness due to exposure to vector borne diseases such as malaria, water borne diseases such as cholera and increase in heart stress mortality. Increased malnutrition

and Stressful life enhance morbidity levels among women.

Response to the Corporate World

Food is a human right and not a corporate commodity for speculation. Mother nature does not operate on a boardroom profit. Corporate profit will merely lead to more food crisis.

An inspiring experience of Indian women to mitigate the effects of Climate Change merits attention. In Zaheerabad, dalit women forming the lowest rung of India's stratified society, now demonstrate adaptation to climate change by following a system of interspersing crops that do not need extra water, chemical inputs or pesticides for production. They grow 19 types of indigenous crops to an acre, on arid, degraded lands that they have regenerated. A collective of 5,000 women spread across 75 villages in this arid, interior part of southern India is now offering a chemical-free, non-irrigated, organic agriculture as one method of combating global warming.

Vast Renewable Energy Potential could help in responding to this scenario, provided "policy and finance measures quickly scale-up proven technologies for the poor, including small hydro and solar power". Promotion of Rain water harvesting, decentralised water bodies, recycling and reusing resources must become our way of life. Efforts such as Green Belt movement in Africa and Bhoogyan in South Asia need to be universalized. Bhoogyan as an Integrated Knowledge System on Climate Change Adaptation by Oneworld.org is designed to cater to the needs of communities

vulnerable to the dangerous impacts of climate change. This web-based technology solution provides contextual knowledge on local and indigenous coping strategies to grassroots communities through multiple delivery channels, including the mobile, internet and radio. Communities in turn access on-demand knowledge through mobiles, based on geographical specifics and in local language, on crucial adaptation and risk reduction measures.

(Continued from Page 12)

between money and such rage, the rage has won.

Kindly do not try to intimidate the media of this country. There may be some mediemen who may have done wrong things themselves. Such media-persons may succumb to your pressure. However, the majority of media persons keep the interest of the Country at heart even today. They are not going to capitulate so easily. History is witness that whenever the judiciary, bureaucracy and legislature crumbled, it is the honest fourth pillar, comprising such media-persons that kept democracy alive.

You have invested in some media houses directly or indirectly. It is possible that these media houses do your bidding. However, the journalists working for such media houses will not barter their integrity so easily.

What is your dream? Do you want to become the world's richest person through dishonesty? Suppose you became the owner of all the wealth in this country. Would that make you happy? Happiness does


not increase by accumulating more and more wealth. Happiness comes with sacrifice. If you stopped doing business dishonestly and contributed your wealth for the development of the nation, this country will remember you with pride forever.

With regards,
—Arvind Kejriwal

(Continued from Page 12)

causing great harm to our country. All out efforts must be initiated to forge alternative model of according high priority to primary sector of farming, dairy, forestry, fishery and evolving decentralized industries harnessing optimum technology. Much more support be extended to the cooperative method of management. Let us take a realistic view of the situation and try to make life less miserable for the teeming millions.

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Practical and pragmatic

S. Viswam

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The Maturing of Bodo Dream
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Good politics need not always be good economics also. Bad politics on the other hand often turns out to be good economics. It is not often that politics and economics are made to function on the same wavelength. In this sense, Railway Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal may well have achieved the unlikely and the unexpected. He has spared rail passengers further imposts but at the same time the railways are to levy imposts in the form of what the Opposition has described as “hidden taxes”. For the first time a railway minister has chosen to be more practical and pragmatic at the cost of populism.

Shri Bansal is the first Congress minister to present a rail budget in 17 years. It was only to be expected that he would choose to be populist and avoid all kinds of levies especially as elections will fall due next year. In the event, he has struck to the middle path. On the face of it, he is not being populist. But let us not forget that it was only last month, on January 21 to be exact, that he raised fares aiming to mop up Rs.6, 600 crores. If he had raised fares again soon thereafter, he would have been guilty of vindictiveness. Instead,

he has chosen to be innovative. There is a strong school of thought which believes and has believed right from the early days of freedom that railways and civil aviation, and a handful of other nation-building activities (shipping, road transport, etc) need not be administered by a minister. In other words, they are only departments not involving policy decisions other than in the acquisition of software and hardware. There are many nations that do not have ministers for all areas of activities. And they have done far better in the development of such activities under an efficient manager.

Free India has only had to build on the basic infrastructure raised by the British. Bansal claimed a historic role for the railways as a unifier of the country. True, the railways cut across regions, castes, languages and cover a lot of geography. Despite six decades of endeavour the railways do not have much to boast about. True, railway statistics are mind-boggling. Indian railways are the world's third largest network, but the size alone is its best and biggest qualification. In all other respects, there are shortcomings galore. Safety, comfort, amenities,

cleanliness and hygiene, are some of the shortcomings. But, in this day and age, when the nation has swung forward in communication, space and other technologies, it has yet to catch up with other parts of the world in regard to the speed in rail travel. We still chug along at a maximum of 150 kms per hour in fast track (super fast) trains and a minimum of 40-50 kms an hour in mail, express and passenger trains. France's fastest train runs at the incredible speed of 320 kms/hour, with Belgium, Germany, China and Japan close behind at a maximum of 300 kms/hour. Do we need bullet trains? There could be differences on this question in India. Maybe, there will be a strong opinion against super-high speeds for rail travel in a country where millions get born and die without ever having boarded a rail coach, or for that matter, an aircraft, a cruiser or even an airconditioned luxury bus. On the other hand, bullet trains have come to be seen as a symbol of development. This raises the question whether India can afford the luxury of such high development when really speaking our priorities should still be linked to roti, kapda aur makan...

Bansal's exercise has been described by the opposition as pedestrian, anti-development, anti-poor, and lacking in vision. The present opposition has made it a policy to criticize the government regardless of whether the criticism itself has any merit or not. We do not share the opposition's view. There are, certainly, some redeeming features in Bansal's budget. First, unlike all his predecessors, Bansal has not gone out of his way to benefit his constituency at the expense of

What's Your Net-Worth?

Jawaharlal Jasthi

When the budget is in the offing it is but natural that many interested groups try to catch the attention of the revered Finance Minister and submit their proposals for consideration. But when these representations acquire the tone of warnings it sounds: there is something wrong – either with the government or with the lobbying group. Of course, nobody wants to be taxed, if only it could be avoided. But if we want a government, we have to bear the burden of taxes.

In one of his meetings the Finance Minister has just indicated that he is thinking in terms of increasing tax rate on higher income groups. The hell broke loose. The media, particularly the press, is full of advises, amounting to warnings, against such a move. They go to the extent of suggesting that the so-called entrepreneurs, on whom the entire progress of the country depends, may leave the country in search of safer havens – just as Kamal Haasan has indicated.

Taxation is an instrument in the hands of a government not only to earn income, but also as a means of social engineering – if only they have a vision of their own. Nobody questions the fact that there are inequalities in the society, particularly the inequalities in economic conditions. One way of reducing these inequalities is taxing higher income earners at a higher rate than the lower income groups. It is a universally accepted principle. But the question is how much of inequality is to be allowed to resort to this discriminatory policy

of taxation. Recently, the President of Asian Development Bank has gone on record stating that the inequalities in India are not so much as to warrant higher rates of taxes on higher incomes. How does it sound? When such people are at the helm of development banks, the developing countries have to be more cautious. It is a suggestion that inequalities shall be allowed to grow further before resorting to higher taxation. But, it is a matter of common sense that the same argument will be put forth whenever such a proposal is made. There is no standard criterion to determine the taxable level. Tax is always a matter of discretion and not of equity.

It is necessary that inequalities must be as less as possible, because inequality cannot be avoided completely. It is a necessary evil, as much of an evil as government itself is. Arguments are made as if the whole process of development is entirely dependent on the investments made by the so-called High Net-worth Individuals (HNIs). That is why they must be respected and honored and to tax them is uneconomic. Taxing, first of all, is denigrated as a populist measure, which implies that there is no economic sense in it and it is meant to satisfy the other less worthy income groups. And so the economists and those who want progress should not support it. Populist policies depend on various political and social factors. But speaking economically, it is necessary to verify the merits and demerits of it from an economic point of view.

(Continued on Page 3)

It is argued and accepted that in India, according to the Standing Committee's Report on the Direct Tax Code a little over four lakh individuals, earning more than Rs. 20 lakhs of rupees, constitute only 1 percent of tax payers but they contribute 63 percent of the total personal tax collected. So, it is suggested, it is necessary to save them from the burden of further taxes. But it also is proof enough that 1 percent of individuals have so much of wealth and earning capacity in their hands. It is also to be noted that this 1 percent is the percentage of tax paying people. If we take the total population into consideration it becomes a miniscule percentage - in the society as a whole the inequality is too high. Is it wrong to expect a bit more of tax from HINs?

But it is suggested that, in addition to paying taxes, they are contributing more to the economy. It is pointed out that HNIs in India are pivotal to the economic growth of the country. According to a publication of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) 95 percent of business enterprises in India are owned by families. This 95 percent includes more than half of what constitutes BSE30 companies. We know that the BSE30 includes the big and very big companies under the control of industrial houses like – Ambanis, Tatas, Birlas, Mallyas, GMRs, etc. It is suggested that these are so benevolent in establishing the industries and help in generating employment which will be affected if tax on them is increased. To know the truth, it is better if we peep into the balance sheets of these companies. They may be holding majority of shares in their companies, but out of the total money (investment) involved in each of the companies, the investment

from these families is very less. Most of the investment comes from the public or public sector in some form or other. The system helps them to keep the management control under their thumbs. Look at the companies like the Kingfisher Airlines or Deccan Chronicle group or any other company of that stature. They manage to corner thousands of crores of investment from the banks to which ordinary entrepreneurs have no access. They grew to the level of "Too big to fail" which means that their failure will be the failure of economy itself. That is why the lenders are afraid of taking any action and the government is afraid to precipitate any action that is prescribed under the prevailing situations.

It is an open secret that the industries are not established to generate employment. Economic viability and profitability are the criteria to establish any industry. By projecting employment potential they get all incentives from the government and banks and claim they have done a great service to the nation. Profits are privatized and losses are socialized. It is suggested that any increase in taxes will kill the enthusiasm to earn more and there will be no investment and so no growth. But it is futile to suggest that anybody will refuse to earn just to avoid tax liability. Tax is always a minor part of the total income. If the tax rate is increased, say by 5%, is it such a burden that there will be no surplus left for investment?

It is also suggested that the financial needs of government can be met by avoiding wasteful expenditure and corruption. It is true and appreciated. But it could be an argument to refuse donations and to run charitable organisations. It can

be said that by unloading much of social responsibility on voluntary social organisations, the government is diverting funds to uneconomic routes. It is public knowledge that there is no fiscal discipline with the government. But we cannot thrive without a government. We can only try to improve the system. But it is an entirely different issue.

There is also a warning that the entrepreneurs may migrate to countries like Singapore or Switzerland if taxes are increased. They do not dare to do it now itself, not because of tax levels, but because they know pretty well they cannot do there what they are doing here. Unlike India, these are the countries that mean business and implement the law in letter and spirit. The hobby of playing with the law is not available there. Those threats are quite hollow.

In spite of it if the Finance Minister submits a budget that is devoid of increase in taxes on higher incomes and HNIs, it will be proof enough that the crony capitalism has taken hold of the government.

(Continued from Page 2)

all other constituencies. Secondly, he has tried to be innovative. He is introducing a variable component in freight tariff to neutralize the impact of fuel costs increases. He has targeted only the more affluent among passengers, the section that prefers the higher classes. For them both reservation and cancellation will be more expensive. And like all his predecessors he has introduced more trains and rail links, taking the railways for the first time to Arunachal Pradesh.

*Between the lines***Kuldip Nayar**

A federal police?

Come to think of it, it was a small matter about the distribution of medals in 1980 to the police officers who had excelled themselves in their tasks. Yet the function blew out of proportion when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who had just returned to power, stopped the ceremony and walked out. She was annoyed because the officers had been recognized for their “courageous work” to punish those who had committed atrocities during the Emergency.

Medal ceremonies were only a routine job. The real casualty was the National Police Commission’s report which was presented to her at the function. The Commission, appointed after the Emergency, had worked hard for three years to suggest ways and means to depoliticize the police. She considered anything done when she was out of power a criticism of the Emergency when she ruled like a satrap. It was a good report but she threw the baby with the bath tub.

Thirty three years have gone by, but the report has got lost in the objections raised by the states and the centre’s lack of determination. Even the Supreme Court’s intervention to get the report implemented has produced no result. The court has advised the implementation of the recommendations. What comes in the way of the report is that the law and order is constitutionally a state subject. The centre cannot interfere in it because of the states’ autonomy. This has assumed importance today in the midst of bomb blasts at

Hyderabad and threats of terrorism elsewhere. The state blames the centre which, in turn, claims that it had warned Andhra Pradesh two days before the bomb blasts.

Apparently, the lack of coordination has led the bureaucracy to renew the proposal of National Counter Terrorism Centre for an overall control. Even in the diluted form it is a welcome step. The performance of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), set up despite protests from some states, has not been effective. Established after the 26/11 attacks on Mumbai, the NIA has taken up 11 cases with only two of them having made some headway. One case challenging the NIA’s jurisdiction is pending in the Bombay High Court and the other stuck elsewhere. Once again the question of demarcation of authority between the centre and the states has arisen.

Ordinarily, such a question should not have posed an intractable situation. The reason why no satisfactory solution emerged answer is the politicization of institutions. The government of different colours in the states fears that the centre has done little to efface the stigma of interference. The Sarkaria Commission report on Centre-State relations has found very few states implementing it. Once again, the fear is that the state would lose its identity.

The Congress is the most to blame for politicization. It has left no institution where it has not introduced

its bias. The party was the first to pick up anybody it liked and reward them by appointing to the gubernatorial post. For example, it introduced the dictum of consulting the states but not seeking their concurrence for appointing governors. This violated the spirit of the constitution. New Delhi has repeatedly argued that the constitution wanted it to consult the states concerned but not seek the concurrence. Gradually, even the sham of consultation has been dropped and the centre has started appointing governors directly. Politics has taken over norms. Naturally, such institutions have become effete.

The politicization of police takes the cake. The force is at the mercy of a chief minister of the state and he or she uses it like a private force. A recent example is that of West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee who removed the Director General of Police Ranjit Kumar Pachnanda then and there. The centre, not always for altruistic reasons, wants to oversee the police work in the states so that it keeps the finger in the pie.

Were the centre and the state to combine and pool their resources, they can really curb terrorism within the country or from across the border. At present, they seem to be working at cross purposes and not following the stray, useful information from some ordinary intelligence department. The post-analysis of so many bomb blasts have shown that if the stray intelligence had also been taken seriously, the bomb blast incidents probably could have been

stalled. In America, the coordinated command after the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington has kept the country free of terrorist acts. That is because a new central institution was constituted and given all powers to collect intelligence, decipher it and take necessary action without bringing in any politician in it. India can follow the example provided the states do not mistrust the centre and does not mix politics with the police. Yet the experience tells that the states are not bothered about the centre or the country's overall advantage so long as they

can keep their house clean. I recall that once in Kerala New Delhi had to use the IPS officers from the all India Service under the supervision of the centre to save the federal property like post offices from state-sponsored strike. No amount of plea on the point of federalism worked with Thiruvananthapuram. The IPS officers, however, did respond to the Centre's request which was otherwise constitutionally wanting. In fact, the country needs a federal police, on the pattern of America, so that crimes which transcend borders can be dealt with effectively.

This would particularly help in the instances of discrimination and denial to the lower castes, including the Other Backward Classes. The states for political reasons or the vote bank considerations do not act or act cursorily when it comes to central offences. The federal police should be autonomous, answerable to parliament, so that the ruling party at the centre does not lessen or exaggerate the crime for political considerations. In the light of increasing parochialism within the country, a federal police may provide the answer.

Fresh polls only answer

Everything under the Congress-led coalition at the Centre is going helter-skelter. Hardly does the bad smell of a scam settle down when another one crops up to foul the atmosphere. No government since independence has been so badly battered and shattered as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's has been. The Prime Minister himself exonerated the then Communications Minister, A Raja, now languishing in jail and facing 22 cases where the Prime Minister did not find even one. Yet, he is an honourable man, with not a spec of suspicion about his integrity.

Similar are the credentials of Defence Minister A.K. Anthony under whose charge the helicopter purchase deal was finalised with the reported kickbacks of roughly Rs. 34,000 crore, the highest ever for a single contract. Yet, the fact remains that Anthony rubbished the kickbacks story which appeared some 11 months ago. The Prime Minister, after a long silence, has said that the government has "nothing to hide" and it is willing for a debate in parliament.

Thanks for small mercies. A debate is a crisscross of ideas and finer points. There is no accountability and no investigation. How does one find out who are the real culprits or recipients of the bribe? We know that the kickbacks were received. We also know who gave them. But we do not know who in India got them when the persons named as recipients deny having got the kickbacks.

The Bofors gun scandal reads more or less the same way. A joint parliamentary committee (JPC) was also appointed. Till today, there is no official confirmation of who got the kickbacks and how much. Once again we knew who gave it, but the years of efforts did not pinpoint the parties that received the money.

As for the string of scandals in the Congress-led government, you cannot blame either Manmohan Singh or Anthony personally. It is even unthinkable because of their clean records in life. Then you come to infer that they did not know. But how can you say that when the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is

the place where the buck stops? The scams continued to get headlines for months and there is also evidence that the sanctions were given. That the PMO knew about them but the Prime Minister did not is a proposition hard to digest when the transactions were going on.

It is possible, if not probable, that such a situation did obtain and that neither Manmohan Singh nor Anthony knew what was happening under their nose. But then you expect some heads to roll when the scams come to light and particularly when you can spot out the officials in the loop. Why none has been punished till today and why nothing concrete has emerged after the investigations?

Except the detention of a few bureaucrats and a couple of ministers, the business is as usual. It is evident that someone is protecting them. And it is no use making the familiar arguments after the horse had bolted. In fact, the whole matter boils down to a cover up, which the government has done, though not properly, because some nosey media

person has brought the house down.

The government does not seem to be even sorry for what has happened to revive faith in governance. Some ministers or a team of them tries to explain things “in proper perspective.” Yet what the Manmohan Singh government does not realise is the yawning trust deficit: none of its claim is accepted, none of its explanation is considered credible and none of its action is taken seriously. It is a pity that the government is suspect in the eyes of the public as if ministers have been caught with their hands in the till. Hardly any minister is regarded as honest. It is such a loss of faith that every segment of administration has a question mark against it.

Institutions like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) stand devalued. It is a public secret that the probe that it conducts is an eye wash. Several former directors of the CBI have written articles and books to show how they were given instructions from above to decide a case in a particular way. When the CBI remains a department of the government, doubts about its functioning cannot be brushed aside.

Similarly, the other enforcement authorities of the government are not any better. If their probes were to be monitored by the Supreme Court, then the general impression of interference by the government would go. People are waiting: whether the CBI inquiry into the helicopters deal would be supervised by the Supreme Court or not.

No doubt, the effect of corruption on economy is there for all to see. Crores and crores of rupees have been siphoned off. The estimate, though challenged by

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Politics in Death Penalty

Rajindar Sachar

One had always heard pejorative remarks about politics and morality being distant neighbors, notwithstanding the life long struggle by Gandhiji to have some kind of connect between these two. This was demonstrated with a telling thud in the way Central Government has dealt with the case of Afzal Guru a resident of Jammu & Kashmir who was held guilty in attack on Parliament and sentenced to death by the Supreme Court in 2005. The lower court thereupon fixed 20th October 2006 as date of execution. However the wife of Guru filed a mercy petition before the President who after giving personal hearing to her, asked for some clarifications from the Home Ministry, which was never sent.

Guru had also in 2006 sent petition through the jail to the President. He never received any reply to this application, but nevertheless was hanged on the morning of 9th February, 2013. Excepting for few officials, none including the family of Guru knew of the impending execution. I am personally against the death penalty, being a follower of Gandhiji, J.P. and Dr. Ambedkar. But even if we have death penalty, the manner in which hanging has been carried out in this case certainly outrages principles of humanity.

I am also concerned with the low in politics where hanging of one person becomes the subject of slinging match between two major political parties Congress and B.J.P. For the last so many years BJP

has ad-nauseam made the issue of hanging of Guru as one of its major political strategy and to seek to project the delay by the Congress government as anti-national, unpatriotic and most mischievously as a Muslim appeasement issue. Congress was up to now explaining the delay as an administrative issue. But it would appear that core group of Congress has now decided that it was necessary to hang Guru to counter the challenge of BJP, because of the proximity of General Elections to Parliament in 2014, and may be to advance the date of Election at convenient date in 2013. So since a month back Digvijaya Singh, Congress General Secretary, suddenly and without any provocation invited questions on TV on Guru and making a very pointed statement demanding Guru's hanging.

Having so decided, UPA Government went about Guru's hanging in the vilest of Human Rights violations. Nowhere in the world, where a modicum of rule of law exists, can the government hang its citizen without informing his family prior to it and allowing them to meet him. Human dignity of Guru was violated by denying him this right. Government's clumsy claim that a speed post was sent on 7th February from Delhi to the family of Guru in J & K and since the family did not contact the government, they went ahead with hanging. Such a convoluted explanation will immediately invite the taunt “Tell that to the Marines”. Admittedly letter was received by the family

on 11th February, when Guru had already been hanged on 9th February. Can one even imagine the deep permanent scar left on the family, especially the wife and small child.

I have no doubt that there was premeditated decision by the Home Ministry not to allow the family to meet Guru (because this would become public knowledge) and presumably it would naturally result in some demonstrations especially in J&K and Delhi. Admittedly Shri Shinde, Central Home Minister telephoned Omar Farouk, Chief Minister of J&K a couple of days earlier informing him of the decision to hang Guru and asking for his reaction – Omar is stated to have raised no objection, but asked only to be told earlier to the date of hanging. The further news report suggests that Home Minister a few days later himself talked on phone to Omar and in the accepted style of conspirators told him in code language that “the event he had told him earlier will be done in a day or so”. What more proof is required to show complete disregard for well established norms by the government.

This hush on the plea of security is laughable. No doubt there would have been some demonstrations and protests, but so what - it is a normal feature in democracies, unless it is the government's plea that its security machinery is so incompetent that it could not deal with demonstrations by angry supporters of Guru and that it also apprehended a Navy Seal Expedition like done by USA government to kidnap Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan.

Bona fide of government's intention to hang immediately is also being questioned, considering

that government knew that Supreme Court was still examining the question that if there is delay of over two years in disposing of the mercy petition, no execution should take place - in Guru's case delay was over seven years. Was not that enough reason to suspend hanging of Guru in the meanwhile?

The killers of Indira Gandhi were allowed to meet their family members before hanging. Has the functioning of Central government become so sullied that their own precedents have no relevance.

Even now with all this inhuman and defenseless exercise, the central government is refusing to return the body of Guru to the family. Both in law and morality, the family is entitled to the body of Guru so that it can be buried with all the usual religious ceremonies at a place of their choosing, so that they can visit the grave like others can. No silly prison rule to refuse the body to the family on the puerile excuse of public disorder can be pleaded in defense. The government in order to conceal its own illegalities, insensitivity and violation of Human Rights has got caught in its own web and succeeded in projecting Guru in death larger than in life.

The Central Government should not muddy the situation any further. It has already allowed itself to be cornered by BJP in the communal cauldron, inviting a legitimate comment that in the matter of belief in secularism, the difference between BJP and Congress is that between tweedledum and tweedledee – the former being openly anti-secular and the later being also the same but concealing it under a thin ice which dissolves at the altar of electoral strategy.

As an epilogue, should we not consider that instead of governments repeating in future such nauseating violation of the Human Rights, India should follow the course of over 140 countries which have agreed to abolish the death penalty and have put a moratorium on any more hangings.

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the Planning Commission, of the Central Statistics Organisation is that the growth rate has fallen from nine per cent to five per cent. And soon we may be nearing the Hindu rate of growth, as my late economist friend Raj Krishna put it - the growth of 3.5 per cent a year. Therefore, the forthcoming Union budget does not evoke much hope. If it is not the old wine in new bottles, it would be the new wine in old bottles. That makes no difference.

True, the environment in attitudes is unfavourable. This holds good for the entire South Asia. In the countryside, home of our most population, a minority of prosperous farmers is swamped by growing number of marginal cultivators and landless labourers which is increasing due to the pattern of development. This has been the scene for a long time. The situation has worsened because of the greed of politicians and bureaucrats who have joined hands to loot the country.

Not that the new elections are sure to bring about a change. But the polls may throw up new representatives and probably change the party in power to herald a new beginning. The best course for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh would be to go to Rashtrapati Bhavan and submit his government's resignation to pave the way for fresh elections.

Problems of South Indian Diaspora

K. S. Chalam

The controversial visit of Sri Lanka President Mahindra Rajapaksa to Tirupati recently evoked violent protests in the South while Telugus remained awestruck. It is strange to notice that very few are conversant with the Sri Lankan issue where millions of Indian-origin people were alleged to have been killed. In fact, some of the so-called Tamils who were slain or persecuted are actually Telugus. I had the opportunity to meet some of the plantation workers in Colombo sometime ago when I was there to participate in a seminar. Some of them were migrants from coastal Andhra Pradesh particularly from Prakasam and North Andhra and they are lumped together with Tamils. It also reminds me of a phenomenon, had we not remained complacent when the Telugu speaking workers from Telangana were distressed in the Emirates? It is largely because of our insensitivity to the concept of Telugu Diaspora. But everyone seems to be aware of our migrants to USA (only from some parts of AP). Is this not a great besmirch to our common history and heritage?

The term Diaspora originated from the dispersion of Jews from Israel since the time of Old Testament. There are scholarly studies on the fascinating aspects of South Asian Diaspora including the economic networks that help hasten globalization in recent times. But, the issues relating to the South are hardly discussed though we were the first to widen our rule outside the peninsula in the historical past. It is really painful to observe that some of

us keep on talking about the migrants of the North West or Jammu and Kashmir (like Sindhis and Pandits) while keeping speechless when our own South Indians are being killed or persecuted. It is necessary to raise the predicaments of not only the North western Indians but also about our own people when incidents of genocide are discussed (in the South). Of course, the exclusive right to talk about Tamilians as Dravidians, seized by our neighbors may be partly responsible for this restricted action. Strangely, there is interesting discussion on the Net about the sabotage done to Tamilians in Sri Lanka by two important antithetical personalities from the state belonging to two different ideologies, yet united against the interests of the Tamils due to their alleged roots in the North.

It is disgusting to read and discuss about the foreign threats only as a North Western phenomenon. The history, culture, language, politics and even cross border issues are deliberated as North or North western India as if nothing exists beyond Vindhya or even in the East. In fact, the border with other nations is much longer on the Coast and in the Himalayas than the Western rim. No one appeared to be perturbed when the IPKF forces from Visakhapatnam had suffered casualties and tensions prevailed on the East or down South at Kacchativu or persecution of fishermen on a daily basis on our continental shelf. Are they not Indians?

The Tamil problem as it called in Sri Lanka is not of a recent hitch. We had a long history as old as the concept of Diaspora of the Jews. Those who have an alien mind set or imaginary cultural roots with the cow belt while sustaining with the local resources for generations in the South, are responsible for this fallacy. Sri Lanka was once a colony of India and according to some sources, both the Sinhalese and the Tamilians were migrants from India while Prof Sudarshan Seneviratne shows that there are some native indigenous populations in the Island. The Andhra/Telugu people had a long link with Sri Lanka from the time of the Satavahana period when Hala the seventeenth monarch met the Sri Lankan princess Lilavati and married her. It was Pallavas who built Kovils there and Rajaraja Chola I annexed Sri Lanka as part of his empire. It is said that, Mahinda and Sanghamitra left for Sri Lanka through Kalingapatnam and the left canine tooth of Buddha was taken to Anuradhapura from Dantapura (Srikakulam, A.P). However, the plantation workers and indentured labourers were exported from the coastal South during 19th and early 20th century by the British. Thus, we had long and cherished relations with the island that should have rattled our Telugu conscience when the issue of Tamil Diaspora surfaced.

There are two categories of Tamils in the Island. The original Sri Lankan Tamils are known as Elam Tamils who had been there from 2nd century BC mostly in the North (Jaffna), and the Tamil, Telugu and

Malayalee workers popularly called as Indian Tamils are alleged to be from the recent migration and spread in different parts of the Island. It is now estimated that out of 2.02 crore people, nearly one fifth (18 percent) speak Tamil. It seems, the social hierarchy prevailed in India had crossed the border and have today around 20 uraikuts (castes). Though, Sri Lanka does not officially recognize caste, the cruel design of caste system prevails. It is reported in some studies that the Agricultural castes like Vellala, lower castes like pariah, pallar, nalavar and the numerically strong Karaiyar (fishermen) along with Brahmin sects like Salagama (Nambudri), Piraman etc do exist among Indian Tamils. It is claimed that De Silva or Rajapakse titles signify Brahminical allusion.

It is surmised that the mainland social hierarchy had been moved on to Sri Lanka along with the Indo-Aryans who became the ruling elite. The issue of caste in Sri Lanka was raised by Convention on the Eradication of Racial Discrimination, CERD of UNO in 1996. There are conflicting views on the system of caste in the island; the Sinhalese claim that it is prevalent only among the Tamils and the lower castes retort saying that everyone has a hidden agenda of caste. But, the issue of lower castes seems to have played a very important role in the so-called ethnic conflict. It is reported that Prabhakaran, the slain LTTE leader declared the aim of his movement was to achieve "casteless Tamil society by armed struggle". Prabhakaran being a member of the lower caste Paraiyar (fishermen), banned scavenging and caste discrimination in the cadres

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Partition of India – Gandhi – Nehru - Jinnah

Sanmatha Nath Ghosh

In various surveys it is revealed that the present generations of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh think the partition of the subcontinent is a curse. Naturally the question arises who is responsible for the mischief. Recently the article of Jashawant Sinha in this respect stirred the debate not only in our country but in abroad also. The rulers may manipulate the history. They may suppress the facts for a while but truth will come out ultimately.

The British ignited communal hatred and conflict to diffuse the movement against partition of Bengal (1905). The Morle-Minto reforms encouraged nationality on the basis of religion. Separate electorate establishes a religion-based identity.

Gandhiji tried to minimize the environment of communal hatred, organizing Khilafat movement with Ali brothers. Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das infused harmony between the two communities signing and executing the Bengal pact.

During the election of provinces in 1937 Congress under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, and Muslim League under the leadership of Khalikujjaman made an electoral alliance in U. P. After winning the election, Jinnah proposed to form coalition government but Nehru declined to agree to the proposal. This single action created much distrust among the Muslims. In this connection it may be noted that

minority mind is always suspicious. They began to think that their interest was not safe under the majority community rule. Similarly in Bengal being inspired by Sarat Chandra Bose, Fazlul Haque, the founder of Krishak Praja Party, made an electoral alliance with Congress and the alliance won the election. The leadership of Bengal Congress was then dominated by Zamindars and money lenders. They refused to accept the proposal of Fazlul Haque to enact the Prajasatta Ain and formation of Debt Settlement Board. Thus the negotiation ended without any result. Then the Congress high command under the leadership of Nehru refused to form a coalition government with Krishak Praja Party. The disappointed Faziul Haque formed coalition government with Muslim League. And the Muslim League expanded its organization to the grass-root level with the help of the government. The atmosphere of communal harmony so skillfully articulated by Deshbandu became vitiated. The only beneficiary of this refusal became the Muslim League. Muslim League organized the common Muslim people on the basis of hatred to the other community. It extended its tentacles into the remote villages through government machinery. They convinced Muslim masses that their "life and property will not be safe in Congress rule when British will leave India. To safeguard their interest, they need their own homeland. Nothing short of partition can create their homeland". Finally in the Lahore conference of

Muslim League (1940) "Partition of India Resolution" was passed unanimously and the proposal came from disappointed Fazlul Haque. But they were not serious. Their activities in their later life will prove it beyond doubt.

In 1941 on 22nd March, Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in Delhi for a political settlement. As he had nothing tangible to offer, Gandhi, rudely advised him to go back by the next flight. Subhas Chandra in his presidential speech at Haripura (1938) said, "India must drive out the British Government by an uncompromising and fierce battle and that negotiation politics would divide the country". He even cited the example of Ireland to substantiate his view point. But Nehru continued to interact with Cripps, though on 12th April. Cripps had to leave after a failed mission. The unnecessary negotiation only fueled the communal fanaticism of Muslim League. This prolonged negotiation simply widened the rift but delighted the British prime minister. Michael Edward wrote "Churchill danced over his table when he knew that Cripps had failed. Churchill killed two birds in one stroke. Cripps after his successful mission in Soviet Russia became an idol of British mind and was thought to be the next P.M. He was minimized for this failure. At the same time it slackened the pressure of Roosevelt for a settlement with Congress.

In 1946 both the Congress and Muslim League accepted Cabinet Mission's proposal. But suddenly Nehru decided that the party would humbly enter the constituent assembly but by virtue of majority support perform as it deemed fit. Jinnah took the opportunity to

convince his community that without partition the Muslims would not be able to live safely. As Michael Brecher, his biographer observed "It was one of the most fiery and provocative statements in Nehru's forty years of public life. It actually hastened the end of the partition drama. That was

the fate of India decided finally. Nehru's tactical folly aggravated the crisis".

The then Viceroy Lord Wavell declined the proposal of partition of India. He told "I cannot deny geography". But the partition of India was very essential for the British government. It could not allow the development of any power bloc which would challenge the Western models of development. Its sole aim was to balkanise the subcontinent.

After Wavell, Lord Mountbatten was appointed the viceroy with the responsibility to make partition of India smooth. While selecting him for the post, Clement Attlee remarked, "He is blessed with an unusual wife". He came to India in February, 1947 and a fierce communal riot erupted in March in Punjab which claimed one thousand lives. It also spread in other parts of the country like wild fire. This made partition acceptable to the masses. Nehru pretended to be hesitant but under his leadership resolution on partition of Punjab was accepted without the knowledge of Gandhiji, much before Congress accepted partition of India. It was very difficult to be refrained from swallowing the power dangled before his nose.

Sardar Patel agreed to partition provided 'there will be exchange of population'. Initially Nehru was

hesitant. His morality succumbed to the greed of power. In this context the role of Lady Mountbatten is remarkable. Abul Kalam Azad in his book "India Wins Freedom" wrote that there were some factors involved in Nehru's change of front. One of them was certainly Lady Mountbatten. In this respect Frank Moraes in his book 'Nehru Sunshine and Shadow' said "Nehru accepted partition as political necessity" at the same time he remarked, "this action of Nehru is like cutting of head to get rid of headache". .

Gandhiji told Mountbatten "Hand over power to Mr. Jinnah and leave the country" and he left for Noakhali, Bihar, Calcutta to give a healing touch to the riot affected people, He told "India could be partitioned only over my dead body". Nehru did not accept the proposal on the plea of majority community. It may also be noted that in his autobiography he wrote "...by education, I am an English, by culture, I am a Muslim and only by accident of birth I am a Hindu".

In the meantime the Congress leaders accepted partition and the date of formal approval was fixed on 4th June. On 3rd June, Mountbatten met Gandhiji and told him, "Mr Gandhi, hope you will not oppose my plan". The day was his day of silence. Hence Gandhi wrote on a piece of paper like a clever advocate "Have I ever opposed you"? He did not commit his approval on partition. On 4th June, meeting of the Congress Working Committee was held. Most of the leaders were ready to accept the proposal of partition of India. Only Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Rammanohar Lohia and Gandhiji opposed the proposal.

The rubber stamp of approval was made without the consent of

Gandhiji. Mountbatten told Gandhi “The Congress is not with you but with me”, in reply Gandhiji told “but the people are with me”. Gandhiji had pledged that India “will be partitioned over my dead body”. India was partitioned and Gandhi remained alive. Gandhi’s most trenchant critics cannot deny his courage. He was not afraid of death. Then why did he not redeem his pledge? It may be interpreted that for Gandhi the fight to keep India united was not ended. He was still struggling for the goal. It is true that he was defeated in the first round. He failed to read the strategy of the British. But he did not give up the fight. After partition, Gandhi’s actions revealed his resolve to bring about India-Pakistan reconciliation. He went on a fast to compel Indian government to pay adequate compensation to Pakistan. This strengthened his credibility to work in Pakistan. Gandhi wrote to Jinnah seeking permission to settle in Pakistan in order to work for Indo-Pak unity. Jinnah agreed instantly. Gandhi desired to settle in Lahore. He resolved to start a march to Lahore with 50 Punjabi families settled in Purana quilla refugee camp and the day of March to Lahore was finalized as February 14, 1948.

He asked to disband Congress. He liked to form Lok Sevak Sangh whose constitution was finalized by him on 30th January morning. He asked the socialist leaders like Jayaprakash, Rammanohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Deb to meet him in Derhi, to discuss the programme of Lok Sevak Sangh. He called a conference of all constructive workers at his Ashram in the month of July to finalize the formation of Lok Sevak Sangh.

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Political Economy of Gender and Climate Change -II

Vibhuti Patel

Mainstreaming of Gender Concerns

As women bear a disproportionate burden of climate change consequences, women’s groups working with rural and tribal organizations are lobbying for gender mainstreaming of women’s concerns in discourse on climate change. Women’s groups in India are seriously concerned about impact of climate change on women’s survival struggles in rural and urban areas. Women scientist such as Dr. Jyoti Parikh and Dr. Vandana Shiva played crucial role in engendering the discourses by coming out with World Peoples’ Conference on Climate Change and The Rights of Mother Earth Indigenous Peoples’ Declaration on Wednesday, April 28, 2010. This declaration has been rallying point for highlighting gender concerns in Climate Change debate advocated by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Practical Gender Needs are those that Women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Practical gender needs do not challenge the gender divisions of labour or women’s subordinate position in society, although rising out of them. Practical gender needs are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. (Moser, 1993, p40)

Strategic Gender Needs are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position to men in their society... They relate to gender divisions of labour, power

and control and may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women’s control over their bodies. Meeting strategic gender needs helps women to achieve greater equality. (Moser, 1993, p39).

The distinction between these two types of needs can provide a useful tool to aid us in analyzing how gender is being addressed in proposed policy or project interventions when faced with challenges arising due to Climate change. .

Decreased food security: With changes in climate, traditional food sources become more unpredictable and scarce. This exposes women to loss of harvests, often their sole sources of food and income.

Impact on livelihoods: Women are more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change. For instance, climate change causes a rise in the sea level, affecting the fishing community (both men and women) not only in terms of fish catch but also with regard to water scarcity, as seawater gets into fresh water. Besides, when the land is inundated, infrastructure (roads and houses) are damaged. Large scale migration from inundated areas is expected and much of the burden of migration falls on women.

Water resources: shortage and access: Climate change may exacerbate existing shortages of water. Women are largely responsible for water collection in

their communities and therefore are more affected when the quantity of water and/or its accessibility changes.

Increased burden of care giving: As primary caregivers, women may see their responsibilities increase as family members suffer increased illness due to exposure to vector borne diseases such as malaria, water borne diseases such as cholera, and increase in heart stress mortality.

Women are particularly vulnerable because they are more prone to the adverse impacts from climate change. Their limited adaptive capacities arise from prevailing social inequalities and ascribed social and economic roles that manifest in differences in property rights, access to information, lack of employment and unequal access to resources. Further, changes in the climate usually impact on sectors that are traditionally associated with women, such as paddy cultivation, cotton and tea plantations, and fishing. This means increased hardship for women. For example, studies show that climate change has an adverse impact on fishing, as the sea level rises and saline water enters into freshwater systems, making fishing difficult. Further, in extreme events more women deaths are observed for women's inability to swim or run or lack of strength to withstand physically demanding situation such as storms, floods, typhoons, etc. From a long term perspective, this will have serious implications for gender relations, as women may end up spending more time on tasks that reinforce stereotypical gender roles. Thus, women are faced by a situation where their ability to adapt is low but the share of the adaptation burden falling disproportionately on them. This makes the consideration of the impact of climate change on

gender most imperative.

Adaptation

The fundamental goal of adaptation strategies is the reduction of the vulnerabilities to climate induced change in order to protect and enhance the livelihoods of poor people. Experience shows that vulnerability is differentiated by gender. Adaptation to climate change or indeed climate variability is dependent on issues such as wealth, technological power, access to information, all of which are major problem areas for women. However, women can be key agents of adaptation and mitigation to climate change. Their responsibilities in households, communities and as stewards of natural resources position them well to develop strategies for adapting to changing environmental realities.

Mitigation

Women also have a role deriving from their own strength. Women are engaged in a number of activities such as brick-making, charcoal-making, waste management and agro-processing where energy efficiency can lead to Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) mitigation and their role in mitigation in these areas can be vital. The development of Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM), through carbon sequestration from afforestation and reforestation can also be done by poor rural women. Women in urban areas can implement energy efficiency programmes at the household level -lighting, the use of appliances, etc., while women in rural areas may be encouraged to use biomass and biogas (for fuel generation), and switch to solar energy. Poor women, without access to modern energy fuels are faced with problems relating to indoor air pollution and bear huge health burdens as a

result – there is a high incidence of bronchitis, asthma and other health problems. While women should not be denied the use of fossil fuels like LPG or Kerosene, yet at the same time appropriate technologies that take into account the specific socio-economic realities of different rural areas reduce women's workload, free-up time and enable them to pursue income generating or other activities that need to be developed.

What is the way forward?

It is clear that gender differences must be taken into account to understand the impact of climate change. Gender differentiated strategies for responses and capacity-building are needed due to differences in gender specific roles and responsibilities created by society. These findings should feed into the climate negotiations as well as national debates to enable decision-makers to have a better understanding of how different groups of people are affected and what kind of capacity and support is needed.

More specifically the following actions are required:

- Recognise that women are more vulnerable in climate change driven scenarios:

Government should analyze and identify gender-specific impacts and protection measures related to floods, droughts, diseases, and other environmental changes and disasters. An inter-ministerial task force could be set up towards this end.

- Understand and address gender-specific natural resource use pattern:

Government should develop strategies to enhance women's access to and control over natural

resources, in order to reduce poverty, protect environmental resources, and ensure that women and poor communities can better cope with climate change.

- Identify women's particular skills and capacities that lend themselves to mitigation and adaptation: Given that women's knowledge and participation has been critical to the survival of entire communities in disaster situations, government should take cognizance of women's specialized skills in different aspects of their livelihood and natural resource management strategies and utilize those that lend themselves to mitigation and adaptation.
- Increase women's participation in decision-making at all levels in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Conclusion

The women's studies acknowledges the contribution of rural and urban women as "Guardians and Promoters of Life-Centered Cultures", seed savers, leaders of resistance movements (Chipko in Himalayas, Appiko in South India) & Alternative farming/market/etc. models (Green-belt Movement in Africa). Women's full humanity becomes the healing force that can break the vicious cycle of violence based on treating the inhumanity of man as the measure of being human, of greed as the organizing principle of the economy. What has changed is greater awareness. Women, even in rural India, now understand better the larger issues like climate change that affect them directly, as is evident in this declaration adopted at a training programme on Gender, Climate Change and Food Security on November 16, 2011, at Saharanpur in UP: '...

Women hold the key to food security, and it is important that women's contributions to agriculture and food security be documented, recognised and celebrated.'

Women are refusing to be part of the culture of hate and violence. Women, in and through their lives, are showing that love and compassion, sharing and giving are not just possible human qualities; they are necessary qualities for us to be human. Living cultures are cultures of life, based on reverence for all life – women and men, rich and poor, white and black, Christian and Muslim, human and nonhuman. In India are involved in 11 types of environmentalism: wildlife management, conservation, preservation, reform environmentalism, deep ecology, environmental justice, environmental health, ecofeminism, ecospiritualism, animal rights and green movements.

For promoting gender-responsive and inclusive state climate change plans in India, we as economists will have to seek answers to questions like (a) is there gender disaggregated data on impacts of climate change? (b) Are the gender differential impacts of adaptation measures understood and addressed? (b) Do the adaptation programmes reach poor women? (c) Are there 'additional' financial resources for women and men? (d) Are women present in the decision-making structures in climate-sensitive areas? (e) Is there recognition of rights/entitlements for poor women and men in adaptation programmes?

Crucial mandate for us is to initiate an inter-disciplinary public debate involving pure scientists, social scientists, practitioners, planners and policy makers on gender and

climate change, including catalysing more research on the subject and wide dissemination of the outputs of these researches through niche scientific journals and popular media, including the new media.

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The Maturing of Bodo Dream

Sandeep Pandey

A Tibeto-Burman tribe, the largest in the Northeast, habitating in Assam is fighting for its right to be recognized as a distinct culture and people. Their demand is for a separate Bodoland within Assam. At the 45th annual conference of the All Bodo Students Union during 7-9 February, 2013, the wall writings in Tamulpur of Baksa district said 'Divide Assam 50/50'. In 2003 when Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was formed four districts – Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar and Udalgiri – were included within it. It is believed that half the Bodos still live outside this area. Hence the Bodo aspiration is to create a Bodoland consisting of entire area north of Brahmaputra in Assam. The area under BTC jurisdiction called Bodo Territorial Autonomous District has been created under the sixth schedule of the Constitution of India. In 2004 Bodo language was granted 8th Schedule recognition with Devanagiri script.

The demand for autonomy is justified because the Constitution of India has envisioned self-rule for tribal areas. However, this dream for tribals has not been realized anywhere. The state and central governments retain the control over tribal areas and have allowed only limited autonomy. The Acts like the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) or Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) are not earnestly implemented by most elected governments of the country.

In fact, the BTC doesn't have provision for elections at the lowest

and intermediate levels. Unless the Village Committees are elected the grassroots democratic participation will remain a distant dream for people. These elections will also allow communities other than Bodo to have a say in governance process.

The movement for autonomy had begun as far back as in 1967 by a political party called Plain Tribal Council of Assam. However, nothing much came off its efforts. The ABSU started its movement demanding a separate Bodoland on 2nd March, 1987, under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma. In 1993 Bodoland Autonomous Council was created. But ABSU denounced the accord as it did not address the grievances or aspirations of Bodo people and began a fresh movement for autonomy in 1996. It is a classic case of how delaying tactics of Government of India have been counterproductive. While ABSU believed in peaceful means of agitation, an armed group by the name of Bodo Liberation Tigers surfaced and was instrumental in signing the next accord with the government in another incarnation as Bodoland People's Front, which now controls the BTC through electoral process. Even after creation of BTC, the BLT was not disbanded completely and continues to attract youth to its fold in the name of Bodoland Royal Tiger Force, an illegal entity set up to counter the other insurgent group called National Democratic Front of Bodoland. The proof of existence of these armed groups is the occasional killing of intellectuals who dare to speak out

against the BPF ruled council. It is also believed that these organised armed groups were involved in most of the killings during the recent communal riots which started as a provocation after killing of four former BLT and BRTF cadres. ABSU demanded a CBI enquiry into the riots. It has also repeated its demand for de-weaponisation of BTC.

Because of the bleak scenario of employment youth, especially the school drop outs from poor families, are easily lured by the insurgent groups. As the BTAD fails to fulfill the socio-politico-economic aspirations of the community more and more youth find the logic of joining the militant groups quite compelling. This, on one hand means wastage of young talent who could otherwise be engaged in constructive society building and on the other, results in weakening of democratic values.

The literacy rate among the Bodo community is only about 33 percent with the rate among the women being lower than that of men. The community of 15 lakhs people living within BTAD has produced 4 IAS, 2 IPS, 2 IFS, 1700 Post-graduates and 4800 graduates. The ABSU is making special efforts to improve the status of education in the community by organising career counselling for youth, creating healthy academic environment and encouraging teachers to upgrade their skills. The enlargement of its agenda from a movement demanding autonomy to ensuring development

rights is a very curious phenomenon. They are now interested in learning ways of accessing their rights and benefits due to them through various government programmes. Hence they are learning about subjects like right to information and right to food with the help of external experts. ABSU has taken a conscious decision to focus on socio-economic and educational betterment of Bodo community and to develop a scientific culture to counter superstitions. The organisation has realised the futility of violence and is trying to wean away youth from that path.

The ABSU now commemorates 30th July as anti-terrorism day and celebrates Gandhi Jayanti as International Non-violence day. They have matured to the next level where they are conceiving of an Arms Free Bodoland and have taken a clear stand against the illegal arms culture and killings since 2008 as they believe it spoils the future generation.

With the adoption of non-violence and democratic agenda the ABSU has also opened its arms to other communities. The stage on 9th February, 2013, in Tamulpur, at the open session was shared by representatives from Gorkha, Missing, Tiwa, Rabha and other tribal communities. In addition to 'we want Bodoland', the slogan 'we want Gorkhaland' was also being raised. It clearly shows that they consider themselves part of the larger struggle for assertion by marginalised communities and are willing to join hands with other struggles. In fact, the demand for Bodoland has received an impetus after the recent movement for Telangana in Andhra Pradesh.

Looking at development as human rights, adopting non-violence

and reaching out to other democratic movements are welcome signs of maturing of the Bodo movement.

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and attracted majority from the panchamars (dalit). But, the problem of social contradictions among the Tamils particularly among the Internally Displaced Persons seems to have surfaced once Prabhakaran and the LTTE were extinguished and their siblings are brutally killed (including Prabhakaran's 12-year old son). It is reported that Prabhakaran has allowed the lower caste cadres to own land and now, after his death there seem to be conflicts between the lower castes and the upper caste Vellala or the Sinhala government might be playing the caste games by imitating India or getting tutored by some alleged Indian intellectuals?

It is not only in Sri Lanka, but every where the Indian migrants went either in the past or in recent period have the problems of divisiveness based on caste/descent. The problem appears to be serious in South Asia and America where our number is considerable. It is further provoked by those who imagine that they are the descendants of Purus, Baratas, Huns, Parthians, Sakas, Pahlavas, Yavanas, etc. and had come from outside and settled in India with the simple idea of 'divide and rule'. Nevertheless, it would be an international problem if we fail to find out a solution to the social evil from the land where it is originated, and is being spread to Anglo-American countries. If we fail to find out a way out and try to fish in the troubled waters as is being experimented by the Sinhalese with the alleged support from crooks from India, the next war or Kurukshetra would be fought on caste lines. Is the world prepared for another discourse

on Niti and Nyaya to be sermonized by Avatar Srikrishna?

(Continued from Page 11)

But all ended on 30th January when Nathuran Godse's bullet pierced Gandhiji's chest.

To conclude, Gandhiji's judgment of the situation maybe questioned and assessment of his colleagues maybe faulty but his integrity is unimpeachable. He never wavered in his commitment to the agenda of unity of the sub-continent.

Special Feature on Nanasaheb Goray

I am thankful to the present editor of 'Sadhana', Narendra Dabholkar, for promptly selecting three editorials written by Nanasaheb and sending them to me for inclusion in this issue. But then translating Nanasaheb from Marathi to English is certainly a daunting job which has been ably done by R. B. Patil, M.A., M.Ed., with a few strokes here and there by me. Smt. Sharmila Pathak made Pu. La. Deshpande's article on Nanasaheb available to me. I am thankful to all of them.

—Bapu Heddurshetti

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Dissolve the High Command

S. Viswam

**Who do I vote for:
Modi or Rahul?**
Kuldip Nayar

**Union Budget 2013-14
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Socialist Pilgrim**
Subhash Ware

**Babu Jagjivan Ram :
Nation Builder**
Mastram Kapoor

Let us think like Socialists
Bapu Heddurshetti

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One has got so used to hearing banalities from the newly-promoted Congress Party Vice-President Rahul Gandhi that it was difficult to take him as a serious politician to whom the country's governance could be entrusted. Like his father, he has acquired an image of a reluctant politician who was catapulted into the Prime Minister's post in spite of his own desires in the matter. For the last several years Rahul Gandhi has come off as a politician unwilling to shoulder any kind of responsibility within his party or in the government. Dr. Manmohan Singh has asked him often enough to enter the government as a cabinet minister. Each time young Rahul rebuffed the offer.

In view of this, his latest pronouncements make for a surprisingly pleasant reading. He has reiterated that he is not interested in the prime minister-ship but his priority is the revitalization of the Congress. This is a welcome statement even if there is no guarantee that Rahul Gandhi will refuse to become the prime minister when the occasion forces him to yield to the temptation. Like his father, he is interested in revitalizing the Congress. Indeed, Rajiv Gandhi promised to make the

objective of revamping the party a matter of high priority but somewhere along the way he left that objective behind and fell into the many traps which Congress "powerbrokers" kept setting for him. The irony was that Rajiv Gandhi had declared war on these same powerbrokers at the historic 1995 centenary of the Indian National Congress in Mumbai. Power brokers still control the party despite the overarching power that the Congress High Command, an euphemism for party president Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul Gandhi, commands.

Now, for a refreshing change, Rahul declares that he is interested in strengthening the party by breaking (nullifying) the "high command system" that has sustained the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty in power all through the post-Nehru era in the party. Fortunately it is the son of Sonia and vice-president of the party that has talked openly of breaking the high command system. Any other leader or rank would have been "hung and quartered" for uttering such blasphemy. The high command has controlled all thought and action in the Congress for the last several decades and anyone who talks of doing away

with it is inviting trouble. However, now that Rahul has hinted that the system can be made vulnerable, the possibilities should be probed. It is doubtful if present-day leaders in the party will throw open the theme for a public debate.

Between the lines

Who do I vote for: Modi or Rahul?

Kuldip Nayar

Rahul is right in saying that the “high command culture” began in the 1970s when Indira Gandhi began her long innings as prime minister and Congress president. No other prime minister after her of has wielded the kind of power which that “Empress of India” did. Rahul is also reflecting realities when he says that this peculiar culture has afflicted almost all other parties. All political parties in India, the fact remains, are “top heavy” but not on the same scale as the Congress. Inner-party discipline (and democracy) is a scarce commodity in Indian politics, and even in the two communist parties, a single or a clique of rulers is not a strange phenomenon. “I want to change the high command system,” Rahul has said. The statement is bound to sound like music to the ordinary citizens but certainly not to the politicians in all parties who have got used to obey the modern-day political czars.

Should the high command system be replaced by some other mechanism? Rahul Gandhi’s desire is to empower middle level leaders and create a structure which will give them a say in governance and organization. As an earnest of his commitment to create a democratic structure in place of the Congress and his wish to end the system of political dynasty he is even willing to stay a bachelor so that he will not run the risk of turning a status-quoist wanting his children to benefit from his status in the party!

(Continued on Page 6)

I am apprehending a situation where I might have no option except to vote for either Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi or Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi. Both have thrown their hats in the ring. True, neither the BJP has announced Modi officially as its candidate for Prime Ministership in the 2014 parliament elections, nor has the Congress nominated Rahul for the position. Yet, it is clear who the two parties have in mind.

My predicament is that I do not consider either of them the prime ministerial timber. They may be suitable for the offices they occupy, but do not deserve to be elevated. However, both have made their presentation speeches as Modi did at New Delhi this week and Rahul before the Congress conclave at Jaipur. The two are not similar in any way. Yet both left none in doubt about what they seek when they exhorted the people to prepare themselves for the new India which the two foresaw as a fresh, dynamic country that would take them over the green mountains into a sunny valley.

The comparison ends here. They are so different and so distant from each other that they do not come anywhere in either character or compartment. Modi hides his anti-minority stance behind the flourish for development. He is still involved in some court cases arising out of the ethnic cleansing carried out in Gujarat in 2002 and may find

him involved in the days to come. Therefore, it would be unfair to regard him as the right person for the highest executive position.

Rahul is a babe in the woods, lionized by the Congress which his mother, Sonia Gandhi heads. He is found out of depth whenever he is asked questions on serious matters. He was not interested in the budget speech and left in the middle even though he was late to arrive. His knowledge about policies is rudimentary and reactions off the mark. For example, on the liberation of Bangladesh Rahul said that whenever his dynasty decided to do something, it had come out with flying colours. He should have realized that East Pakistan was liberated by the Bangladeshis themselves. India did help, but its role was secondary.

Leave Rahul and Modi apart, the ominous part of the forthcoming elections is that they would be probably the dirtiest, divisive and most violent polls ever held in India. The nation would be arrayed on the lines of religion and caste. A country which is already ill at ease because of never-ending corrupt cases and scams might have to go through a phase where no method would be considered mean enough by the contestants to win votes.

The BJP seems to have concluded that the country has already veered towards Hindutva. Otherwise, BJP president Raj Nath Singh would

not have gone to attend a meeting at Haridwar during the Kumb Mela where the Sangh parivar and the extremist sadhus chalked out the strategy to revive the demand for building Ram temple, the symbol of Hindutva.

Understandably, the conclave of Sangh parivar does not bother about the cases pending against the BJP leaders for demolition of the Babri masjid. The Congress-led government does not want to accelerate the pace of disposal of such cases. It looks as if the party wants to ride two horses at the same time. It does not want to follow a clear-cut policy on secularism, fearing that if it were to do so, it would alienate the wavering Hindus. On the other hand, the party is certain that the liberals would have no option except to vote for it if and when Modi becomes the BJP's candidate.

The Congress, particularly the BJP, is not assessing the country's mood correctly. An average person or the *aam admi* is secular in temperament and does not want to join issue with the fanatics when he labours under the impression that he can defeat them at the polls. It happened that way in 2004 when the BJP thought that its slogan of 'India Shining' was sure to return it to power. In fact, the adoption of Hindutva by the BJP may help the Congress since a Hindu does not feel insecure about his religion in India. Had it been so, he would have founded the Hindu Rashtra long ago because 80 per cent of the country's population is Hindu.

It is clear from the current political situation that no party is in a position to get a majority—the minimum

(Continued on Page 4)

Union Budget 2013-14 through Gender Lens

Vibhuti Patel

It is important to understand the context in which gender budgeting has acquired great attention in the Union Budget 2013-14. India's record for achieving the Millennium Development Goals has been extremely poor as compared to several African, Latin American and Asian Countries. In international forums a "Shining India" India has been named and shamed continuously for not being able to reduce maternal mortality rate and child mortality rate, wide spread anaemia and malnutrition among women and children, starvation deaths in certain pockets and sky rocketing prices of essential goods for the poor, namely food, water and cooking fuel.

In this context, the allocation of Rs. 97134 crore for gender budget (less than 6 percent of the total budget) and Rs. 77236 crore for child budget has been made in the Union budget 2013-14. Last year the allocation for gender budget was Rs 18,878.5 crore. Due to sustained pressure from the women's groups and gender economists, separate budgets for women and child are given.

Financial allocation of Rs. 200 crore for most vulnerable groups including single women and widows is an eye wash. Such paltry amount cannot support schemes like Swadhar, working women's hostels, one-stop crisis centre, a national helpline and effective implementation of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act and recently passed Sexual Harassment at Work

Place Act.

Anti-poverty Programmes

The budget has enhanced allocation for anti-poverty programmes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Rs. 33000 crores) and centrally sponsored flagship scheme for public health - National Health Mission (Rs. 21239) whose principal beneficiaries are women as they are the poorest of the poor. Allocation for women specific schemes for economics services, welfare services and social defense have been increased up to 8500 crores.

It was announced last year that multi-sectoral programme for reducing maternal and child malnutrition would be implemented in 100 districts during 2013-14. It has been allocated Rs. 300 to scale up to cover 200 districts the year after. This is grossly inadequate fund allocation to address 40 percent of children and 55 percent women of India who are malnourished.

Integrated Child Development Scheme

The scheme gets Rs. Rs 17,700 crores for this fiscal year. In response to galloping inflation, the amount is quite inadequate. Successful implementation of ICDS requires nearly Rs 3 lakh crore over the 12th plan period as per an estimate made by nutrition experts while allocation has been for Rs 1.23 lakh crore. Financial provision social security and additional remuneration for

Anganwadi Workers and ASHAs, the principal carriers of the flagship schemes has not been made.

Public Sector Bank for Women

The budget has also announced an allocation of Rs. 1000 crore for all-women public sector bank in which both the management and clients are expected to be women. The state owned Women's Bank will work for financial inclusion and empowerment of self help groups, women entrepreneurs, self-employed women and support livelihood needs of women. At last, the state finds women bankable!!! RBI will have to complete all formalities of license for Women's Bank by October, 2013. Bitter experience with private micro finance institutions (MFIs) which behave like financial sharks charging 24 to 48 percent interest, used SHGs as foot soldiers and driven poor women borrowers to commit suicide due to harassment has made rural and urban community based organizations disenchanted with the private MFIs. In this context, announcement of Public Sector Women's Bank has given new hope to community-based women groups.

Nirbhaya Fund

Sustained agitation by the Indian youth and women after Gang rape of young 23-year old woman (who was named by media as Nirbhaya) physiotherapist in a moving bus on 16th December, 2012 has shaken the whole world. To appease the angry youth, the budget has announced Rs. 1000 crore as seed money for Nirbhaya Fund. There is no clear mandate for Nirbhaya Fund that it will be used for rehabilitation of survivors of sexual violence and acid attacks.

No increase in allocation to education against 6 percent as

suggested by Kothari Commission in 1966 and demanded by all people's organizations. Focus on only Sarva Shiksha Abhyan is not enough. Aspirations for higher education have enhanced exponentially among the Indian youth. Government aided higher education and vocationalisation of education are need of the hour. The Union Budget 2013-14, has failed in its duty towards masses by leaving higher education to the private sector.

In spite of repeated demands of women's movement for over 30 years, specific allocations for safe houses and shelters for women who face domestic violence, incest, and for homeless women is not made. Girls and women facing incest are forced to continue to stay in the same house as their molester for want of a safe shelter. Homeless women remain ever-vulnerable to violence on the streets.

To win over educated middle and upper class women the budget has offered an incentive of duty free baggage limit for jewellery for women passengers raised to Rs 100,000, subject to some conditions.

Conclusion

From 2004 to 2013, 56 ministries have set up Gender Budget cells. But to make their fiscal policy gender responsiveness has been an uphill task. Galloping inflation has affected the toiling poor women of India adversely whose real wages have declined sharply. Due to withdrawal of the state from social sector, women's work burden in unpaid care economy (cooking, cleaning, nursing, collecting fuel, fodder, water, etc) has increased many-fold. Subordinate status of women manifests in declining child sex ratio i.e. 'missing girls phenomenon', deteriorating reproductive and child

health, feminization of poverty, increased violence against women, enhanced mortality and morbidity among girls and women and deplorable condition of elderly women and women in difficult circumstances.

(Continued from Page 3)

requisite figure of 273 in the Lok Sabha which has the strength of 543 members. If Modi is adopted by the BJP, he may scare away its allies without which the party cannot form the government. Janata Dal (United), one important ally of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance has already announced that it would not accept Modi as the Prime Ministerial candidate. Under the circumstances, it is difficult to believe that the BJP, which is keen to come back to power, will still go ahead and nominate him.

Yet I wonder why it is incumbent on us to confine our choice to the BJP and the Congress. Both have been tested, tried and found to be hopelessly wanting. In the first, the saffron considerations have crept at every level. In the second, corruption has come to dominate every segment of government's activity. Also, there is not much of secular foundation left on which the party's edifice rested once.

Maybe, either the non-Congress or the non-BJP combination would emerge to provide an alternative to the country. Whether there is a formal constitution of a third front or not is not yet clear. But the general perception is that the nation cannot be left at the mercy of the Congress or the BJP. The voters do not want a choice where they would have to either jump into the sea or the river. Why is the nation doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past?

Foreign Investments Can't be the Bedrock of Indian Economy

Medha Patkar

In his budget speech, lasting for 2 hours, Shri Chidambaram, the finance minister, with undoubted eloquence talked much about the poverty and equity, churned out thoughts and principles of taxing the rich, empowering women and youth, enabling the children, including the poor. However, if one looks at his principles and promises on one hand and the plans, projects and allocations on the other, one finds a very limited redressal of grievances and no fulfillment of dreams of the toiling sections of India.

As expected, the Finance Minister's presentation of budget revolved much around the womenfolk, the question of violence, exclusion and security yet where are new plans to use the contributions of human resource, creativity, perseverance and hard work and the productivity with skills of women? It is only a small share in the sectoral or schematic budget calculated on the basis of the proportional number of women as beneficiaries, that is projected as 'Gender-Budget' indicator. Is that enough to ensure that every girl child will get education, nutrition, health facility and every mother, a shelter and livelihood? No! With no adequate increase in the budget allocation for health, education or even MGNREGA, human security will not be ensured. It's unfortunate that while defence has got its due with no increase, yet no curtailment in the huge allocation as always. Security measures,

social and economic, is beyond allocating funds for first women bank. Pension, provident fund or any livelihood security measures for women in farming and other unprotected sectors would go a long way. No doubt, the first ever "Women's Bank" is a attractive gift but cash based approach to almost all welfare schemes, now resorting to cash transfer, is likely to expand to PDS sector too and no universalisation of PDS is certainly anti-women.

Inequity and lack of inclusiveness have been the aspects of our social and economic scenario, highlighted time and again, by the PM to FM, however the highly inadequate solution is that of a small increase of about 14,000 crores to direct tax collection and 4,000 crores to indirect tax collection. It's a welcome move to categorise those with income above 1 crore and earning above 10 crores yet the total collection by charging 10 percent of additional taxes, that too for one year can't fool us who are challenging vulgar inequities, furthered by move such as 30 lakh crores worth tax/duty concessions granted to the corporates during just 6 years, 2005-2012.

No increase in allocation to education against 6 percent as suggested by Kothari Commission in 1966 and demanded by all people's organizations is once again to be condemned, priority and allocation to not only Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan but with new

innovative schemes to reach out to the dropouts, left outs and thrown outs in millions is needed. 'Health for all' too is remaining to be a slogan more than a targeted goal with well planned approach. NREGA in the name of Mahatma also has not got the raise to cover all villages, districts, while there is not even a thought in favour of employment guarantee to the urban poor.

The budget continues the path laid out by his predecessors as is visible in blind pursuit with the same paradigm based on FDI, FII and CII. Is the confidence that he has expressed in the foreign/corporate investments justifiable? Is it acceptable, given the past experience? The experience is, even a small percentage of foreign investment leads to a large extent of foreign 'influence not only on the specific projects but policies'. The crucial sectors such as Khadi village industries and the micro, small, medium industries is also left to the World bank and other multinational development banks. But the sops to the corporate or the heavily funded 'Infrastructure' is not!

Undue importance given to infrastructure of one kind is obvious in the Budget. It's establishment of 7 cities and ports under Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor and ports like Dholera, Gujrat and Shendra – Bidkin, Maharashtra. But this is not all. It's known that

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Clever Attempt

The Union Budget presented by the Finance Minister is a clever attempt to mislead the public in an election year. The Finance Minister's speech offers little remedy for the key problems facing the Indian economy that he himself begins by acknowledging: slowdown of growth, rising fiscal deficit and current account deficit. The current crisis required the government to stimulate domestic investment by encouraging consumption from below; instead the FM remained focused on foreign investors. Controlling inflation required expansion of PDS and reinforced subsidies on energy and focus on increasing agricultural output in pulses and oilseeds; instead the government has relied on hope. Meeting the demands and aspirations of the people required substantial and real increase in social sector expenditure; instead the government has resorted to statistical tricks and gimmicks rather than put its money where its mouth is. Nor is there any evidence of the government being serious about better usage and monitoring of the funds spent on these public provisions. Shockingly, the government has not come up with any measure to curb corruption and control the parallel black economy that the public is so visibly exercised about.

An analysis of the summary statistics of the budget make it clear that there is little connect between the rhetoric of the budget and its actual numbers. In his speech the FM claimed that the government has not spared money for welfare schemes; the fact is that the UPA has drastically cut down on most of the

key welfare schemes in the current year itself. The FM's claims about increasing outlays in key sectors is a clear case of statistical fudging; the 'increase' claimed by the FM is with reference to the drastically reduced expenditure (Revised Estimates). In most cases the rise in budget allocations is barely enough to cover inflation. In real terms there is no increase in spending for the aam aadami. The FM has also used the age old devise of distracting public attention with the help of some gimmicks that cost very little.

The government needed to increase tax revenue, which has actually fallen by 4 percent in the current year over what was budgeted; similar false assumptions seem to driving the current projections of 20 percent increase in revenue. The much talked about move to tax the rich turned out to be a damp squib, for it would affect only 42,000 super rich and bring very small gains for the country. This small gain would be more than made up by the generous increase in the tax exemption, mostly for the well off and the corporate. The amount of 'Tax foregone' has gone up from Rs. 5,33,000 crores to Rs. 5,73,000 crores. There is no change in the capital gains regime to curb speculative gains activity in the stock market. The budget gives no indication of a political will to curb black income generation in the economy. The deferment of implementation of GARR to 2016 is another example of the lack of political will to curb tax avoidance. There is nothing in the budget to do away with non-transparent instruments like Participatory Notes

or to reformulate the double taxation treaties with 'tax havens' and black economy conduits.

Most of the schemes meant for the aam aadmi have remained static or have in fact gone down in real terms or even compared to the actual expenditure in the year before. The central Plan size has come down from Rs. 6,51,000 crore in the Budget last year to the Revised estimate of 5,56,000 crores, huge shortfall of Rs. 96,000 crores. In 2012-13 expenditure on agriculture and allied activities, rural development, irrigation and flood control and welfare of ST has actually gone down compared to the actual expenditure of the previous year. A similar comparison of the expenditure on health and education shows a marginal increase that barely keeps pace with inflation. The total expenditure on social services has fallen short by Rs. 23,000 crores compared to the budgeted allocations. This fact acquires significance for much of the social sector expenditure takes place at the level of the states where the transfer has been cut down by as much as 10,000 crores.

Aam Aadmi Party

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All this is welcome and good news but, and it is a strong but, it remains to be seen how far the existing system will allow him to translate his wishes into action and reality. Pro-status-quoist pressures are stronger in the Congress than in other parties.

Invisible and Voiceless

Kalpana Sharma

While we are still talking about women, let us spare a thought for those who do not appear on the pages of our newspapers or on television channels; women who seem invisible even when the subject under discussion relates directly to them.

The monsoon was deficient in many parts of the country last year. As a result, the first reports of drought setting in have already begun to be reported. In Maharashtra, 16 districts have already been declared drought-affected impacting an estimated 12,000 villages. Crops have withered, water is difficult to find and the summer has not even begun. You hear stories of indebtedness and suicide once again. The state government has already predicted that this will be the worst drought since 1972, one that many people would have forgotten but not those who till the land and know the price it extracted from them.

The face of the farmer afflicted by this drying up of land is almost always that of a man. Forgotten most of the time is the fact that the bulk of work done on farms across India is by women. Just statistics never tell the full story but the fact remains that while 79 per cent of rural women are agricultural workers, fewer rural men, 63 per cent, work on land. Despite this reality, where the bulk of the workers on land are women, only nine per cent of women own agricultural land. The untold story of Indian agriculture is not just one of mismanagement — of water and other resources — but also of the refusal to acknowledge women's contribution to agriculture.

Despite numerous studies that have established beyond doubt that the bulk of the work to produce the food that all of us consume is done by women, they are still not recognised as farmers in our official agricultural policies. As a result, whenever the government announces schemes for farmers, the women who are actually doing the work are left out of it.

A telling example of this is the dairy industry. According to some estimates, 93 per cent of dairy products are attributed to the work of women. Something like 15 million women are involved in the dairy industry. They tend the cattle, collect fodder, collect and deliver the dairy products for further processing. Yet, few of them actually own cattle or land. As a result, the men and not the women who do the work usually take the benefits extended by the government to dairy farmers.

The majority of agricultural assets — land, machinery, money and credit — remains firmly in the hands of men. The irony is that despite several policies, where women are supposed to be joint holders with the men of land, or even sole owners, many women are not even aware that they own the land. No one, least of all the men, have bothered to inform them.

Why is any of this important, we can well ask. After all, these are agricultural families where everyone works. What does it matter if women work longer hours than the men? Why is it so important for them to be owners of the land they till? If the men own the land, does that not automatically mean they too are the

owners?

There are numerous reasons that can be given for why women should be acknowledged as principal workers on land, and they should be the owners of that land. The chief reason is that, in the patriarchal culture that continues untouched in this country, a woman without an economic standing stands little chance of asserting her rights not just as a woman but as a human being. Of course, even women with independent economic means are not necessarily respected or heeded. But they have a greater chance to make choices than those who are forced into dependence and as a corollary to that, subservience.

Much of the violence that we do not read about, because it takes place away from the location of our media houses, is rooted in this powerlessness of the women. Every now and then a horrific story will catch our attention. But for every one such story, there are thousands that go unreported because the women at the receiving end do not count — not even in government records. In rural areas, almost half of all rape cases are related to land. In some parts of India, to ensure that women do not get their share of the land, they are declared witches. In others, even where they are entitled, they are forced to sign away their share.

At a time when the airwaves are full of talk about the budget and financial allocations, all those who are concerned about violence against women ought to look at policies

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Kishor Pawar: Socialist Pilgrim

Subhash Ware

Sathi Kishor Pawar began his public life as a soldier of the Rashtra Seva Dal. Later on he came to be known as a prominent leader of the workers in the sugar industry. Being involved in the Rashtra Seva Dal from the beginning he shouldered the responsibility of almost all the institutions and organizations labelled as the Socialist Family. He led the Sugar Workers' Union of Kopergaon as well as of the Baramati Talukas. He did not stop there but advanced much further to reach through the Maharashtra state sugar workers' representative body and the National Co-ordination Committee of Sugar Workers' Unions, to all the sugar workers with their different ideologies, working at various levels; because he was committed to all of them and wanted to solve the problems of all workers.

A little over five feet tall, Kishor Pawar was blessed with a strong and sturdy body and was always attired in spotlessly clean and well pressed Khadi clothes. Being open minded he would, on meeting with anybody, instinctively initiate a conversation. He also had a peculiar knack of pressing his point in such a pleading and imploring manner that he always got his way in any discourse.

Kishor Pawar took his lessons on socialism and secular nationalism in the Rashtra Seva Dal, a school without walls, and acquired his liberal and progressive inclinations from the Warkari Sect (the religious sect whose followers go on a pilgrimage to Pandharpur every

year). When Raosaheb Patawardhan urged him to look into the problems of the sugar workers he promptly resigned from his service and devoted himself to that cause. He put his heart and soul in whatever he undertook and carried it to the conclusion with all his strength. He studied the sugar workers' problems and their root causes so thoroughly that his opinion on the concerned issues proved to be of considerable value even at the national level. The sugar industry was monopolized by a few private financiers when Kishor Pawar started looking into the sugar workers' problems. Later the sugar manufacturing in Maharashtra came to under co-operative sector and many Sugar Co-operatives flourished, putting more money into the pockets of the sugar workers and increasing the purchasing power of the rural people. But along with this tiny prosperity, the co-operatives got infested with nepotistic and dynastic leadership. The co-operative venture beset with corruption and mismanagement and finally many sugar factories were closed down. The inoperative sugar co-operatives were then taken over by the sugar bosses well-heeled through corrupt sugar polity. The reprivatisation of the sugar industry was thus complete and so was the cycle of the problems of sugar workers back to square one. The additional misery is that Kishor Pawar is no more there with the sugar workers to attend to their altered circumstances and new challenges.

He had fought many a battle on behalf of the sugar workers;

got their pay and also their bonus increased. He also managed to secure half pay to the sugar workers when the factories were closed down during the off season and thus considerably improved their condition. However, at the same time he saw to it that the sugar workers ever remain committed to the society at large. That is why these workers participated, in no small measure, in many other movements from the one against inflation to that against declaration of Emergency. That is why the contribution of the Sakhar Kamgar Sabha was of much importance to the workers' and other social movements of Maharashtra. This was possible because Kishor Pawar endeavoured to awaken and sensitize the sugar workers regarding problems of the whole society, not only their own problems.

Although born in Ahmadnagar district he could connect with the activists in the Konkan area with ease. He was especially widely known in the Rajapur constituency and shouldered the responsibility of campaigning in the election for Barrister Nath Pai and Prof. Madhu Dandavate.

If I am not wrong, Kishor Pawar wrote/edited just one book and that was on Barrister Nath Pai. He even named his own house as 'Nath'. Nath Pai did possess a soft corner in Kishor's mind.

He helped a number of candidates win elections besides Nath Pai and Madhu Dandavate. Ironically

enough he could not figure out the riddle of his own defeat in elections. Either the timing or the choice of constituency happened to be wrong. However, he never made a fuss of his own defeat and through his political journey from the Socialist Party to the Janata Dal, whenever the party was in financial difficulty, it was invariably Kishor who could pull the party out of adversity.

Kishor Pawar fought in the Indian Independence struggle, the movement for liberation of the Hyderabad state and the Goa liberation struggle. He was involved in the Sanyukta Maharashtra Agitation; and later on for his participation in the peaceful resistance to imposition of Emergency, he was put behind the bars for 18 months.

S.M. Joshi and Nanasaheb Goray were his most beloved and revered leaders. For him, the two institutions, the S.M. Joshi Socialist Foundation and the Nanasaheb Goray Academy in Pune, were the most active memorials of these two leaders' thoughts. He was first, the treasurer of the Foundation and later became its President. He tried his level best, during his tenure, to bring stability to this institution.

He was looked at as a leader with whom any volunteer of the party could easily engage in a dialogue because he always remained with them and helped them overcome their difficulties. He had created a special niche for himself in the minds of all workers. The demise of this Socialist soldier has orphaned many an institution and organisation.

*Translated from Marathi
by Suman Oak*

Babu Jagjivan Ram : Nation Builder

Mastram Kapoor

History writing of the national builders had suffered many drawbacks. One reason of this is the tendency of personality cult. Except Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad and Subhash Chandra Bose, the names of other nation-builders are generally missing in common discussions. Same can be said about the memorials and monuments in which Nehru-Gandhi family must have scored several centuries. This tendency has done grave injustice to leaders like Dr. Rammanohar Lohia and Babu Jagjivan Ram. Babu Jagjivan Ram remained in the Congress, throughout his political career except for some two and a half years of post-emergency Janata Party rule and yet he suffered total neglect from the Congress. The greater injustice he received from the community in which he was born and which he served whole heartedly throughout his life. The Harijans or Dalit community neglected him in comparison to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, and some fanatic Dalit leaders even used foul language against him.

Leaders of the Dalit movement consider Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as their messiah and also consider Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Shahu Maharaj and Kanshi Ram, etc. as their icons and never include Babu Jagjivan Ram among them although he was not only born as Dalit but also represented them in Indian freedom movement, and nation-building after the Independence, whereas the Dalit leaders mentioned above (except Dr. Ambedkar) did not even belong to Dalit community. From August 15,

1947 to 1984 (when Bahujan Samaj Party was born), it was Babu Jagjivan Ram who fought for the rights of the Dalits in the government. Why then was he totally neglected by Dalit movement?

Babuji was brilliant science talent of Bihar and his academic achievements were no less than any leaders. His mastery over Hindi and English languages was well known and his speeches in both languages were remembered for smooth expression and poetic flavor. In this he can only be compared with speakers like Kamalapati Tripathi, Prakash Vir Shastri and Hiren Mukherjee.

Babuji remained attached to the national stream of politics whereas Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, like Mohammed Ali Jinnah, remained for most of the time, an instrument of the British imperialism and became part of the national politics only after the Independence. It is an undisputed fact that the British government used Dr. Ambedkar against the Congress in freedom struggle in the same way as it used Jinnah. Under their policy of 'divide and rule', the British authorities first separated Muslims from the national stream in 1909 by conferring on them reservations in Legislatures which created the two-nation theory and thereafter tried to separate the Harijans (now called Dalits) by giving them reservation in Legislatures under the Communal Award, in 1932. Both these reservations were given with the right of separate electorate which made these reservations

dangerous for unity of the country. Mahatma Gandhi declared fast unto death against the malicious designs of the British imperialism which resulted in Poona Pact, under which reservations with separate electorate were substituted with nearly double reservations with joint electorate for a certain period. The Ambedkarites accuse Mahatma Gandhi for this saying that he pressurized Dr. Ambedkar to accept these conditions. This is wrong. Dr. Ambedkar was convinced by Gandhi's arguments that separating Harijans from the national stream will create three nations theory and if the country is divided on this theory, there would be unprecedented tragedy. This might have converted Ambedkar to Gandhi's view. The press-statement issued by Dr. Ambedkar, after putting his signatures on Poona Pact, clearly shows that Dr. Ambedkar was satisfied with the agreement. That is why, when the next day, the caste Hindu leaders backed out from the agreement, Dr. Ambedkar bitterly criticised them instead of backing out himself. He willingly cooperated with Mahatma Gandhi by joining Harijan Sevak Sangh.

In 1945-46, Dr. Ambedkar was elected to the Central Assembly from East Bengal, on Muslim League ticket. On August 15, 1947, he lost his membership due to partition of the country. Mahatma Gandhi asked Sardar Patel to get Dr. Ambedkar elected from Bombay. G.V. Maavalankar, who had already filed his nomination from Bombay, was asked to withdraw his nomination and Dr. Ambedkar's nomination was filed and he was elected. Thereafter Gandhi persuaded Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru to induct him into the cabinet as Law Minister and Chairman of the drafting committee of the Constituent Assembly. Ambedkar

acknowledged this generosity on Gandhi's part and even put his trust on him in seeking his help in getting Harijan facilities bill passed in the parliament. Unfortunately, the Ambedkarites do not know or want to know all this and they continue to abuse Gandhi for working against Ambedkar.

Babu Jagjivan Ram was inducted into the first Congress government under Jawaharlal Nehru as a national face of the Harijans or untouchables. His loyalty to the national movement for freedom as well as his concern for the down trodden and suffering people endeared him to a vast population of the country. But the Dalit movement inspired by Dr. Ambedkar ignored him. The reason being, that this movement was based on hatred, bitterness and envy of the upper castes or Brahmanism while Babu Jagjivan Ram's approach was of cooperation, coordination and goodwill. Not that he was less concerned than Dr. Ambedkar towards the suffering of the untouchables or he had undergone less sufferings and indignities compared to Dr. Ambedkar. But he took his sufferings with patience and his indignities with a dignity of a noble soul and even forgave those who washed with Gangajal the statue inaugurated by him. The real cause why the Ambedkarites ignored him was that the Ambedkarites' Dalit movement was basically a separatist movement having no attachment to the freedom movement or to the national aspirations of the Indian people. It was committed only to the well-being of the Dalits of some limited castes. That is why some of their top intellectuals started saying that the Britishers came late and left early and that English language should be made compulsory from the first class to the highest level

of education. How could such people appreciate Babu Jagjivan Ram's approach of cooperation and national interest. They called this approach sycophancy and surrender to Brahmanism. Yet his positive and constructive approach produced many top class leaders from the down trodden classes viz: chief ministers; Jagannath Pahadia, Ashok Gahlot, Bhola Paswan, Anjaiya, Ram Sunder Das, Karpori Thakur, etc; President K. R Narayanan, Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar and some judges of the High Courts and the Supreme Court. As against this, Ambedkarites' Dalit movement has produced only one Chief Minister, that also with support of some upper castes whom they had abused day and night. This movement might have erected many stone memorials of the Dalit icons, including of the living one, but this has not solved even a single problem of the Dalit and Backward communities. Instead, it has created so much bitterness and hatred between upper castes and lower castes that the goal of harmony seems to be receded infinitely and atrocities on Dalits have become a daily affair.

It is intriguing to note why the soft method of cooperation and coordination of Babu Jagjivan Ram could not attract the Dalit and Backward communities, as compared to the method of hatred and envy adopted by Ambedkarites. This draws our attentions to the very valuable observation made by Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, in his article, 'The Meaning of equality', included in his famous book 'Marx, Gandhi and Socialism'. He said:

"Two evils are manifesting themselves in the current Indian situation, and they are probably universal to the human race. Equality

as against those placed above one's own station in life is easy to practice, for in certain situations, jealousy and bitterness come easiest to man. Equality against those placed below one's own station in life is comparatively hard of practice, for sympathy is consuming both materially and spiritually, although a source of great joy after one has experienced it. A passion for equality would not restrict itself to the practice of sympathy; it would also practice anger, though not jealousy.

“Another accompanying evil is the effort of broad sections to lift themselves up with the lever of bitterness and jealousy rather than the development of their talents. This is particularly the case in a situation where tens of centuries have specialised some classes into mental pursuits and most other in to manual work. These oppressed castes tend to throw up a leadership which specializes in the demagogy of jealousy in order to attain equality with the classes of power and wealth. Men of real ability even within these oppressed castes are left behind and get no chance to develop themselves, for those more adept at the strident voice of jealousy easily outrun them. Mankind loses. Egalitarians must be ever aware of the need to develop the outlook and talents of all men, particularly of those oppressed, as much as to fight for equality against the unwilling usurpers of inequality. The usurpers of inequality possess certain virtues, particularly of efficiency and manners, and the crusaders of equality must ever breed their virtues in their own ranks”.

[Collected Works of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Vol.I, Page 406-407]

In conclusion, it can be said on the basis of our experience of sixty-five years of Independence, that the solution to problems related to our caste-ridden society can be found only by the methods of cooperation, sympathy and goodwill as taught by Babu Jagjivan Ram rather than by methods of hatred, envy and confrontation, followed by Ambedkarites' Dalit movement. Unless Dalit movement adopts a positive approach of joining hands with others in eliminating the castes and building a classless, equality based society instead of adopting a selfish approach suspicious towards others, creating permanent hatred among the castes, the country

will slide down towards caste-wars and blood-sheds. This makes Babu Jagjivan Ram more relevant today. His contribution to the social revolution can never be diluted or forgotten in history.

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towards farmers — and whether any of them address the women who do farm work. Let us begin by accepting that women are farmers, that they should get the benefits extended to all farmers and that it is pointless talking about ending violence against women without seeing and recognising women's work and contribution to agriculture.

—The Hindu

Low cost Medical Care for Rural Areas

Yusuf Meherally Centre is keen on promoting low cost, but quality, health care in rural areas. One model the Centre tried has been to create awareness among the Mumbai doctors that it is their duty to do something for the surrounding villages. It succeeded. It set up a Sunday clinic at Tara, a village on Mumbai-Goa highway in 1967 and that is still continuing. There is no dearth of doctors willing to serve patients free once a month or so.

Now there is a proposal to undertake a new initiative and do a similar experiment with a view to attracting medical men to rural areas committed to providing medical care, curative as well as preventive, without their expecting market salaries. For this, one idea that makes sense is to appeal to retired government doctors who do not wish to start private practice. It is possible they will respond. The same with the retired military medical officers. And there are quite a few medical men who are motivated by their ideology – Gandhian or Socialist who too may respond. The freedom movement, as also the early socialist movement, did succeed in making ideologically committed people to move to rural areas to provide health care.

The Centre appeals to Janata's readers to identify such people and introduce them to it.

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साथी अशोक सासवडकर - पहिला स्मृतिदिन

गुरुवार दि. २१ मार्च, २०१३

सायंकाळी ६ ते ९

स्थळ: मुंबई मराठी ग्रंथसंग्रहालय, सुरेंद्र गावस्कर सभागृह, दादर(पूर्व)मुंबई

परिसंवाद विषय:-पर्यायांचा शोध

वक्ते:- श्री.अजित रानडे, श्री.मिलिंद बोकिल, साथी मेधा पाटकर, साथी अजित झा

अध्यक्ष:-प्रा.पुष्पा भावे

साथी-----

साथी अशोक सासवडकर याचा पहिला स्मृतिदिन गुरुवार दि. २१ मार्च २०१३ रोजी आहे. आपण सर्वजण या मनस्वी कार्यकर्त्याचे सहकारी राहिलो आहोत. अशोकने लोकशाही समाजवादी विचारांसाठी आपले संपूर्ण आयुष्य दिले. प्रबोधन-रचना व संघर्ष या सर्व कामात झोकून तो सहभागी झाला. त्याने सुरवातीला युसुफ मेहेरअली सेंटर-तारा व नंतर सुधागड-पाली तालुक्यातील उद्धर गावात निर्मिती या संस्थेची स्थापना करून शेती व रोजगार निर्मितीचे विविध प्रयोग केले.

ग्रामिण विकासात विकेंद्रित तंत्राबाबत जाणीव जागृती, प्रशिक्षण व प्रेरणा निर्माण करण्याकरता सतत विविध कार्यशाळातून प्रयत्न केले. महिला सबलीकरण, पंचायत राज प्रबोधन व प्रशिक्षण, शेती प्रशिक्षण प्रयोग तसेच फळबाग लागवड व विविध साधनांद्वारा छोट्या ग्रामीण, कुटीर उद्योगाची निर्मिती. पर्यावरण रक्षण - विकास, जैविक-संद्रीय शेतीचे प्रयोग, यातून स्थिर, रोजगार निर्माण करणारी व आनंदी जीवनप्रणालीचा मार्ग जनतेला देण्याचा प्रयत्न अशोकने केला. म्हणूनच या कामाची गरज आजही आहे. अशोकच्या या वाटचालीत अनेक तरुणांनी आपला मोलाचा वेळ दिला व देत आहेत. या कामासाठी अर्थातच आर्थिक सहाय्याची गरज आहे. संस्थेचा वार्षिक खर्च जवळपास वीस लाख रुपये आहे. त्यामुळेच अशोकच्या पहिल्या स्मृतिदिनी आपण अशोकचे मित्र-सहकारी- असा संकल्प करुया की येत्या २ ऑक्टोबर २०१३ रोजी हा निधी (देणगी व स्मरणिका जाहिरातीद्वारे) जमा करून संस्थेला देऊ. संस्थेने स्वतःच्या पायावर उभे रहायला हवेच पण आपल्या मित्रांनी सुरु केलेल्या कामाला आपल्या मदतीची आज गरज आहे. त्यामुळे केवळ एक वर्षाच्या खर्चाची जबाबदारी आपण उचलत आहोत.

आपल्या सहकार्या बद्दल खात्री आहेच. कार्यक्रमास आपण उपस्थित रहावे व आपला सहभाग कळवावा, ही विनंती.

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देणगी करता निर्मिती या नावाने चेक व डी.डी.(पेअेबल-तारा.जि.रायगड)काढावा.

Let us think like Socialists

Bapu Heddurshetti

After the fall of the Soviet Russia, the communist regimes all over the world have disintegrated, organisationally and also ideologically. However, socialists can be proud that they are still an organisational and an ideological force to reckon with in the world. However, in India, the situation is reverse. While the communists have been able to retain some foothold, the socialists have scattered not only organisationally but also ideologically. Socialists in India have not been able to even hold on to their ideology and evolve it so that it can respond to the changed circumstances and the new challenges. Thus it has become imperative that socialists should not only build a genuine socialist party but also regain the focus on socialist ideology. Evolving socialist ideology to respond to the changed situation and circumstances so as to face the new challenges is a *sine qua non* for building a socialist organisation, let alone a party, since it is not possible to build a new socialist organisation or a party on the ideology of the last century.

Human beings have several and different identities. For example a person is a son/daughter, a husband/wife, a father/mother, an Indian, a Marathi Manus or Manushi or a Bihari, or a Hindu, or a Muslim, or an agriculturist or a factory worker, etc. But many a times we confuse between two or more identities. To give an instance, many Kannada literary or linguistic associations in Karnataka sport the image of Goddess Bhuvaneshwari in their functions as the Goddess of

Karnataka. A Mahila Co-operative Bank in Bangalore has built a Ganesha temple on the ground floor of its building which one has to pass through to enter the Bank. But then many Muslims have contributed to the Kannada literature and many Muslims and Christians also have their accounts in the Mahila Bank. If any one of them is a strict practicing Muslim, how can he identify himself with an organisation or a Bank which sports a picture of a Goddess or a God, for the Muslims are not only against pictorial depiction of God but are also monotheistic and believe only in 'Allah'. Here people tend to confuse language and economic activity with religion. Many Muslims identify themselves with Urdu language and hence many people think that Urdu is a language of the Muslims. But in Kerala the Muslims speak Malayalam language and not Urdu. Here religion is not confused with language because since Malayalam is spoken by Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike, nobody there identifies the Malayalam language with any of these religions.

Similarly there are many ideologies with which the socialists identify themselves in addition to Socialism, like Nationalism, Gandhism, Environmentalism, etc. During the freedom struggle, the Socialists identified themselves with 'nationalism' also and hence launched the 'Congress Socialist Party' within the Indian National Congress and joined the freedom struggle and did not join the Communist Party of India though most of them were Marxists because

the Communist Party did not identify itself with the nationalist movement. Similarly many Socialists like Achyut Patwardhan, and in the later stages Jayaprakash Narayan himself, identified themselves with Gandhism. However there is no problem when Socialists identify themselves with another ideology in addition to socialism. The problem arises when they confuse between the two ideologies and start claiming and believing that the 'other' ideology itself is socialism. They sometimes also even think like a 'common man' sans any ideology.

Of late, the socialists are thinking more in terms of 'common man's perspective'. For example on corruption, socialists tend to think like 'common people' and offer populist solutions to the problem and do not try to offer 'socialist' diagnosis of the problem and 'socialist' prognosis. They suggest 'strict and stringent laws', their 'strict implementation', 'independent Lok Pal' to enquire into the charges of corruption and to punish the guilty, etc. We get dragged into the 'common man's perception and start debating whether Lok Pal should have this power or that power and whether this dignitary or that dignitary should be included within the jurisdiction of the Lok Pal.

However, no serious attempt is made by the socialists to relate corruption to the existence of inequality in society which should be the 'socialist' diagnosis of the cancer of corruption. A 'socialist position' on corruption could be, or rather should be, that no amount of Lok

Pals or punishments of the guilty will eliminate or even reduce corruption, as people do commit murders though they know that murderers are likely to be hanged, but only the effort to remove the temptation for corruption that economic inequality engenders that can make a dent on corruption.

Sometimes they take 'nationalist' positions and presume that they are taking 'socialist' positions. For example, when some socialists take the view that the Multi-national Corporations will take away their profits to their own 'countries' and 'drain' India of resources, a la 'drain theory' of Dadabhai Naoroji, they are thinking like 'nationalists' rather than as 'socialists'. A socialist position on the profits earned by the 'foreign' companies could be that such profits should be distributed among a large number of people and as far as possible equitably, whether the recipients are Indians or foreigners.

Some socialists define socialism as 'simple living' after Gandhian thinking. They tend to think that simple living, limiting our wants, wearing Khadi, etc after Gandhian thinking, is socialism. But if every one starts living a simple life and limit their wants, and starts wearing Khadi, will it be socialism, if inequalities persist and fraternity is lacking?

Similarly, while talking about agriculture, socialists often talk of provision of irrigation, better support prices to agricultural produce, provision of cheaper credit, etc. However, these are issues which are better taken up by agricultural scientists or agricultural economists and are spoken of by almost all political parties. Then how are socialists different from agricultural scientists or agricultural economists

or other political formations? For example, providing irrigation *per se* does not reduce inequality but in fact perpetuates it.

In 2001 7.5 crore holdings i.e., 62 percent of the holdings had less than 1 hectare and cultivated 19 percent of the land and 4.3 crore holdings i.e., 36.5 percent of the holdings had 1 to 10 hectares and cultivated 68 percent of the land. While socialists talk about qualitative improvement of agriculture by improved irrigation through public spending etc., no socialist appears to be bothered about evening out the size of the land holdings thereby advancing towards equality or about bringing the small and marginal unviable farmers into farming co-operatives with a view to make agriculture viable for them and advance towards the socialist ideal of fraternity.

Hence, Socialists should focus on creating 'equality' in the agrarian sector, by equal redistribution of land holdings and on promoting 'fraternity' by encouraging co-operative farming by integrating land owning farmers and landless labourers. These latter issues are not taken up by agricultural scientists or agricultural economists or by other political parties. Unfortunately whereas socialists take up positions that should be taken up by others like agricultural scientists, 'nationalists' or Gandhians, these others rarely take up socialist positions.

Not that, one should not take 'nationalist' or 'Gandhian' positions. Not that a socialist should not think like a nationalist, or a 'Gandhian'. But the point is that one should be clear in his mind that it is a 'nationalist' or a 'Gandhian' position and not a 'socialist' one. Those who take such positions should identify such positions as 'nationalist'

or 'Gandhian' positions and not confuse them with or equate them with 'socialist' positions. This will help us in developing a 'socialist' perspective on issues.

The confusion between different ideologies is worst confounded by the confusion about what is meant by socialism. "In India today almost every one claims to be a Socialist. The near unanimity however is based upon a lack of clarity and precision" says Asoka Mehta in the introduction to his book "Studies in Socialism". But even five decades earlier, in his book 'An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism' George Bernard Shaw had said "Unfortunately, most of the people who call themselves Socialists at present, do not know what Socialism means, and attach its name to all sorts of fads and faiths and resentments and follies that have nothing to do with it".

Advocating the 'destruction of castes' rather than bringing about 'equality among castes' is one such 'fads and faiths' that Shaw speaks about. What can be a socialist's objection to the caste system except that some castes consider themselves to be superior to other castes while some castes accept that they are inferior to other castes? If so, the socialist strategy should be to bring about economic and socio-cultural equality among the castes rather than destroying the castes themselves, which can exist even in a socialist society as socio-cultural units and as examples of socio-cultural plurality of a socialist society. Likewise, obsession of some socialists with peripheral issues like language by stretching the issue to demonstrate its relevance to the core values of socialism, has driven them away from the very core values of socialism.

Worse still, in his book 'Future of Socialism' C.A.R. Crosland says "But the worst source of confusion is the tendency to use the word (socialism) to describe, not a certain kind of society, but particular policies which are or are thought to be, means to attaining this kind of society or realising these attributes". It is hence that many socialists of the last generation thought that land reforms were socialism, though the land reforms like the abolition of Zamindari and Land to the Tiller policies ended only feudal land relations and created capitalist land relations of the owners of land called farmers and the workers on those lands called the agricultural labourers. Many thought that nationalisation or socialisation of the towering heights of means of production was socialism.

While the Congress has tried to decentralise democratic governance by introducing the Panchayat Raj and giving it a semblance of a constitutional status, instead of strengthening the decentralised structures of state governance, the Socialists have been, perhaps unknowingly, strengthening the centralised state by making ever increasing demands for its intervention in improving the lives of the people, while totally forgetting the need to encourage community initiatives for creating a co-operative commonwealth which should ultimately replace state and which should be the ultimate dream of a democratic socialist.

Socialists also have not been able to find a proper equation with power. After gaining independence they had to remain in the opposition for nearly two decades. So when in 1967 they were catapulted onto power, most of them, of course with honourable exceptions, were

very uncomfortable with power and were always eager to get out of it, citing one or the other reason. This is also an after effect of the socialists' 'opposition psychosis'.

Socialists have been the victims of the 'opposition psychosis. perhaps due to their participation in the freedom movement in which they 'opposed' the British rule in India and like a hangover, they have continued their policy of 'opposing'. The question is not that they should not oppose the government. If the socialists are in the opposition, they have to oppose the government. But should there be a blind opposition to everything that a government does or a selective opposition to the policies of the government that adversely affect the core values of socialism? Should they also oppose the progressive measures being taken by the government only because they are in the opposition? The tendency has been to oppose even what could be the progressive measures of the government by branding the measures as anti-people or as anti-progress.

But socialism is not only about opposing the government but also

about 'governing'. Socialists have to propose policies for governance, the policies they will implement when they come to power. On this count the socialists have certainly failed. After the first surge of programmes like the abolition of Zamindari, Land to the Tiller etc., which in effect eliminated the feudal land relations like the Zamindar and the tenant and replaced them with capitalist land relations of land owning farmer and land-less agricultural labourer, the socialists have not been able to formulate their next programmes concerning land and carry forward the reforms and aim at transforming these capitalist land relations into 'socialist' land relations. This applies to other programmes also. They have not been able to carry forward the programmes to their next stage of evolution in the journey towards socialism.

Clearly there is need to view every issue from the point of view of the normative values of socialism, i.e., liberty, equality and fraternity, and assess whether these values are enhanced or curtailed and evolve strategies to enhance these values.

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(Continued from Page 5)

progress on DMIC which FM specially mentioned, is towards acquiring/ diverting 3,50,000 hectares of land and yet, without impact assessment, necessary clearances, with no guarantee of more employment generation than to be lost, and with Japanese support. No concern is expressed for affected, while so many projects – industries, power to infrastructure are proposed. Without consent of the Gram- Sabhas or local urban

unit, this is surely to crush life and livelihood.

The truly necessary infrastructure for the millions of urban poor is that of shelter and neighbourhood amenities. A passing mention of 2000 crores indicates, it is to be left to the private developers and not brought into the plan expenditure. Not a mention about Rajiv Awas Yojana which is the only scheme to usher in slum free cities.

We welcome higher allocation for SCs, STs, minorities as non-transferable, we appreciate some priority given to alternatives. India as a country firstly has to secure food, clothing, shelter and livelihood for every citizen before it becomes the 7th largest or fall in the 5 top economies of the world. We surely have to change, till then we can't claim to have carried out our role within the fiscal regions and other world fora.

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Diplomatic setback

S. Viswam

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Kuldip Nayar

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K. S. Chalam

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Pannalal Surana

**Movement:
The legacy and legitimacy**
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Indo-Italian bilateral ties have remained what diplomatic jargon would describe as “cool, calm and correct.” They have rarely witnessed the usual peaks and pits normal to an active relationship. Yet, suddenly the ties have dipped and touched a new low. Rome’s refusal to send back their two marines accused of killing two Indian fishermen for trial in India has resulted in a major international crisis.

Hindsight tells us that New Delhi, and even the country’s high judiciary, have been disturbingly complacent, naïve and trusting in the matter of the Italian marines. They trusted the Italian government when all available evidence suggested that Rome could betray that trust. New Delhi would do well to take a lesson from this episode: in international relations, no one except your own self is worthy of your trust. This is the reason why diplomats always caution you to “oil your guns and keep your powder dry.”

Italy’s track record as far as this episode is concerned has been quite innocent. It showed respect for due process of law and participated in it till the case went to the Supreme Court. After the marines were sent back the first time—they were permitted by

the SC to go home for Christmas—India seems to have become too complacent. The two were even shifted away from ordinary prison accommodation to a guest house. But India got a slap on its face when Italy was asked to send the marines back and has given a new twist to the entire story, Italy now asks India to solve the case through diplomacy.

Another new demand from Rome is that the case be referred to the UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea). This demand has already been rejected by and the rejection has been accepted by Rome which is why it conceded by implication Indian jurisdiction after initially claiming that only Italy had jurisdiction. The prime minister has said that Italy’s action in refusing to send back the marines is unacceptable. The implication is that Italy will ultimately have to return the marines. One sovereign country cannot unilaterally break an undertaking given to the highest court in the other sovereign country. The Supreme Court took the undertaking on its face value and allowed the marines to travel.

Admittedly, in retrospect it would seem that Italy was insincere from the

Between the lines

Bangladesh means business

Kuldip Nayar

beginning, but India was caught flat-footed. Many options are available to India to retrieve the situation. First, it has to decide whether to give the crisis a confrontational character or to treat the issue with maximum goodwill and act in a give and take spirit. It has to bear in mind the condition of the victims (the family) of the Indian fishermen shot by the marines. Secondly, it has to bear in mind the possibility of opposition threats to make the marines issue a big one politically.

The government is already in the docks over the issue of VVIP choppers, and relations with Italy have been strained to that extent. The ultimate decision it will have to take is the determination of how important Indo-Italian relations are, and whether strong reaction will imperil them in the long run.

Dhaka was a distant dot on India's map when I was living in my home town, Sialkot. Partition pushed me to Delhi and, happily for me, the dot came closer. I took the first plane to Dhaka as soon as it became the capital of the liberated Bangladesh. For the first time, I heard *Joi Bangla*, a slogan or an invocation, from the weary Bengalis returning home. The airport was littered with luggage and looked disorderly with long queues before the immigration desks. Yet every face was writ with determination to make the freedom meaningful for the sacrifices they sought to offer.

That was nearly 40 years ago. Whenever I went to Dhaka I looked for that spirit. Now I find the same urge of *Joi Bangla* returning. Most of the 180 million people feel the same sense of pride and proudly find that the idealism within them has not extinguished. In the three-week-old stir, they have proved that their fight against fundamentalism, something they witnessed when they separated from West Pakistan, is still raging. It seems that a country which had lost its ethos is returning to the right path.

That *Jammat-e-Islami* should oppose a secular ideology is understandable because the party does not believe in pluralism. Yet its use of violence to deny the country its ideology of liberation is to deny the very baptism of the nation. The liberation struggle represents the revolt against the colonial rule which East Bengal suffered at the hands

of West Pakistan. It also negates the two-nation theory, Pakistan's *raison d'être*. When Bangladesh became independent, more Muslim population walked away from Pakistan which hugged to the thesis based on religion. Religion doesn't make nations; in fact, nations make religion. It is futile to keep Muslims and Hindus apart on the basis of their beliefs.

For people who had staked all they had to wrest themselves from the unwilling hands of Pakistan could not stay away long from their three basic demands: death sentence for the perpetrators of war crime committed during the liberation struggle of 1971; a ban on the *Jammat-e-Islami* and its students wing, the *Islami Chattar Shivir*, both involved in war crimes against the Bengali population; and, boycott of companies controlled by the *Jammat*.

In 1952, Pakistani soldiers had shot and killed seven young Bengalis at Dhaka University. Those killed were protesting against the imposition of Urdu as a compulsory language. Language, culture and ethnicity were staking their claim. In a sense, February 21, 1952 was *Shahbag Square* before its time. No wonder, *Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman*, founder of the country and father of *Sheikh Hasina* of the *Awaami League*, insisted on calling the then eastern part of Pakistan 'East Bengal'. Today, of course, this is Bangladesh. He anticipated that

Madhu Dandavate

By

B. Vivekanandan

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Pakistan would rather give up Bangladesh than Urdu. And this is precisely what happened.

It has taken the nation some years to realize that it cannot sustain its secular as well as liberation spirit without punishing those who had usurped power in the name of liberation. But they were not the real liberators. The youth, which must get the credit for leading the movement, has forced their people to see their face in the mirror and recognize that the real liberators had been pushed aside while they should have been the real beneficiaries. In the process, the anti-liberators have seen during the years they were in power that the original commitment to stay pluralistic would be mixed with religion, just as Khalida Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Jammāt did.

The youth have made the country realize that those who opposed freedom for Bangladesh, plotted in conjunction with the military Junta in West Pakistan and oppressed their own people must be separated from the liberators. The latter see the Jammāt as a part of the Razakār militia that was an ancillary to the Pakistan army and are determined to punish those who sided with the aggressors. They consider it essential to remove the stranglehold of the Jammāt from politics, economy and society. Make no mistake, these are not the only young people in Bangladesh at Shahbag, the venue for the agitation, who are against communalism but they seem to be the only ones who count.

The situation is not easy when huge money is pouring into the coffers of the Jammāt and when the only viable opposition BNP, have

(Continued on Page 9)

Primacy of Fiscal Deficit in Indian Budget

K. S. Chalam

Ever since the Whig Prime Minister Robert Walpole referred to the term "budget", while opening the leather bag in British Parliament in 1733, the term became popular throughout the world for an annual financial exercise. The first budget in our country was presented for seven and half months in November 1947. The Constitution has made special provisions for the presentation of the annual financial statement (budget) in the Parliament. It has undergone far-reaching changes in the budget speeches of Finance Ministers - starting with few pages to that of volumes in print, comprising different aspects of revenue and expenditure and other matters. The latest change is about the 'Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement' presented by P. Chidambaram along with other budget papers, appears to be continuation of a new structure initiated in 2005.

There was hardly an occasion immediately after independence to look at fiscal deficit except as the overall budget deficit of excess expenditure over revenue. The federal structure of the country and the separation of functions between Union and States along with the division of resources are clearly laid in the Constitution. Of course, they are increasingly becoming contentious issues with growing aspirations of provincial groups and parties. In fact, the liberalization of the economy has further strengthened these divisions, with regional satraps wielding more power. However,

the central leadership and the union governments have been trying to resolve some of these issues with the existing institutional structures of fiscal federalism. But, a new regime of fiscal prudence with measurable indicators was brought in to the jargon of our budgets from 1991. It is noted that, "a more complete measure of macroeconomic imbalance used internationally is the concept of gross fiscal deficit which reckons the total resource gap in terms of excess of total Government expenditure over revenue receipts and grants. This concept fully reflects the indebtedness of the Government". This shows the philosophy behind the concept and the conditions of the fiscal profligacy of the period resulting in alleged crisis in Balance of Payments.

Expertise in Public Finance is not a pre condition for budget making as the trajectory of a budget is decided prior to its presentation. It seems three important quantitative indicators now dominate the field: The Rating agencies, SENSEX and the Fiscal deficit. A new piece of legislation was also brought in 2003 known as FRBM and amended in 2012. Some of the parliamentarians who talk about the defects or merits of the budgets appear to be unfamiliar with the constitutional provisions in Articles from 107 to 117. Are they not infringed? For instance, six important policy modifications were made to give primacy of Fiscal Deficit to arrive at 5 percent of GDP in 1991. They are: 1. Reduction in

the fertilizer subsidy by increasing the average price by 30 percent. 2. Abolition of cash compensatory support for exports, 3. Abolition of subsidy on sugar through PDS, 4. Offering 20 percent Government equity in PSEs to public, 5. A 20 percent increase in the prices of motor spirit and LPG, and 6. Adjustment of Tax rates to yield net revenue of Rs 2500 crores.

The approach of the policy makers in Delhi appears to be that of a banker and not necessarily that of an economist. A banker looks at the creditworthiness of the loanee (borrower) and not his needs. This is alright for an individual, but can we treat a country like this? However, the World Bank and IMF such institutions look at the borrowing country like a customer and prescribe prudential norms. The concept of Fiscal deficit is part of that strategy. Fiscal deficit is total expenditure of the government (revenue and capital) minus revenue receipts minus loans and other capital receipts, expressed as a proportion of GDP. It was around 7 percent before 1991 and was brought down to 5.4 percent in 1995-96 and further reduced to 4.4 in 2004-5. It was again moved up to 5.7 percent in 2011-12 and is being regulated to 4.8 percent in the current budget. It is noted by the FPSS that “the fiscal policy of 2013-14 has been calibrated with two fold objectives - first to aid economy in growth revival and second to bring down the deficit from 2012-13 level so as to leave space for private sector credit as the investment cycle picks up.” There are two other deficits: the revenue deficit consisting of revenue expenditure minus revenue receipts

(Continued on Page 15)

Development vs. Internal Security: *Who Gains and Who Suffers*

Prafulla Samantara

The nation is growing through a terrible time. It is terrible not only because incidences of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, ill health, school drop outs, farmers' suicides, disparities between individuals and groups are on the rise at a very alarming rate. It is terrible also because the nation is not aware of what is wrong with the nationals and the nationals are not allowed to know what truth is and what is untruth. An industry seems to be working day in and day out to create confusions in the minds of the citizens/people of this country in such a way that most pertinent issues are ignored or neglected and non-issues come to the centre stage. The media in our times has been instrumental in converting issues into non-issues and non-issues into issues. As a consequence, unrest and discontentment are also on the rise as all affected people and communities don't get their outstanding issues resolved. When they approach representative institutions of democracy such as the legislative assemblies, the parliament, the grass-root institutions through difficult means they don't find any one sensitive to their issues who can at least listen to them with care and attention. The bureaucracy despite reforms remains alienated from the masses, though it has come very close to the corporate world which often targets the livelihood resources of the common men such as land, water and forest. When the judiciary is approached as a last resort there also the common man finds it an alien territory, friendlier towards

the powerful elements. Anyone who wants to seriously analyze the issues of popular unrest in India in any form should be sensitive enough to understand whether it is an ill motivated, externally inspired and engineered one or whether it is yet another case of expressing anger and frustration as the so-called development inherently excludes a vast majority of Indians from the process. This is extremely important as the understanding or lack of it, or even a simple perception of ours, decides whether it is an 'internal security' issue where guns will resolve the issue or whether it is a case of development deprivation which will certainly require no application of force or armed power of the state.

Development or Deprivation

We have come across a few things pertaining to development since independence which has created a complex cycle in which we see problems keep rising and not getting resolved. First, our development planners never held the common men to be in the centre of their thinking. Who are these common men? Certainly, the vast majority of people engaged in farming, cultivation as well as artisans, fishermen, forest dwellers and other traditional livelihood dependent population. They were excluded from the beginning itself and the tribal sub-plans of the government targeting specific primitive tribes were not a success. Green revolution never helped the small and marginal farmers. Rather

it made the vast majority of farmers hostile against farming. It derailed the land reforms agenda as green revolution required concentration of land and not land distribution. As a result more and more people started leaving agriculture. Odisha, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh which were producing 25 percent of nation's food grains in 1951 are nowhere in the producers' list. They have topped the list in terms of poverty, malnutrition and disease. These are the areas that are on top now in mineral production map of the country. No FDI is coming here to address the issues of hunger and deprivation. FDI is coming to exploit the rich mineral resources of these areas. Incidentally, these are the areas that witness highest concentration left-wing extremism. Even the Planning Commission special group headed by Former Secretary of Government of India, Dr. Debu Bandopadhyaya did also talk about this complex cycle. But we ignored the complex part and thought of providing very simplistic solutions of intervening through security forces. We never thought we are now dealing with our own citizens. The Integrated Action Plan that the government declared for such disturbed districts could not convince how and what was integrated. Just think about someone in your family - a son or a daughter who may be quite violent or aggressive in nature. Do you say- "Take a chocolate like IAP and keep quite or else I shall kill you" or do you all get together in your family and sincerely try to understand why someone is so upset or so aggressive?

Even in states where so-called development has succeeded the story does not provide much hope. In just 25 years, 2.5 lakh farmers have committed suicide. Most of

these suicides have taken place in the so-called developed states such as Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Punjab. The story of FDI coming in lakhs of crores of rupees brings along with it the fact that about 3000 farmers in Odisha have committed suicide in the last 11 years. Now they are being forced to dispose off their land and no one asks them, "what will you do after the land is gone". If you want to know what they are doing, you just look around in your town you will find them as construction workers, brick workers as cities like Surat and Raipur can't accommodate all of them. This is happening at a time when the number of billionaires in India is continuously on the rise ever since economic reforms project was launched in India in the 1990s. If we take Montek Singh Ahluwalia's measurement of poverty, someone is called poor if his house can't spend Rs 26 a day in the village. Please compare the poor man's income of Rs 26 a day with that of 1000000000 rupees of a citizen of the country whom we call billionaire and tell me if your conscience approves this as normal in a democracy. Dr. Arjun Sen Gupta committee of the planning commission in 2007 revealed that 77 percent of rural India has capacity to spend less than Rs. 20/- per day.

Even with all their difficulties the poor have been managing to live a life with tremendous hardships in spite of the state. But even that is not allowed. Because certain companies have to prosper and earn sky-reaching profits we decided to open up mineral rich areas which are heavily forested and where tribals live in large number. When we invite large investments for mining, anyone who invests 1 dollar in mining gets 100 dollars in returns and in the process devastates an

ecosystem which does not have any monetary value but which has been sustaining life on earth for thousands of years. The natural custodians of these resources who have been protecting them so well for so many generations are being displaced from their habitat and deprived of their right to livelihood and life. Without giving any thought about their future we go on removing them mercilessly from their ancestral habitat and when they protest we crush them. We call them Maoists though most of them don't know what Maoism is. There are Maoists but they are not everywhere. Particularly the struggles in Odisha against POSCO, Vedanta, Utkal Alumina, TATAs, Jindal, Adani, etc are spontaneous resistance of farmers and forest dwellers. But they are being crushed by using brute force and in certain places they are deliberately called Ultras as that makes the task easier - of repressing them. The most revealing example one finds in Nira Radia tapes where Nira is telling Vir Singhvi that TATAs are fighting with Maoists in Kalinganagar - a 21st century lie, so irresponsibly circulated.

We Need Serious Introspection

Friends, there are many stories which will make you cry if you think you have fellow citizens who are living in such wretched and repressive conditions whereas life for you is not so difficult. Where is the Indian brotherhood among us when we are gradually becoming indifferent towards each other? How can we resolve issues affecting the nationals/citizens without making any sincere efforts to get to the roots of each issue? On top of that we are deciding to resolve issues at gun point - today paramilitary forces, tomorrow the military. Somewhere reason has deserted us. How can we

think of using military in dealing with our own citizens? The people who have put up military uniform have single mission to defend the territory of the country at any cost as their own countrymen will have to live peacefully inside. These countrymen are none other than their own brothers and sisters who are farmers, forest dwellers, fisher folk, artisans and workers who are also fighting to defend their livelihoods against corporate takeover. While the men in military uniform are defending the nation, their brothers and sisters are defending the nationals by providing them with food and basic services. But the task has been equally hard and challenging for them as almost all livelihood sources have been threatened and the political leadership continues to be hostile and apathetic to their plight. We should not allow a divide between the two important class of fighters who are defending the nation and nationals in hostile conditions as this will threaten the overall security of the country. We should reexamine our concept of development and make necessary transformation otherwise the confusions will grow and ultimately we will end up in fighting with each other. We can't say Jai Jawan, if the Kisan is dying. We can't also engage the Jawan to kill the Kisan just because we don't understand the reasons of his unrest. We don't try to understand that may be we are the cause of his unrest. Friends, we should be in a position to say very proudly both 'Jai Kisan, Jai Jawan' and not just Jai Jawan at the cost of Jai Kisan.

(Edited text of the keynote presentation in the roundtable conference organized at Lucknow under the aegis of Headquarters of Army Central command on 13 February 2013).

What ails Indian Polity?

Pannalal Surana

Communal hatred, in the name of religion, instigated by political organizations accompanied by violent acts is a great destabilizing factor. Bharatiya Janata Party and a few fundamentalist Muslim groups are indulging into that kind of activity.

Capitalist forces unleashed in the name of Globalisation are trying to extract huge profits by reducing the number of workers on the one hand and charging high prices to the consumers on the other. Greedy captains of corporate houses are pressurizing rulers-that-be in all countries to help them acquire control over natural resources like land, minerals, water, etc. Consequently, traditional inhabitants and beneficiaries of the areas concerned are driven out to trot unknown tracts in search of meaningful occupations. Polarisation of strange nature is taking place.

Consumerism, in the form of over-indulgence, is causing great harm to the health and culture of large citizenry. Vulgar advertisements, telecast, broadcast and printed 24x7 are corrupting the minds of youths and juveniles.

Congress party is mainly responsible for this degeneration of political economy of our country though other mainstream parties are not free from the blame.

The people, on their part, are indulging in gross indiscipline in public, viz. while using private

vehicles on roads or travelling by trains or buses. There are heaps of garbage accumulating on roads, crossroads, markets, bus stands, riverside. Dirt and filth everywhere and so is urinating in the open spaces at bus stands or in bazaar.

Over the sixty years since India became independent bureaucratic apparatus has expanded vastly. In rural areas, teachers, gram sevaks, doctors in PHCs, muster clerks and assistant engineers don't stay at the places where they are posted. They are commuting daily by private two-wheelers or buses. Nobody is bothered about the work. During most of the office hours, the premises look like deserted places, with lot of dust piled on cupboards, racks and files as well as tables and chairs in total disarray. Whenever a citizen visits any government office for his work, either the officer concerned is not there and nobody in the office knows where he/she has gone, or if s/he is there, the papers concerned are missing. The client is told to supply a fresh set. And, of course, no paper or file moves without putting some weight on it. Corruption has spread to every nook and corner. The rates are rising in proportion to the rising tempo of popular agitations against corruption. Government employees, barring a few exceptions, have become extremely irresponsible and arrogant. They are not at all bothered by the possibility of punishment or disciplinary action. They enjoy protection of various provisions in the relevant laws and of their trade unions.

Sense of duty and responsibility are equally lacking in the professions of doctors, pleaders, chartered accountants and so on.

One is totally dismayed. What point is there in asking the Government to undertake new programmes of development or welfare schemes?

It is the experience of many activists, across the board, that the toiling masses or their sections are lukewarm, if not totally apathetic, to any programme of action to get their grievances redressed or new demands raised in their behalf. They seem to have lost faith in collective action aiming at higher goals. Instead, every person tries to go by a short cut. They don't mind paying a bribe to get things done. Individually, many of them are too eager to fall easy prey to various allurements offered by the corporate directly or through media. Indulgence in vices like drinking alcohol, grotesque entertainment, gambling, etc. is too rampant. Teenagers are also participating in "rave parties"

How can such a lot respond to a call for determined political action?

These days, elections are won by money/muscle power. A large section of voters are prone to preferring 'a short cut' even in that field. Given the mentality and the habits of large number of voters as described above, the path of principled politics that we, the Socialist Party(India), have chosen to follow, stands little chance of success in elections.

This is not to suggest bidding good-bye to, or keep away from, elections forever or give up

principled politics. It is my firm belief that dedicated and intense political work is the only way out - to help the people get out of the rot. It is the duty of ours not to allow this great country to return to the "dark ages" of the second millennium. Like any other nation, India is capable of rejuvenating itself and leading a spirited and civilized existence. That is possible only if its political, social and economic order is based on the principles of justice and equity. Bringing about that kind of transformation requires two things : (1) changing the mindset and the habits of the common people by making them aware of the bad habits and selfish, shortsighted attitude which many of our people have developed over the last fifty years or so, and (2) building up an army of devoted, self-disciplined and competent activists. This is an uphill task. People will have to be told that better social order cannot be built if all the bad habits and vices are allowed a free play. Citizens will have to decide whether to suffer all the ills of this degenerating consumerist society or to stand up and give up the socially harmful habits. That may hurt a little for a while. But this is the price we will have to pay. No noble goal can be achieved without paying a price in the form of "blood, sweat and tears". If self-sacrificing vanguards come forward, people will respond sooner than later.

Political party, by definition, should participate in elections. But it is not inevitable that we should tell the people only what they would like to listen. At times, it becomes necessary to tell a few unpalatable, but enervating things. No bribe to be paid, whatever the delay or denial. Strict observance of the rules that are not, ipso facto, unjust. For

conducting the affairs of a society rules are to be framed and enforced. Citizens should follow the rules willingly. Willing participation helps build up sound social order. Political activists should not hesitate to speak out frankly when it is called for. Playing to the gallery is not always a good policy.

These days, a number of so-called Godmen are leading the masses to participate in superstitious rituals. Yagnyas are performed for inviting the rains to come. A number of political activists take lead in organizing such events. This is not only useless but greatly harmful. Activists, committed to bring about radical transformation (Sampoorna Kranti) should be bold enough to resist such rituals. Some would say that doing it may have adverse effects on the electoral prospects. Actually, if cogent case is made out and put forcefully, some of the citizens would certainly appreciate such bold initiatives. Activists should get engaged in constructive activities that are beneficial to the people. That helps image-building which can be helpful when radical initiatives are to be taken.

That takes us to the second plank. Small local groups are to be groomed and ideologically oriented. There must be clarity of thought and courage of conviction. When a small group of activists is formed and trained over a period of two-three months, it can serve as a vanguard of transformation.

This is a time-taking process. With patience, perseverance and full faith in the creed that we have adopted after due consideration, a band of dedicated activists can succeed in accelerating the pace of radical transformation.

India Against Corruption Movement: The legacy and legitimacy

Nishikanta MohaPatra

Peoples' discontent against mal-administration in general and corruption in particular got a vent through the movement called India Against Corruption (IAC). Its popular face Anna Hazare with his formidable lieutenant Arvind Kejriwal ensured that the crescendo against corruption reaches its all time height and people from nook and corner of the country join it. The movement even aroused the enthusiasm of the patriots from overseas and demonstrations were organized in different countries apart from the online support and physical presence in Delhi and elsewhere within the country. The support and participation of the public ensured that the movement evoked instant comparison with Jayaprakash Narayan's movement of the nineteen-seventies which ensured a paradigm shift of power from the Congress to the non-Congress regime. Personal experience of individual fighters against corruption and media exposures of various scandals became the order of the day. Debates, discussions, articles, initiatives and social media got abuzz with the clarion call to end corruption in the country. IAC's demand for a strong anti-corruption institution namely 'Jana Lokpal' got unqualified support from the public and a number of surveys substantiated the popular mood. Even the Parliament was forced to acknowledge the growing unrest of the public against corruption and promised to pass an effective bill to that end at the earliest. India Against Corruption movement successfully changed the cynicism

of negativism in the country into an ambience of hope and possible change. Students, housewives, teachers, contractors, shop keepers, doctors, engineers and people from other walks of life jumped into the movement swimming against the current trend of pursuit of self-interest and personal career. The high point of the movement was recognition of the need for self-sacrifice and pursuit of national interest in the form of demand for Jana Lokpal and structural changes.

Narrative of IAC's experience, of course, cannot be completed without mentioning the road blocks and inherent contradictions that created little furores. Very often it was witnessed that the Anna core team spearheading the movement was not in unison. Whether it is Santosh Hegde's disapproval of certain methods of agitation or Kiran Bedis' comfort level with Bharatiya Janata Party or the emerging equation with Baba Ramdev, the team was at pains to explain the diverse viewpoints. The icing on the cake of this internal discord was Swami Agnivesh's role as a Congress plant in Anna team caught on camera. Moreover, the accusations of the facebook coordinator against Arvind Kejriwal of self-promotion and withdrawal of a member on charges of clandestine recording of the core committee meeting provided sufficient fire power to people like Digvijay Singh and Manish Tiwari to rubbish the movement on the wrong side. The juggernaut of Anna finally got disintegrated once it was declared that the path of alternative politics

will be the future course of action. It is still a mystery for the public to map the contours of development after the clarion call for alternative politics. It was Anna himself who announced the alternative path and from the same platform from which Arvind Kejriwal gave details of the new initiative. So Anna's later denial of political option and Arvind's insistence on it still need a proper explanation. A fringe opinion that Anna was befooled into announcing the political option doesn't hold water, as a seasoned warrior and independent leader like Anna Hazare is not known to be vulnerable enough to be deceived. Rather the version that Anna and Arvind have a proper understanding to work on both the civil society and political platform simultaneously gains credence if the later developments are taken into account.

So the legacy of IAC movement is both social and political. Socially it ensured a general awakening among the public against corruption and wider understanding of the concept of the swaraj. The movement demystified the process of registration and ridiculed the claim of the legislative representatives to absolute power of rule making. It questioned the one time sanction through election and asked for right to recall and reject. It questioned the intention of the political parties for corruption free governance and demand accountability for the same. We

can say the movement pinched the general psyche of the public and

assured the nation of a new beginning. Anna became the symbol for the new social movement asserting, in general, active citizenship and demanding accountable, transparent, participatory administration.

The political legacy of IAC movement is no doubt the declaration of Aam Aadmi party (AAP) as a political movement. To compliment the accountable governance paradigm as perused under the IAC banner, AAP declared Jana Lokpal, swaraj, right to recall and right to reject as its core objective. Not only so, it also provided a party structure which is decentralized, democratic and participatory. In matters of selection of candidates by local party workers the only benchmark decided by AAP is Anna's five golden principles. In the words and designs of Arvind Kejriwal it is amply clear that Anna Hazare's principles will be the torch bearer for the political initiative instead of Anna's expressed reservation for electoral politics. Of course, Anna's support for clean politics and his trust in Arvind provides the key to the future strategy that the duo may adopt.

After disbanding the core team and the later announcement of Anna in Patna that he would not be using the IAC tag, it is important to question the legitimacy of the social movement under the present nomenclature. Because for the political legacy it won't be a problem as it has accrued the legitimacy under the banner of Aam Aadmi Party. IAC has been a genuine citizens' movement. When Anna and Arvind started the movement against corruption they had no organization; except the public anger against the state of affairs in the country. This resulted in widespread protest

against corrupt system and people in various localities through local initiative gathered to show solidarity to the septuagenarian leader. In the process, IAC became the banner of an all-India phenomenon. The social media, IAC logo and the core team provided a rudimentary structure to the movement and people accepted it as the common brand. So IAC as a brand value is significant to the display of people's power and the non-centralized leadership under the ideals of Anna. It is no more a name only. It stands for independent, ideal, assertive, motivated, active and decentralized local citizen initiatives. In Odisha, we have seen the local team on its own going for health camps, publication of magazine, solidarity with movements fighting against corporate monopoly, farmers'

(Continued from Page 3)

moved closer to the fundamentalists. Against this background, it was natural that Begum Khalid Zia would cancel her appointment with Indian President Pranab Mukherjee who was visiting Dhaka last week. Khalida looked like conveying to New Delhi that the fight against the Jammatt was motivated by India. For her, even this far-fetched argument means a lot because the elections are only a few months away when she would polarize the nation along with the Jammatt.

What the two, more so the Jammatt, do not seem to realize is that the demand for death of the collaborators has not been encouraged by India in any way. Bangladesh is fighting for its identity—an identity that inspired it to be free which it has forced now to refurbish the wherewithal of freedom. The more the issue is clouded the louder would be the voice. The Bangladeshis have got awakened.

rights and the recent initiative to completely ban liquor in the state. Depending upon Anna's ideals as the only capital they have showed the strength of common man to lead the fight from the front. It's an ideal citizenry movement.

So will the citizen drive be delved into a narrow organizational structure? Will Anna commit the mistake of killing an automatic spring by opting for an organizational rigidity? Will IAC be lost in the vested interests surrounding Anna? The answers to these questions will decide the legitimacy of IAC for its ardent followers. But, interestingly the answers lie not with Anna but with the people themselves. They have to decide whether they want to lead or to be led.

There is a lesson for us to learn. We too have left our basic commitment far behind, that of pluralism and democracy. Electoral politics has mutilated them and what has come to be known as the vote bank politics has let communalism, caste and regionalism emerge. We demolished the Babri masjid at Ayodhya and killed the Sikhs in Delhi in 1984 and Muslims in Gujarat in 2002. We have practically destroyed the pluralistic society that we had built since independence. Can we retrieve pluralism and democracy that our forefathers envisaged in the constitution and placed before us like a pole star?

Bangladesh looks determined to reclaim the purpose for which it was constituted. In contrast, we think we have all the time to hark back on the old values as well as ideals of our freedom struggle. Bangladesh means business. We have not yet begun to feel what we have lost.

Megalomaniac Project

The Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project (DMIC) is such a humongous, megalomaniac, ambitious State-sponsored industrial development project spanning 1483 km in length across six states in India. It is a joint venture between India and Japan, both having contributed equally to the initial Rs. 1000 crore (\$ 182 million) fund. The 'dream' is to ramp up the size to \$ 100 billion (Rs. 5.5 lakh crore). DMIC is supposed to pass through U.P, NCR of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra, with end terminals at Dadri in the National Capital Region of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru Port near Mumbai.

Along with the environmental and material disaster it will have an impact on 14% population of the country, as per official documents. This is being done ignoring the displacement and immense suffering of the people in various projects. What could not be achieved through the Special Economic Zone Act is now being planned through this. The new Bill on land acquisition and resettlement and rehabilitation is being tailor made to this project, and no wonder if this turns out to be the biggest disaster for people in coming years.

Projects have already started at many of the places and so have the resistance by people. To bring all these struggles together, to reach out to people on the route, spread out information and to be with them in solidarity we have undertaken this yatra from Mumbai to Delhi, culminating in Delhi on March 23, Shahid Bhagat Singh's martyrdom day.

Key features of the project

- will affect a band of 150km to 200km on both sides of the Dedicated Freight Corridor

- incorporates 11 investment regions and 13 industrial areas of about 100 - 250 sq. km each
- approximately 180 million people, 14 percent of India's population will be affected
- nine junction stations including Vasai (near Mumbai), Gothangan (near Surat), Makarpura (near Baroda), Amlī (near Ahmedabad), Palanpur, Marwar, Phulera, Rewari, Tughlakabad

The stated goals of this monstrously big dream are to:

- double employment potential in five years
- triple industrial output in five years
- quadruple exports from the region in five years

DMIC is just one more link in the long chain of fantasies pursued by the corporate-politician-bureaucrat-technocrat-land shark nexus of vested interests who foist projects to benefit themselves at the cost of the toiling majority of our country. The clique of vested interests masquerades as 'development magicians' who will make India shine. Technocrats are fascinated by what is big. In their view all that is 'mega' is in the interest of the country. Whimsical ideas are floated first, feasibility examined as an afterthought and justification drummed around like it is divine decree. Interlinking of rivers, SEZs, SIRs, DMIC etc. are part of a long history of mammoth fanciful projects with dubious promises, unfulfilled and unfulfillable benefits.

Experience shows that investment jamboorees across the country do

not deliver. At best only 20 to 30 % of the promised investments come good. The record of new employment generated is even worse. Every new job typically requires a capital of between Rs. 80 lakh to Rs. 1 crore. Whether it is SEZs, SIRs or infrastructure projects there are land scams and routes to avoid taxes.

There is absolutely no mention of the human or environmental impacts of the humongous DMIC project.

The kind of projects pursued currently are massively resource-intensive. There is no thought spared for where water and power will be available from.

Even a small project has to be examined for its feasibility, economic costs and benefits, environmental and social impact assessment. No such exercise is known to have been undertaken.

When something on such a scale is envisioned one cannot look at individual projects, one has to look at the combined impact.

The real cost of 'development' is displacement, dispossession, dis-employment and dehumanisation.

Ask the toiling majority of women, farmers, farm labourers, Dalits, Adivasis, fish workers; India is not shining, India is declining. Only the Tatas, Ambanis, Adanis, Mittals, Birlas & Jindals are shining. They will soon be joined by Walmart, Ikea, Carrefour.

**National Alliance
of People's Movements**

Obituary

Lotika Sarkar

Prof. Lotika Sarkar who played a central role in several path-breaking and crucial legislations for gender justice and empowerment of women during 1975-2005, passed away at the age of 86 on 23rd February 2013. In the women's rights movement, she was known as Lotikadee. When other stalwarts of women's studies touched our hearts with inspirational speeches in the women's movement gathering, Lotikadee floured us with her legal acumen. She was the first Indian woman to graduate from Cambridge. Lotikadee was in the peak of her career, when she was asked to join Committee on Status of Women in India, 1972 that prepared Towards Equality Report, 1974. As a pioneer in the fields of law, women's studies and human rights, she prepared the chapter on laws concerning women in the Status of women's Committee Report with gender sensitivity and analytical clarity for furthering women's rights.

Dr. Lotika Sarkar was the first woman teacher of law faculty at the University of Delhi and taught Criminal law and was a mainstay of the Indian Law Institute, Delhi during 1980s and 1990s. She was a founding member of the Indian Association for Women Studies.

In 1980, along with Dr. Veena Mazumdar, Lotikadee founded Centre for Women's Development Studies. Along with three professors of Law of Delhi University-Prof. Upendra Baxi, Prof. Kelkar, Dr. Vasudha Dhagamwar, Lotikadee wrote the historic Open Letter to the Chief Justice of India in 1979, challenging the judgment of the

apex court on the Mathura rape case. I remember cutting stencil and making copies on our cyclostyling machine of the 4-page long letter for wider circulation. Translation of this letter into Gujarati and Hindi served a crash course for me to understand nuances of criminal justice system, rape laws and sexual violence as the weapon to keep women in a perpetual state of terrorization, intimidation and subjugation. Wide circulation of the Open Letter resulted in birth of the first feminist group against rape, Forum Against Rape in January, 1980.

When Lotikadee came to Mumbai for the first Conference on Women's Studies in April, 1981 at SNDT Women's University, we, young feminists were awe-struck!! Ideological polarization in this Conference was extremely volatile. Lotikadee's commitment to the left movement did not prevent her from interacting meaningfully with liberals, free-thinkers and also the new-left like me. Indian Association of Women's Studies was formed in this gathering. In the subsequent conferences, Lotikadee attracted innumerable legal luminaries to IAWS.

At the initiative of her students, Amita Dhanda and Archana Parashar, a volume of Essays, Engendering Law: in Honour of Lotika Sarkar was published in 1999 by Eastern Book Company, Delhi.

Lotikadee and her journalist husband, Chanchal Sarkar, both were kind, generous and trusting.

After her husband passed away, she was under immense trauma and grief. Taking advantage of this situation her cook and the police officer whose education they had sponsored usurped her property and house. Her students, India's top lawyers and judges mobilized support and signed an open letter studded with such names as Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, Soli Sorabjee, Gopal Subramaniam and Kapila Vatsyayan. Jurists, advocates, academics, bureaucrats, journalists and human rights activists had signed the open letter demanding justice for her. Finally, during her last days, Lotika Sarkar's property was transferred back to her and her assets handed over to her to allow her to live her life in peaceful serenity, which she so deserved. Lotikadee's traumatic experience invited serious attention to safeguarding the rights of senior citizens by both state and civil society.

Lotikadee was a conscience keeper not only for policy makers and legal fraternity but also of women's studies scholars and women's movement activists. The most appropriate tribute to Lotikadee is to proactively pursue the mission she started with her team in 1980 to fight against rape and various forms of structural and systemic violence against women and to strive for social justice, distributive justice and gender justice. Resurgence of activism against sexual violence and feminist debate around Justice Verma Commission's Report as well as Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013 constantly reminds us of pioneering work of Lotikadee

in terms of creating a strong band of committed and legally aware

feminists who are following her footsteps. Let us salute Lotikadee,

torchbearer of gender justice by continuing her heroic legacy.

–Vibhuti Patel

K. R. Nallasivam

Where could we find those kind of people today?

While browsing the internet I stepped into a news item that took my memory to an incident which happened long back, sometime in 1958 or 1959. I was returning from Madras to Coimbatore by Nilgiri Express. When the train started from Madras Central two gentlemen rushed to the compartment and got in. It was a third class reserved compartment for sitting. In those days; there were no sleeper compartments. One person was fair and lean, wearing Khadi kurtha, dhothi and a towel over his shoulder and the other was little dark complexioned wearing white shirt, dhothi and a towel over his shoulder. They were allotted seats nearby in the same bench. They were carrying ordinary bags containing their clothes and some documents. They were discussing some politics and the assembly proceedings. After some time, the ticket examiner came and when he saw them he respectfully enquired about their welfare and asked whether they would like to upgrade their tickets to travel by first class. The two gentlemen told him that it was OK for them to travel by third class.

The fair gentleman turned to me and introduced himself as K.R. Nallasivam, MLA from Chennimalai and the other was N.K. Palaniswami, also a MLA (Communist) from the next constituency. He told they would get down at Erode, till then we can adjust and sleep in the available space on the bench. In the meanwhile Sri Palaniswami climbed up on the luggage rack and spread his towel to sleep. I could not believe at the simplicity and ease with which they moved with others. Later I came to know that K.R. Nallasivam from Kodumudi was an agriculturist and respected Congressman-turned-staunch Socialist and spent his entire life in the service of people. He was a veteran freedom fighter, Member of the Socialist Party National Executive and Chairman of all-India Socialist Party in 1963-64. Prior to that, he was Chairman of the Tamilnad Socialist Party in 1963.

He represented the then Chennimalai Constituency as MLA from 1952 to 1957, again from 1957 to 1962 and also from 1962 to 1967. Then, after formation of Modakurichi constituency in 1967, he became the first MLA of the constituency contesting on the Socialist Party's banyan tree symbol. He represented the constituency till

1971. He died in 1975 after a brief ailment.

He was MLA for nineteen years, but did not own any property. He left behind his wife, son and daughter. After his death his wife Saraswathy and her son N. Ravindran had to face hardships..

Coming to know of the further impoverished status of Saraswathy and her son, the then Congress MLA representing Modakurichi, R.M. Palanisamy, raised the issue in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly and spoke about the family circumstances of K.R. Nallasivam. Immediately, the then Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi declared that on behalf of the Tamil Nadu Government, a sum of Rs. 2 lakh would be given to the wife of late K.R. Nallasivam. Later the cheque for Rs. 2 lakh was handed over to her on 16 February, 2008, by the then Handlooms and Textiles Minister N.K.K.P. Raja in the presence of R.M. Palanisamy and Chairman of the Erode Panchayat Council S.V. Saravanan. Receiving the cheque, N. Saraswathy thanked the Chief Minister for the timely help rendered to her. Later the Government of Tamilnadu awarded a family pension of Rs.3,000/pm to Smt. Nallasivam.

–Brahmansmtyan,

Dr. S. Vijayalakshmi

When Dr. S. Vijayalakshmi passed away recently, it was brought to my notice that she was another woman to establish a 'first' at the University

of Madras. She was the first woman to receive a Ph.D. for Political Science from the University. That was in 1961 and her thesis was on

'History of the Madras Legislature 1893-1921.' It was a degree that should have paved the way for her in the higher echelons of the

bureaucracy. But she chose a more rugged path to follow: Politics.

Joining the Praja Socialist Party, Vijayalakshmi contested seats for the Madras Assembly in 1957 and 1962 - and was unsuccessful in both her attempts. Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Ashok Mehta and, closer home, S.A. Rahim and V.R. Radhakrishnan may have all influenced her and made her the dedicated Socialist she became. But rather disillusioned with the conflicts and divisions among the Socialists, she moved away from the movement and, coming under the spell of Kamaraj, joined the Congress in the late 1960s. When Congress itself split, she followed the Indira Gandhi group and became one of its leaders in Tamil Nadu. From 1968 to 1995, she also served as a member of the All India Congress Committee.

But for all her involvement with politics, Vijayalakshmi's heart was in trade unionism. She was probably one of the first women trade union leaders in India. From the late 1950s, she was involved with unions representing postal workers, the Reserve Bank employees and textile workers. In 1971, she joined the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) and was senior vice-president of the National Defence Workers' Federation for 23 years. She was the Federation's president from 1995 to 1997. In 1999, the trade union movement honoured her at a function, describing her as a "revered trade union leader and research scholar."

As a scholar, she was involved in two major research projects in the 1960s and 70s. One was writing a 'Who's Who of the Freedom Fighters of Tamil Nadu' as part of a larger project, a 'Who's Who of

the Freedom Fighters of India.' Her contribution was brought out in three volumes, reflecting the amount of research she had done in archives as well as in villages from where many of the freedom fighters came. She also contributed significantly to a 'Who's Who of Indian Martyrs.' And she was one of the 26 scholars invited to contribute chapters to the Congress Centenary Volume edited by B.N. Pandey. Her contributions were titled 'Freedom Movement from 1908 to 1917', 'Associated Movements in India' and 'History of Militant Nationalism in India.'

Vijayalakshmi's considerable research into the Freedom Movement in Tamil Nadu led to her creating a mini-archives in her home on the Freedom Movement, with focus on Tamil Nadu. Research scholars were always welcome to use her material. Where will it all go now, I can't help but wonder.

One of her disappointments in life was that the Centre for Social Research she set up had to close down because of lack of resources. While it existed, it did numerous studies for the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute. These included research on agrarian tensions in the Thanjavur District, child labour in Sivakasi, conditions of the work force in the export garment industry, and the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen of Tamil Nadu. What would perhaps be the best memorial to her would be reviving the Centre and sustaining it in partnership with a research library in the State.

On the other hand, an activity that gave her much pleasure was writing - particularly on the subject she was most committed to, Socialism. She was a regular contributor to Janata ,

the voice of the Socialist Party, and New Wave . She was Managing Director of Alai Oosai. And in 1975, Pudiya Alai was launched, with Dr. Vijayalakshmi as its Editor. A Tamil version of New Wave , her regular contributions to it focussed on the history of the Freedom Struggle and the Socialist Movement in India. All her life, she had lived frugally, with State buses her usual form of transport, an auto-rickshaw journey a luxury. She never married, did not even have a room to call her own. And in the last years of her life, when she was virtually immobile after a stroke and a fracture following a fall, she still thought life had been "good" to her, for she had no regrets at all about the way she had lived and contributed to the nation.

– S. Muthiah in *The Hindu*

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POSCO Violence

A national-level fact-finding team consisting of civil liberties and democratic organisations and individuals visited Govindapur and Dhinkia villages of Jagatsinghpur District on the 9th of March, 2013. The objective of the visit was to assess the situation in the wake of escalated violence since the land acquisition process resumed in the area on the 4th of February 2013. The stationing of armed police platoons in the proposed POSCO project affected areas and finally the recent incident of the bomb explosion that left three killed and had one person severely injured prompted us to visit the area and share our findings with a larger audience and appeal to the Odisha government and local administration. During the visit, the team had a detailed discussion with the POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti (PPSS) leader Abhay Sahu and other members, the personnel of Orissa State Armed Police and the State Police stationed at Gobindapur, leader of Gobindpur pro POSCO group Ranjan Bardhan, dalit landless labourers, a group of people in Nuagaon led by Tamil Pradhan (husband of the Sarpanch) and the local youth. The following day, on the 10th of March 2013, the team also visited Laxman Pramanik in the SCB Medical College Hospital, Cuttack. We informed the District Collector and Superintendent of Police about our visit and sought an appointment but they told us that they were out of the district and thus not available to meet us.

The incident of March 2nd, 2013

Discussions with members of the PPSS and families of the deceased clearly indicate that the four people namely Nabin Mandal (30), Narahari

Sahu (52), Manas Jena (32) and Lakhman Parmanik (46) were sitting at their usual meeting place after leaving a nearby betel vine in Patana village. A powerful blast occurred that killed three people and left Lakhman Parmanik severely injured. Another person named Ramesh Raut had left the spot just a minute before to buy a paan.

Within hours of the incident SP Jagatsinghpur Sri Satyabrata Bhoi announced through the local and national media that the blast occurred while the deceased were making a bomb, even before any police personnel had visited the site or done any investigation. According to Lakhman Parmanik in the hospital, bomb/s was/were thrown at them. He strongly refuted the accusation by the police that they were making bombs, adding "What gain will I make by lying when I am on the verge of death." It was reported to be a powerful blast as its impact was felt and heard by most of the villagers as they recalled in discussions with the team. None of the police personnel reached the spot until nearly 15 hours after the incident. This is clear dereliction of duty given the fact that two platoons are stationed within a distance of a few minutes from the area. Even before the police came and took charge of the dead bodies, land acquisition started on the morning of 3rd of March 2013.

The Role of the Police

One, the police neither reached the area nor sent any help for taking Laxman Parmanik immediately to the hospital, despite PPSS informing the police immediately after the incident. Secondly, the police arrived only on the morning

of 3rd of March at the scene of the incident and took charge of the dead bodies. Thirdly, families of the two deceased shared that the police arrived on the midnight of the 3rd of March, and asked them to sign a written statement stating that the victims died in the process of making the bomb which they refused to do. Fourth, when Kusumbati Sahu, sister-in-law of the deceased Narahari Sahu went to register an FIR at the thana of Abhoychandranpur on the evening of 3rd of March, the police refused to accept the FIR, scolded her that she has been sent by Abhay Sahu although they themselves were making the bomb and had come to lodge an FIR. She had to leave without registering the FIR. However it should be noted that the only FIR that was accepted by the Abhaychandranpur thana on 4th of March was lodged by Ranjan Bardhan against the three deceased, the injured Lakhman Pramanik, Abhay Sahu, Surendra Das and five others of the POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti.

Our observations

Following the March 2nd bomb blast the already existing tensions in the villages have been greatly escalated. The villagers are unable to move freely and are in constant fear of harassment and arrest by the police. Since 4th February when the land acquisition process was resumed accompanied by a severe police lathicharge on the villagers, outbreaks of violence have become more frequent. In Govindpur village, two platoons of police have been deployed, which has greatly contributed to the escalated tension in the villages. At least 105

betel vines have been destroyed in Govindpur village in the process of land acquisition. There was a lathicharge on 7th March on villagers demanding the removal of the police camp, in which 41 villagers including 35 women and children were injured.

This situation has also gravely affected the lives and livelihoods of the villagers. The situation of dalit landless labourers is very grave. Over 150 families depend on betel vines located on approximately one acre of land. They are keen and clear that the plant is most undesirable since it is the only source of livelihood. Two persons shared how they have got no compensation after sale of land. Most others said how there are no provisions for compensations for the landless in the acquisition process. In fact, Laxman Pramanik, who has been gravely injured in the bomb blast is also a landless labourer, the sole breadwinner of a family of eight persons, depending on the same. In short, the livelihood activities and mobility of the entire community is under threat. Any access to health care or medical treatment, however critical, is difficult to obtain as most of the community is under threat of arrest.

Demands

In view of our discussions with all the affected persons, and the clear attempt of the police to blame the deceased persons in a premeditated manner, we demand

1. A high level judicial enquiry into the bomb blast incident resulting in the death of three persons and injury to one person, to ascertain the truth of the matter.
2. The immediate withdrawal of the police camp from Gobindpur village as it is contributing to

escalating tensions in the area.

3. The cessation of the land acquisition process forthwith in the Dinkia panchayat area including Gobindpur village.

4. Compensation on humanitarian grounds to the families of the deceased who were killed in the bomb blast and proper medical help for the injured person.

Team Consisted of Meher Engineer, former Director, Bose Institute, Kolkata; Sumit Chakravartty, Editor, Mainstream Weekly, Delhi; Dr Manoranjan Mohanty, Retd Professor, Delhi University; Pramodini Pradhan, PUCL Odisha; Saroj Mohanty, PUCL, Odisha; Ranjana Padhi, PUDR, Delhi; Dr Kamal Chaubey, PUDR, Delhi; Sanjeev Kumar, Delhi Forum, Delhi; Mathew Jacob, HRLN, Delhi; Samantha, Sanhati; Partho Roy, Sanhati; Gyan Ranjan Swain, Ravenshaw University.

(Continued from Page 4)

and the primary fiscal deficit minus interest payments. The two deficits along with capital formation are sufficient to look at the financial health of a domestic economy. No one argues for free ride or advice to sell/mortgage family silver to buy/import Kurkure. But, subsidies have been evolved as sinews of political war.

The gross capital formation of the country as percentage of GDP was 10.89 percent in 1950-51, reached 17.24 percent in 1974-75 and was around 20 percent by 1980-81. The percentage rose to 26.0 in 190-91 while the GDP growth was considered small. Strangely, the proportion in 2000-01 came to the pre-reform period at 24.36. The recent budget report projected it at 35.0 percent for 2012-13. Similarly, the tax-GDP ratio was highest in the year 1989-90 with 14.2 percent and has not so far reached that level during the reform period as it stands at 10.4 percent.

The policy makers are found telling us that the way to reduce fiscal deficit is through reduction in Government expenditure on subsidies and social sectors as they consider them unproductive. It is only

half truth. There may be leakages in the subsidies and inefficient administration of the schemes, but, has the money gone down the drain?. Yet, the fiscal deficit can be reduced without affecting the expenditure by broadening the revenue.

Fresh public resources are always found in knowledge society like 3G/4G or expansion of service sector and the tax, burgeoning of capital market and the transactions tax ,etc. It is more than two decades now that the state has given enough concessions to these sectors; it is now their turn to contribute to the development of the country. In this context, Chidambaram budget seems to have a mixed bag. He has shown the way to get money but is not courageous enough in touching the super rich who are the beneficiaries of liberalization. It is to be noted that he has reduced the tax on securities transactions, exemptions to Securitization Trusts and paid little attention to commodity markets. It is here the so-called black money goes in, and the Finance Minister has the moral and legal right to grip them for the good of all. This would help reduce the fiscal deficit and ought to satisfy the fiscal fundamentalists.



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Crisis-ridden Polity

S. Viswam

The current national political and economic situations seem caught in a vicious crisis and have created a sense of foreboding. The government has managed to survive on the support of a handful of parties propping it up from the outside while the alliance itself is tottering. Politics is having a direct and dire impact on the economy, witness the manner in which the markets came tumbling down when the DMK announced it was pulling itself out of the government. The Reserve Bank of India trimmed its repo rate by 25 basic points but even this long sought-after measure failed to raise market spirits. And, as if to compound the government's misery, the foreign policy front also seemed so besieged at one point that New Delhi's prestige and status in international affairs seemed shaky. In short, it has not been a pleasant week we have just passed. Nothing seems to inspire hope for better times ahead.

Lok Sabha elections are getting nearer and nearer. It is doubtful if Karunanidhi would have pulled out the DMK from the government and the UPA alliance but for the approach of national elections. Under similar circumstances last

year, he did not stage any dramatics of the kind he staged last week. Similarly, Bihar's Nitish Kumar would not have administered a threat to the BJP-NDA of branching out on his own or befriending the Congress if there were no polls. He has put both the BJP and the government on notice. The BJP is under pressure from him now to choose between him and Narendra Modi, that is, choose between his model of development, which is inclusive and focuses on social justice or Modi's form, which is development alone without any underlying progressive motive. The government is under pressure to confer special status on Bihar on a time-bound basis. The government's sincerity is on test. Logic and common political sense suggests that the government would meet Nitish Kumar half way right now, so that he develops goodwill for the UPA. The Congress and Nitish Kumar share the thought, impelled no doubt by concern for secularism, that Modi should not be allowed to capture power at the Centre.

Unfortunately, for the UPA-II that is, crisis of all varieties, has the government in its grip at a time when the economy is looking up,

the budget has had a beneficial impact, and the general state of disenchantment with a government caught by several scams is thinning out. Uncertainties persist at many levels. One does not know how the imbroglio with Italy on the issue of the marines will be sorted out. The European Union has not been of much help to India on this issue. There are ambiguities on how far India can go in detaining the Italian Ambassador, many authorities on international law do not support the Indian stand. In other words the mess is largely of Indian creation.

The DMK has played the politics of blackmail. Nitish Kumar also has been tempted to resort to political blackmail, but his is not as destructive as that of the DMK. The Centre may overcome the DMK threat. It has to find the political will and courage to find a way that will appease Nitish Kumar and make him a supporter of the Congress-led alliance in 2014. Let us see how the cookie crumbles.

Forgotten Bhagat Singh

Kuldip Nayar

Strange, there was no meeting or seminar to remember Bhagat Singh who still lives in the memory of every Indian. I was still in a primary school when the revolutionary Bhagat Singh was hanged 82 years ago, to be precise on March 23, 1931. Even though more than eight decades have passed, the feeling of his loss has not lessened. An uproar against the British united the country and so strong was the feeling that nobody was willing to name his comrade (Hans Raj Vohra), who agreed to be the official witness.

Hans Raj Vohra was a close companion of Bhagat Singh and spilled the beans as soon as he was arrested. Although his version is different, he said that since Sukhdev, one of the persons who were hanged along with Bhagat Singh, told everything to the police, Hans Raj told the British the whole thing in detail, where the revolutionaries would make the bombs and where some among them, were located in the country.

Although he had not forgiven his father for making a written request to the tribunal saying that his son was innocent and that he had nothing to do with police officer John Saunder's murder, he knew his father was a sincere patriot who had devoted his life to the cause of independence. His father's filial affection at times had embarrassed Bhagat Singh, the revolutionary. But he knew the harrowed look in his father's eyes was his way of saying sorry.

Bhagat Singh had chided his father through a letter. He wrote

to him, saying: "I have not been able to understand how you could think it proper to submit such a petition at this stage and in these circumstances... You know that in the political field my views have always differed with those of yours. I have always been acting independently without having cared for your approval or disapproval."

Head jail warden Charat Singh indicated to him that the time allotted for the *mulaqat* (meeting) was over. But Bhagat Singh lingered. His family's love had overwhelmed him. He was pensive. Charat Singh told him to hurry up. His relatives embraced Bhagat Singh one by one. He touched his mother's feet. It was a gesture of reverence but it brought tears to everyone's eyes. His sisters sobbed openly. Bhagat Singh was greatly upset. "Stay together," were his last words to them. Then he folded his hands and left.

On his way back to his cell he saw Sukhdev and Rajguru still standing behind iron bars, forlorn and lonely. Despite Charat Singh asking him not to, he stopped to chat with them. It will be any day now, he told them. The last meeting with his family was indicative of that. They nodded in assent. Back in his cell, Bhagat Singh touched his kurta which was damp with the tears of his family. Little Kultar, his youngest brother, had wept incessantly. As he clung to his older brother and said goodbye he had sobbed, "Life will not be worth living without you." His innocent, grief-stricken face haunted Bhagat Singh. As the cell

door closed behind him, he reached for his pen and wrote him a letter in Urdu, the language he normally used in personal letters.

The letter to Kultar was done. He hoped his words would soothe his brother. But what about the millions of people who believed in him? After writing to his brother, Bhagat Singh reached for a notebook he maintained. It was neither a personal account nor a record of his reactions. He just jotted down his favourite passages from the books he was reading. They were passages, mostly in English, by thinkers like Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Hobbers, Locke, Rousseau, Trotsky, Bertrand Russel, Karl Marx and Engels.

Among the Indian authors he read were Rabindranath Tagore and Lajpat Rai. Bhagat Singh was also fond of poetry. He would recite even from Wordsworth, Byron and Omar Khayyam. But his favourite was Ghalib whom he quoted frequently. The meeting with his family had shaken him emotionally but Bhagat Singh took it in his stride and immersed himself once again in his books.

As the news of his execution spread, the nation went into mourning. There were processions throughout the country. Many went without food. People wore black badges and shut down their businesses to express their grief. The British stayed indoors. Among the Indian political leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru was the first to pay his tributes.

Nehru said that Bhagat Singh was a clean fighter who faced the enemy in an open field. He was a young boy full of passionate zeal for the country. He was like a spark that grew into a great flame in a short time and spread from one city of the country to the other, illuminating darkness everywhere. Mahatma Gandhi was profuse in his praise for the courage of the executed heroes. He said: "Bhagat Singh and his companions' death seem to have been a personal loss to many. I join in the tributes paid to the memory of these young men..."

But these words were lost on many people who were angry with Gandhiji for not having done enough to save Bhagat Singh and his comrades. Faced with public's ugly mood, Congress leaders tried to come up with several explanations for their failure to rescind the sentence. But nothing worked to soothe the frayed tempers of the public.

For the past three years, we the Indians and the Pakistanis have been celebrating Bhagat Singh's birthday at the very crossing where he was hanged. We have been lighting candles and garlanding his life size photo at the site. We have recalled the hanging of Ashfaqullah, who went to the gallows with the Koran dangling from his neck, by reciting one of his couplets which reflected his patriotic sentiments, not religious.

Kuchh aarzo nahi hai, Hai aarzo to yeh

Rakhde koi zarasi khake watan kafan mei

(I have no desire. If at all there is one, it is that someone should place the earth of my country in the coffin).

What Does Economic Survey Tell Us?

K. S. Chalam

The Economic Survey for the year 2012-13 was laid on the table of the Parliament on Thursday. It is customary to present a white paper on the state of the economy before the presentation of 'annual financial statement' or what is called budget. The white paper in the form of Economic Survey contains details of the policies introduced, performance of the economy and the broad philosophy or commitment of the government. Issuing a White Paper on important subjects is a part of the democratic process of a country. Churchill called it as an important tool of participatory form of democracy that involves a dialogue on contents of the paper. It is necessary that the learned Members of Parliament and public should participate in the discussion once the document is available for comment. We have started an Alternative Survey in 1992-93 as a part of dialogue containing the people's perspective.

The media has picked up the expected rate of growth indicated in paragraph 1.76 in the survey as 6.1 to 6.7 percent in 2013-14 and indicated that in order get the rate of growth, subsidies are to be reduced, price of oil to be increased, etc. However, they have not looked at the last part of the paragraph where it is assumed that the monsoon, moderate inflation and the global recovery would be favorable. It is noted that the rate of growth of GDP was only 5 percent during 2012-13. It was due to the low rate of growth of agriculture at 1.8 percent, lower than the previous year at 3.7 percent and manufacturing

was at 1.9 percent that was lower than an already stumpy rate of 2.7 percent. How it is possible to get the projected rate under these conditions is left to the imagination of speculators.

The present survey is found to be sensible in its approach compared to the previous one where received theories were repeated without looking at our own conditions. The present report has made a very important observation as, "the combined share of exports and imports of goods increased from 14.2 percent of GDP in 190-91 to about 43 percent in 2011-12 and the two way external sector transactions (gross current account plus gross capital account flows) have risen from 30 per cent of GDP in 1990-91 to about 108 percent of 2011-12. Therefore, while the globalization of Indian economy has helped raise growth, it has also meant greater vulnerability to external shocks" (p130). It is an example of dependent development. This appears to be the genuine condition of our economy today and all other explanations in the survey are platitudes. In the area of FDIs, it is noted that the net portfolio investments including FIIs increased from \$1.3 billion to \$5.8 billion and interestingly the NRI deposits have increased from \$3.9 billion to \$9.4 billion during the same period. Yet, the survey says that it is necessary to shift the consumption demand to investment so as to restore the fast rate of growth. There is a very interesting statement on FDI. It is said that FDIs are confined to cities of more than

a million population and therefore, do not affect common man and FDIs are essential for the fast rate of growth of the economy. It is tricky to understand this logic or theory. How is it that an investment that does not affect majority would bring economic growth? Either of the two is false.

It is weird to find that the euphoria created in our external sector during the 2005-2009 period, when the rate of growth was almost double digit, has slowly petered out. It is noted that the economy was bumping even during the American economic crisis of 2008. What has happened during the period? There are many explanations. One pragmatic view is that the so-called black money of the country had come back home during the period through various routes irrespective of the crisis. It seems all that was staked is now exhausted and the country is back to square one. In this context, the kind of theories like Micro Foundations of Macro Economic policies parroted in USA were found discredited there and scholars like Blinder, a former Vice-President of Federal Reserve System and Princeton Professor and Danni Rodrik of Harvard have drawn the attention of economic teachers to the theoretical blunders of Macro Economics so as not to repeat them in class rooms. It was also reported in the journal 'the Economist' about the crisis of Macroeconomic theory in the West. Yet, the same were repeated in the Economic Surveys of India. Does it indicate the bankruptcy of our intellectual tradition or helplessness of our Advisers? Of course, the chapters on Micro Foundations of Macroeconomic Policy and India and the Global economy are dropped in the current Economic Survey.

The budget that can be called as "Nirbhay" budget for its slant on women during 2013-14 was presented by Chidambaram. There seem to be no enthusiasm in the preparation of the budget due to the economic constraints and political compulsions of an election year that perhaps made Chidambaram to simply raise the allocations by 10.8 percent (compared to revised estimates NP) to make it only a nominal increase as the inflation rate is also around the same range. Education and health sectors needed a little more attention in view of the international standards of expenditure on these sectors - in India it was the lowest in BRICS. However, the Finance Minister has tried to impress with his figures on MNREGA, Food Security, SC/ST sub plan and an all Women Bank in the public sector. It seems he has made a bold step in catching the super rich with a proposal to impose surcharge on Income Tax on income above Rs 1 crore for individuals and Rs 10 crores for companies. The GAAR guidelines and GST seem to have not been finalized and they would come to the house after some time. It is doubtful to what extent these changes would bring the expected rate of growth when there is economic gloom all over.

It is found that very few (except the academics) are participating in the discussions about the state of the economy. In fact, the document is an authentic account of the economy and the public has every right to question the statements made in the report if they find that they are contrary to what they experience or observe in practice. The economic surveys of India are found to be very comprehensive and contain useful data both across section and timeline. People seem to be

unaware of the importance of the document except the trade and commerce associations using it for lobbying with the government. As a matter of fact, the budget being a constitutional obligation is only an estimate of future revenue and expenditure, whereas economic survey is about the performance of the past year. And people should raise issues of concern and draw the attention of the government and people's representatives about the progress achieved or underachieved as per the previous year's budget and policy statements. But, we often observe that public discussions (including media) are generally organized on the budget, mostly in relation to the direct and indirect tax proposals (income tax and customs) but hardly about the performance of the industry, service sector, agriculture, infrastructure etc. and the direct or indirect burden passed on to the citizen due to the failure of the policy or governance. Are the citizens not responsible to question and ask for clarification from the government? What role the civil society is expected to play in such matters?

The structure of the survey has undergone a metamorphosis. The survey for the year 1957-58 contained a very brief state of the art account having only six chapters in 38 pages including tables. Today, the size is increased by ten times having 13 chapters and 424 pages. It is a text book on Indian economy. The original survey maintained the spirit of government without resorting to any theoretical discussion or policy speculation with little scope for public debate as the government of the times knew the courage of conviction of the leaders, most of them being freedom fighters and could challenge even a statesman

like Nehru. It seems the ruling elite of the past were responsive and accountable to the people for the policies committed in the survey. Therefore, the size and structure was carefully planned. It has undergone a sea change following the PPP philosophy of the successive governments after 1991.

There are five departments in the Ministry of Finance. The Department of Economic Affairs through the newly created Chief Economic Adviser is responsible for the preparation of the survey. Generally, the Chief Economic Adviser is brought from outside mostly from among those who had a stint at the World Bank or seize on the philosophy of the World Bank, while the economic service officers are kept at the level of Principal Adviser to assist CEA. They work broadly under the guidance of the Minister and in association with the Secretary. Finance Ministry is one of the most important agencies in the government and is also one of the largest. The officers in collaboration with the chief statistician procure and produce data and information for the economic survey. It is an official document and the citizens should consider this as the source for any debate on economic issues.

One of the earliest documents on survey used to give the economic outlook, review of economic trend, food grains position and prices, industrial progress, balance of payments as important components of the survey. The statistical tables used to provide data on private imports and the type of goods imported and the structure of the survey has remained almost the same for two decades. It seems some changes were brought in the format in 1974-75 with a new chapter

on Industry and Infrastructure to indicate the importance of the sector for the economy. But, the 1991-92 is the watershed in the history of the Indian economy that was accused as 'license permit' raj with Hindu rate of growth, to shed its inertia on a road to fast growth trajectory. Therefore, the so-called socialist mode of industrial policy built over a period of time was given a decent burial. It was mentioned in the economic survey of 1991-92 (which was in two parts) in chapter 6 on Industry that abolition of industrial licensing, deregulation of public sector, removal of investment control and amendment to MRTP to restrict only to control monopolistic and restrictive practices etc. were important policies initiated. The chapter on Balance of Payments clearly described the reasons for taking up the new Economic Policy, to tide over the problems in the balance of payments crisis described in the part-A of the survey. The adjustment strategy of the government consisted of exchange rate adjustment, fiscal correction, structural reforms and mobilization of 'exceptional' (emphasis added) financing from IMF, etc. The 1992-93 survey displayed a positive outlook saying that 'we must protect the weak and help the poor to ensure peace and prevent mischief.' It also mentioned that it would bring the 'most prosperous future for our people'. Have we achieved this?

The current survey and the budget introduced by Chidambaram seem to be pragmatic in their approach; perhaps they have received enough hints from the global trends. It is necessary that our policy makers should realize that it is better to concentrate on our real economic strength, rather than heavily relying on external factors that are not under

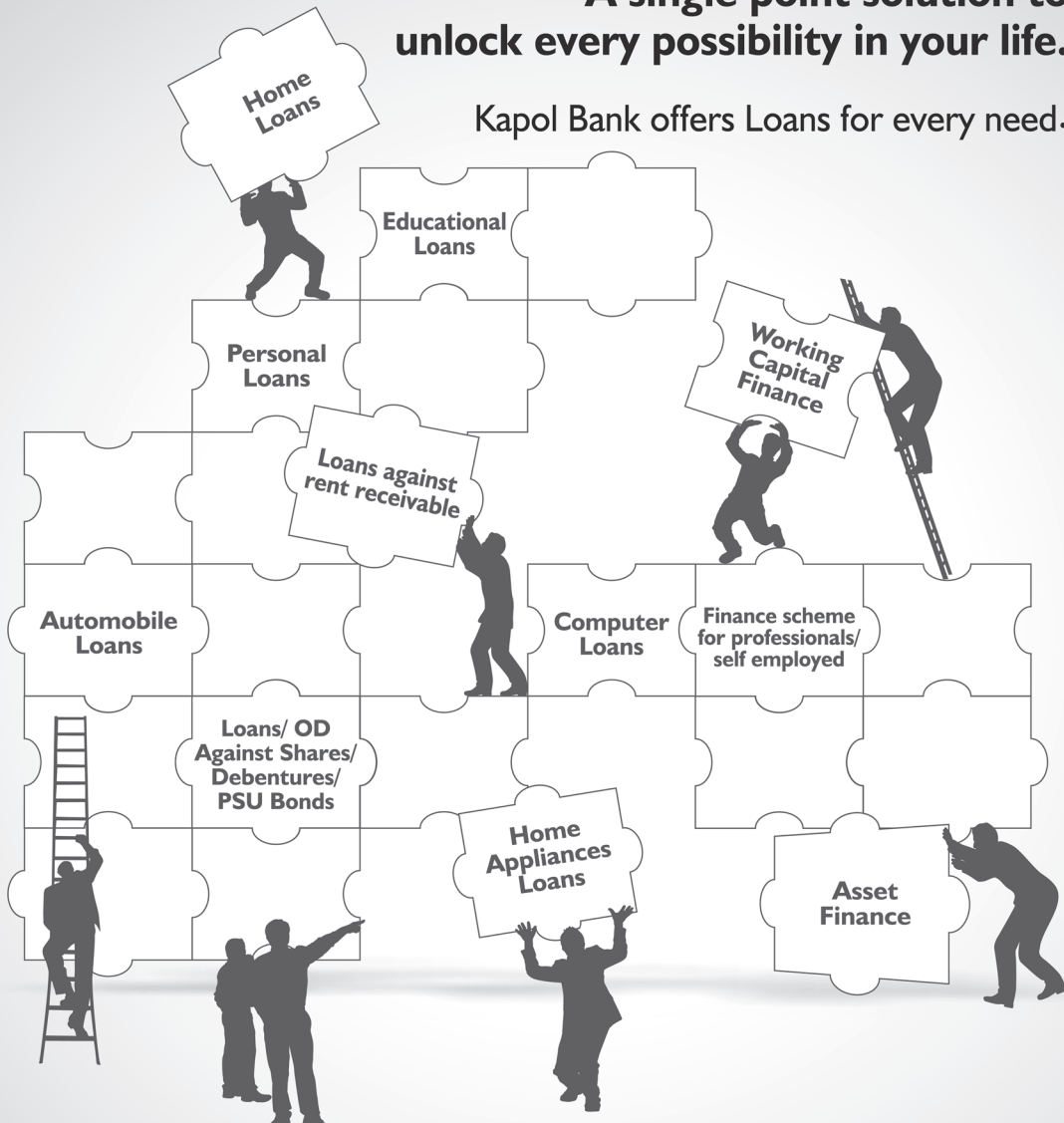
our control. In fact, the Moody rating agency has said that the 'diverse source of Indian growth' of industry and service sectors in equal weight, is responsible for India's resilience. But, we have neglected the manufacturing sector and our *annadata* agriculture as revealed in the present and in the past surveys. Even the Banking and Capital markets seem to have not helped much, as 70 to 80 percent of our savings come from the household sector while more concessions are given to the corporates. It is essential to strengthen this sector with constant flow of income and not just doles for votes. People in this country need work and never rely on others as seen from the rural scene where even a ninety-year old woman is found longing for work and ever willing to contribute to the country, unlike those who sit in cozy rooms and manipulate financial markets and fatten. It is for them some theoreticians wanted to dole out cash so that it would increase monetization and help increase the aggregate demand for goods produced in the FDI financed sectors. But, India is a complex country as reflected in economic institutions; need a thorough probe so that they could be utilized for the development of the people at large, and not necessarily the chosen few.

The economic surveys that were presented in Parliament have set an optimistic outlook and continued to bring reforms in all sectors to compliment the structural adjustment policy initiated in 1991. It seems the strong and economically volatile reforms were brought during the period 1998-99. The disinvestment of PSEs like VSNL, GAIL, IOC etc. to reduce the shares to 26 percent of the investment was initiated. It was also

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Only 42,800? That's rich!

S. Gurumurthy

Much has been said and written — mostly favourably — about the budget for 2013-14 presented by Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram. His heavily ornamented speech led the electronic media to enthusiastically vote for his budget in less than an hour after he had presented it. The print media followed suit. “PC Taxes the rich to pay for the poor” claimed one. Another praising him for voting for growth and rated the budget at /. Most comments must have been written relying on only the Minister’s speech, without looking at the detailed budget papers which the Finance Ministry had put up in detail on its website fairly late in the night on February 28. When the Finance Minister’s speech does not truly reflect the budget documents he presents, it misleads. And that is precisely the case here — particularly on the most critical aspect of the budget, namely revenue raising.

Take the case of the surcharge levy on the “super rich” highlighted by the media. Has the Finance Minister really “taxed the rich” to raise resources as part of his “inclusive growth” ideal? Or is it an exercise in symbolism for politics? This is what he says: “Wherever possible, revenues must also be augmented. When I need to raise the resources, who can I go to except those who are relatively well placed in the society? There are 42,800 persons — let me repeat only 42,800 — who admitted to a taxable income exceeding Rs.1 crore per year.” He has levied a surcharge on them. First, his tally of the super rich seems to be far less than the 1,25,000 High Network

Indians [with investible wealth of \$1 million (Rs.5.5 crore) plus house and durables] reported by KPMG International. Their income cannot be less than Rs.1 crore per year. Again, with the luxury car market touching some 27,000 cars a year, the number of super rich cannot be as low as 42,800. Next, are these the only ones from whom taxes can be raised? To test whether the Minister was being truthful here, one needs to only look at the facts tucked away in the budget papers which expose what his political symbolism conceals.

More than anyone else, he knows that in today’s corporate capitalist model — with, all over, 98 per cent of Indian corporates being family-owned and controlled — individuals and families hoard and enjoy their incomes through the corporates they control.

And see how these “rich” corporates are taxed in India. The statutory corporate tax rate of 32.5 per cent in India is among the lowest in the world — the United States [40], Japan [38], Argentina [35], Belgium [34] and Brazil [34] tax corporates more. But no Indian corporate pays tax even at the lower rate of 32.5 per cent. The Statement of Revenue Foregone [Annexure 12 to the Receipts Budget] laments that the effective rate at which the Indian corporates pay tax is almost 10 per cent less. And corporates that earn more than Rs.500 crore plus pay tax at sub 22 per cent. Does it mean taxing the rich? Or sheltering them? If all corporates pay tax at statutory rates, technically, tax revenues would be higher in 2013-14 by Rs.1,90,000 crore.

The statement of revenue foregone laments that thanks to rebates granted, the effective tax realised is far less. It brings out that for the year 2010-11, the customs and excise duties foregone was 132 per cent of the tax realised, which means that for every Rs.100 of tax realised, the tax foregone was Rs.132. In the next year, 2011-12, it was worse. The tax foregone was 145 per cent of the tax realised, that is for every Rs.100 of tax obtained, the tax sacrificed was Rs.146. The total amount of indirect tax foregone for 2010-11 was Rs.3.65 lakh crore against Rs.2.75 crore realised. For 2011-12, the tax forgone was Rs.4.35 lakh crore against the tax of Rs.2.99 lakh crore realised. In direct taxes, the tax rebates for 2010-11 was Rs.94,928 crore and for 2011-12, Rs.93,640 crore. The total tax foregone for 2010-11 was Rs.4.6 lakh crore and for 2011-12, Rs.5.31 lakh crore. Had these giveaways been withdrawn, there would be no fiscal deficit at all. The budget document equates “tax foregone” to “tax expenditure,” implying that it is an expenditure that is not shown in the budget as such.

See how the *Economic Survey* for 2012-13 presented 24 hours before the budget speech laments the tax giveaways. Under the paragraph titled “Tax Expenditure,” it says: “As indicated earlier in the section on the collection rates, the magnitude of revenue foregone [tax expenditure] is indeed high.” It talks about the corporate tax foregone [Rs.57,192 crore for 2010-11] and Rs.51,292 crore for 2011-12]. It equally laments the indirect tax giveaways [Rs.2,12,167 crore in excise in 2011-12 and

Comprehensive Reforms Needed Not Cosmetic Allocations

Rs.2,30,131 crore for 2010-11 and Rs.2,33,950 crore in 2009-10, in customs duty which is projected to rise to Rs.2,76,093 crore in 2011-12] The *Survey* concludes: "there is merit in limiting the exemptions or their grandfathering on a case-by-case basis so as to realise the fuller potential through wider tax base." How misleading then is the Minister's statement that he has to turn only to the 42,800 "rich" in the country for small add-on revenues. His own budget documents and the *Economic Survey* prove him wrong.

The alert Minister is not unaware of the huge giveaways. In his second innings as Finance Minister in 2007, he had indeed promised to scrap them. In a news report titled "Bye Bye Exemption: Tax Exemptions hits Govt's revenue collection, PM promises action," *India Today* Online [February 12, 2007] said: "Buried in the voluminous budget documents is a startling disclosure: for every two rupees the Government collects in taxes, it forgoes one" by way of tax giveaways. It pointed out that in 2004-05, against the tax [Rs.3,03,037 crore] collected, the exemptions robbed the government of Rs.1,58,661 crore. The report charged that, thanks to lobbies, successive governments had doled out exemptions, of course in the garb of incentivising a sector or attracting investments to a backward region. The report said that "last year, the big boys (companies with taxable income of more than Rs.500 crore) milked exemptions to pay 16 per cent in taxes," well below the normal rate of 33 per cent.

The magazine had quoted Mr. Chidambaram as saying "subsidies for poor should continue, exemptions for rich scrapped." And supporting him, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh also said, "Our tax regime should not have too

(Continued on Page 22)

Finance Minister, in his budget speech talked about spreading the gains of the Green Revolution to Eastern States but also acknowledged the stagnation and loss in fertility and other ills in Punjab and other states and accordingly made allocation for crop diversification. But why is the same scheme not spread out to other states, why would one wait for the same problems to manifest and then start the same prescriptions. The state of Indian agriculture and Indian farmers are critical today. It is not only due to farmers suicide (16,000 to 17,000 year) but those alive are also not better off. The changes proposed by the Finance Minister are cosmetic and will have no impact on the state of agriculture.

The focus on urbanisation, industrialisation and infrastructure will not be able to absorb the large work force which is currently engaged in agrarian sector. They will be worse off, than what they are today. With a huge population base, the push for contract and commercial farming, the food security and employment will be jeopardised.

There has been an increase from 17692 crores to 27049 crores proposed but no change in the Minimum Support price... So procurement of 1,18,000 crores for the Food Security Act will not indicate any benefit through increased prices, to the farmers. A big amount of agriculture budget and overall focus is on credit-opening of credit network for crop loan, to scheduled private commercial banks beyond public banks and cooperative credit societies and banks. This can

open up scope for fraudulent bidding and it need not be true redressal of the problem of indebtedness leading to suicides.

Its good that at least now it's recognised that nutritional crops - millets like bajra, maize with wheat need to be brought back. But only pittance Rs. 200 crores for pilot projects. Agriculture biotech management institutions in Chhatisgarh, jharkhand, Karnataka is welcome step but at the same push for BRAI and introduction of bt seeds is leading to complete loss of farmers control over the input. These will continue to make them more dependent on the market.

There is severe drought in the state of Maharashtra and other states due to poor Monsoon, which needed attention but has been neglected. Budget offers no concrete time bound plans to deal with such situations. Farmers groups have already rejected the budget and feel that this year too the effort has continued to be the same and nothing concrete has been done, since the attempt is only on increasing foreign investment.

Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA) has termed the budget in denial mode about the farmer's crisis. They added that the Economic Survey focuses mostly on the production numbers and not the net returns to the farmers – and even on the production front the target growth rate of 4 per cent was not met. The MSPs are mentioned but not the fact that in many states they are below the Cost

of Production. The Price Support Scheme and Market Intervention Scheme are given lip service, but they were used minimally in just 5 states, that too in just 1 or 2 crops in each state. It is necessary to have a Price Guarantee policy and a Farmers' Income Commission to make the incomes of farming families as the central concern of the agricultural policy. The Budget should have announced at least Rs. 2000 crores for Price Stabilization or Market Intervention fund – that would have incentivized the farmers to meet production targets as well as helped them make a decent living. The farmers' crisis is strongest in the rain-fed areas which are more than 50 per cent of the cultivated area but receives less than 10 per cent of the benefit of subsidies and support systems. A massive program of focused attention is needed for rainfed areas in a new paradigmatic approach, but it doesn't find any mention,"

We strongly feel that there is a need for separate Agriculture Budget to be presented on lines of Railway Budget, every year, which looks at issues comprehensively and makes a sincere effort at addressing the crisis.

The scourge of land acquisition continues to haunt the farmers and the new bill, Right to Fair Compensation, Transparency in Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill, will not provide any relief to them. The Bill neglects the Parliamentary Standing Committee recommendation that no agricultural land should be acquired.

- Land rights – no to acquisition for private purpose and a moratorium on land acquisitions until government comes up

with a white paper on all the land acquired, utilized and not utilized, status of resettlement and rehabilitation for the project affected people.

- Farmers income – which includes Farmers Income Guarantee Act / Farmers Income Commission, fair remunerative prices of crops and minimum assured income
- Sustainable technologies –NO TO GMO's yes to Agroecology (agricultural science that valorizes farmers local innovations, nature's own processes and traditional

knowledge), Stop BRAI bill!

- We oppose all the new legal frameworks that are against food and farmers sovereignty- No to free trade, No FDI In retail, No commodity and futures trading in agriculture, create universal PDS and support local farmers
- Stop farmer suicides – acknowledge them and provide fair relief and rehabilitation to victims, recognize women farmer's suicides and conduct special parliament sessions on farmers suicides.

Yudhvir Singh(BKU), Rakesh Tikait(BKU), K Puttanaiah, Chamarasa, Patil (KRRS), Nandini Jairam (KRRS), Chukki Nanjundaswamy(KRRS), S Kannaiyan (SICCFM) MedhaPatkar, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Dr. Sunilam, Kisan Sangharsh Samiti (MP), Suniti S R, Ulka Mahajan, Vijay Diwan, NAPM Maharashtra; Madhuresh Kumar (NAPM) Prafulla Samantara, NAPM Orissa; J. P. Singh, Rupesh Verma, Kisan Sangharsh Samiti UP; Bhupender Singh Rawat, Bhumi Bachao Andolan, Sudhir Vombatkere, NAPM Mysore

A historic mobilization of more than 1 lakh farmers, farm workers and agrarian masses belonging to a wide variety of social movements from across India descended upon New Delhi on 18 March. Protestors at the 'Kisan Khet Mazdoor Mahapanchayat' came to show their collective commitment towards getting the government's attention to reverse the grave agrarian crisis caused by liberalization reforms supporting foreign investors, corporations; reforms that support elite consumerism instead of the agrarian masses and common people of India. Farmers from the Indian Coordination Committee of Farmers' Movements comprising of independent mass farmers groups such as the Bhartiya Kisan Union and the Karnataka Farmers Movement, have joined hands with the National Alliance of People's Movements to defend rights to land, water, forest and seeds – the most important resources for agrarian people, and the source of food and livelihood for the Indian masses.

All the farmers' leaders collectively burned the Land Acquisition & Resettlement and Rehabilitation Act 2011, which has been high on the national political agenda these days. Pointing out that although farmers supported a new land bill, they absolutely did not support the current form of the bill which has ignored the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee and converted the bill into an instrument for taking away farm land for private corporations.

– NAPM

Dealing with Water Scarcity in Maharashtra

Nilakantha Rath

The state of Maharashtra has taken many steps since independence which mark it as a pioneer in the fields of developmental effort in India. Before other states had taken steps to protect the rights of actual cultivators, this state passed a tenancy protection law in 1948, and when it was found that this law was not adequate, under the prevailing social conditions, to protect most of the actual tenants, it passed a land-to-the-tiller law back in 1956, vesting ownership rights on the land cultivated by the tenants, and fully implemented it in the succeeding years. Excepting one or two states, this has yet to be followed by the others in the country. The state was not only in the vanguard of the vastly expanded co-operative credit system for farmers, but also has been the pioneer in promoting the co-operative processing of sugarcane back in 1949, making it a unique institutional device in the country, covering the entire production in this field. This state was one of the very few in the country which passed a law creating decentralized administration at the district, Taluka and village level - The Zilla Parishad Act of 1961- and fully implemented it. It is instructive that it implemented all that the 73rd amendment to our Constitution not only provided but also wished later in 1993. It is a pity that ten years after the implementation of that Act, the very success of the Act led our legislators to undo what had been done, because our legislators

felt neglected in the countryside due to the very success of the Act. All other states have behaved the same way, without having created a situation like the one we created here. I still hope this state will again be the first to revive that 1961 Act and thereby give real meaning to the 1993 amendment to the Constitution. Back in 1974 the State launched the employment guarantee scheme for the people in rural Maharashtra, despite non-co-operation of the Planning Commission. It became a unique programme to provide employment to the unemployed and the underemployed in the country-side. It was thirty years after it was launched that the Union government and therefore the Planning Commission launched a somewhat similar programme for the entire country. This state was the pioneer in promulgating a law that the farmers losing land under an irrigation reservoir should be compensated with land in the command area of the reservoir. It appeals to commonsense that the people who lose the land going under a reservoir do so for the benefit of those whose lands would be irrigated from the water from that reservoir. Therefore, it is just and proper that the beneficiaries should compensate the losers with land of equal value in the area under command of the reservoir. This requires effort at convincing the beneficiaries about the justice of such a requirement. It speaks well about the trust of the people's representatives that they

thought it not only proper but also necessary for the social and political leadership of the affected region to take the people along in this task.

I must confess I have been impressed by these legislative measures initiated by the political class of Maharashtra. Therefore, I think other equally serious measures can and should also attract the attention of the political class for the benefit of the rural population and the rural economy of the state. Two decades ago the political leadership of Maharashtra thought that the dry lands of Maharashtra, with poor irrigation facilities, should take to horticulture, which can give better returns per acre than seasonal crop farming. It can also lead to preservation and processing industries to add value to the production effort. While this started as a government programme, it has yet to catch popular imagination. Large scale programme of suitable tissue culture to help grow superior varieties faster and help preservation and processing industries to grow are called for. Non-coastal Maharashtra has more than its share of poorer farm lands, not very suitable for seasonal crop farming. These lands are better utilized for small ruminants like sheep and goat the demand for which as meat animals has been growing fast in the market. Unlike states like Rajasthan, Maharashtra is a land of a few small ruminants like goats mainly in poor households. Nearly one fourth of the rural households

Slightly edited text of the lecture delivered on February 18, 2013 at Undale, Maharashtra on the occasion of being felicitated with Swantantryaveer Dada Undalkar Samajkarya Puraskar. Though the lecture was delivered in Marathi the text was written in English, the speaker's mother tongue being Odiya.

have one to four heads each. The goat is the poor household's milch animal and the kids fetch money from the mutton market. A better breed of goats with more and higher quality meat and one with greater output of milk per day of lactation has been developed in a research institute in Phaltan. The spread of this type in rural Maharashtra can greatly improve the production of goat milk, lead to much larger output of mutton, to superior quality skin for leather, and to overall improvement in the economy of the poor household. The same is also true of sheep which our Dhangers have been keeping in larger numbers as seasonally itinerant flocks. The research, first established by the Phaltan institute, has led to a cross breed of a variety that produces on an average one and a half lambs per conception in place of the one lamb so far, leading to a nearly fifty per cent increase in sheep meat production. And finally, that institute is developing a variety of grass which grows well even under poor rainfall conditions, making our vast murum lands suitable for goat and sheep farming. A concerted effort for the expansion of this research outcome will help turn the rural economy of western Maharashtra and Marathwada in the years to come.

Horticulture and sheep and goat farming can take care of a relatively smaller part of our dry cultivated land. But what about the larger remaining land? Let me talk about another approach that is so important for the chronically water short regions of Maharashtra. Western Maharashtra (excluding the Konkan region), Marathwada and parts of Vidarbha are a part of what is called the dry agricultural region of India, accounting for nearly 40

per cent of the total cultivated land of the country. 'Dry' means lands that receive less than 40 inches of average rainfall in the year. In fact, a very large part of the dry lands of the state receives less than even 25 inches rainfall. This leads to our agriculture being confined to crops that can be grown under such low rainfall. But low rainfall regions are also subject to uncertain rainfall. Examination of rainfall data for western Maharashtra for more than a hundred years shows that in every five years there are two normal years, one better than normal and two real drought years. Furthermore, poor rainfall leads to poor ground water resource. Traditionally our experience was, fifty per cent of the effort at sinking wells resulted in the investor being sunk with it. Our heavy rains on the crest of the Sahyadri range gets drained by the rivers either flowing west to the Arabian sea or to the east to fall into the bay of Bengal. The only dependable source of assured water for irrigating our dry agricultural lands is by damming these east flowing rivers and diverting them through canals to fields.

In our state this effort started in a significant way in the beginning of the 20th century. Neera canal system, for example is one such. It is worth recalling how this water was sought to be used in the fields at that time. At that time, besides dry crops like jowar and bajra and pulses like Tur and Gram, there were not many other crops that could be usefully grown under the poor rainfall conditions. It is useful to remember that the present day oilseed crops like groundnut, sunflower, soyabean were not known then. Even cotton was a new crop and largely, though not exclusively, grown in Vidarbha. The only irrigated crops known were

sugarcane and paddy. Administrators and engineers found that farmers were interested and even keen to irrigate their crops like jowar only in the years of poor rain. In good rainfall years they had no interest in irrigation. Therefore, if canal irrigation was to make water available every year from the stored water of the rivers carrying the rain water from the Sahyadri range, it has to be given on a regular basis to crops that can be grown here only with irrigation, namely sugarcane. But, sugarcane requires a lot of water the year round, in addition to the seasonal rainfall. If water were to be given to only sugarcane in the command area of canals, there would not be enough water for all the land that can come under irrigation in the command area. So, the question arose: how to distribute this water between the sugarcane and other seasonal crops and how to make as many farmers in the village area under the command as possible benefit from the irrigation facility. A young assistant engineer named Visweswaraiya, who had joined the public works department of the government after passing out in the first batch of graduates of the new Poona Engineering College, went round all the villages that were to come under the command of the Neera left bank canal. He met villagers in every village and persuaded them that since only a limited area under command can get water from the canal in a year for sugarcane, farmers should agree to arrange their lands in such a manner that every farmer has some land, roughly in proportion to his total land holding, in blocks to be signaled as sugarcane blocks for the year. For this purpose, those with more land near the blocks should trade, through mutual leasing, land with those that did not have such

land near the block or even in the command area. If it were agreed to, every farmer would have some land in the sugarcane blocks. The blocks should change from year to year to avoid putting the same land under sugarcane continuously. The young engineer worked out this block system and the exchange of land amongst farmers for every village under the Neera left bank canal. But, before the water became available, he was transferred. The system of land exchange, a wonderful idea in the prevailing condition of our land distribution, was not properly followed up, though the block system remained. Besides sugarcane, crops like jowar and wheat were also irrigated, mainly in rotation with sugarcane.

The sugarcane based irrigation required on the one hand farmers willing and able to grow sugarcane and a sugarcane processing industry on the other. Not many land owning farmers in the newly opened canal systems were familiar with sugarcane cultivation. Gradually, farmers with experience of well irrigation from other parts, Malis more than others, came to these areas, leased in land from owners and began growing sugarcane. In course of time some or many of these tenants became owners by purchasing lands. While they knew making Jaggery, sugar was now available in the market and its demand was growing. At the government's prompting private sugar factories were started in the 1920s. These factories also resorted to taking land from land owners on long term lease to grow sugarcane to ensure a steady supply of cane to their factories. By this time also groundnut had entered the agricultural production system and gradually became a crop giving good return under irrigation.

This in brief is the story of agriculture under canal irrigation in western Maharashtra till the time of independence. By the end of the Second World War the sugar factories were established propositions and the use of canal water in the main for sugarcane was quite settled. Soon after independence in 1947, some enterprising and thoughtful farmers thought that it may be better if under the co-operative system they can have their own sugar factories where their own cane can be crushed and they would get better return from their crop than by selling it to private factories. That was the beginning of the Pravara Co-operative Sakhar Karkhana in 1949-50. With the success of the Pravara factory, the idea spread and the then political leadership of the state supported it heartily, leading to a spread of co-operative sugar factories in the sugarcane growing canal areas of western Maharashtra. Indeed the state did not permit any private sugar factories. Growth of canal irrigation meant growth of sugarcane. It is interesting to know that in all the canal irrigation areas, 75 to 80 percent of the canal water (about three-fourths to four-fifths of the total canal water) was used up in the sugarcane fields. The other seasonal crops were relatively small users of the canal water.

Sugarcane cultivation also increased in well irrigated areas. Most of these wells were successful in the vicinity of reservoirs and around the command areas of the irrigation projects. These wells were helped by the water seeping from the canals and the irrigated fields.

As demand for water grew, the engineers found that, given the pattern of use of the canal water in the dry agricultural regions,

not more than one third of the total cultivated lands of western Maharashtra and Marathwada can ultimately be irrigated when all flow irrigation projects in these regions are completed. This was a disturbing finding and scholars began to think about the way out of this situation. Some distinguished engineers said that the way out of this shortage of water for irrigating the dry agricultural regions of peninsular India is to bring the surplus water from Ganga-Jamuna, the Brahmaputra and the Mahanadi to the peninsular dry regions through link canals.

Simultaneously, some others thought that it is necessary to examine if the present a pattern of use of canal water in western Maharashtra is the most economical way of using this quantity of water, which appears to the factor in shortest supply in the agriculture of the region, even shorter than land.

Let me discuss this latter question first since I was one of those who raised this question with myself and followed it up with field enquiries. The problem was simple. It appeared that if a farmer had, say, some 15 acres of land in a single patch but only one irrigation well on his land, how would he use the water from his well? If he chose to grow sugarcane, which will give him high valued yield, he can irrigate at best one and half acres of cane in the year. But, if instead, he uses this water to irrigate seasonal crops he can irrigate five to seven acres of land under seasonal crops in the kharif, rabi and even some in the summer season. And like all wise cultivators he would find that the total income from the two or three seasonal crops under irrigation on five to seven acres of his land will give him much-much higher income

than the sugarcane on one and half acres. He will, therefore, choose to do the seasonal crop. This the farmer understands.

The state's irrigation department's routine experiments showed that one acre of sugarcane uses up 180 acre-inches of irrigation water in a year, in addition to the normal rainfall. But, one acre of hybrid rabi Jowar uses only 18 acre inches of irrigation water. It means, with the help of the water given to one acre of sugarcane, a farmer can irrigate 10 acres of hybrid Jowar in the rabi season. What about the returns? A little arithmetic showed that the income from one acre of cane was about half the return from the 10 acres of hybrid Jowar. When we did the calculations of the cost and return of different irrigated crops in our canal irrigated areas and compared their return from acre inch of water in the early 1980s, it turned out that not only hybrid jowar, but many other seasonal crops, like hybrid Bajra, oilseeds like groundnut, sunflower, safflower, soyabean, pulses like tur and mung and udid, even wheat and cotton, not to mention the relatively low water using horticultural crops like grape, gave much higher return per acre-inch of irrigation water than sugarcane. The only seasonal crop which did not fit in to this pattern was paddy. Paddy, like sugarcane, is a heavy water guzzler.

The lesson we learnt was that in canal irrigated areas the least economical use of canal water was in sugarcane cultivation. If the water used in sugarcane cultivation is given instead to seasonal crops, then from the same total quantity of canal water, the region can produce at least twice the total income from much larger area under combinations of such seasonal crops than from

sugarcane.

The question therefore arose in our minds: why do farmers in canal irrigated areas ask for water for sugarcane, instead of for seasonal crops? Compared to the situation in the beginning of the 20th century when Vishweswaraya was designing for Neera canal area, there were now many more crops, with much improved varieties in terms of yield.

When we were studying the Neera canal situation, a farmer whose fields we were investigating, one day came to our office to enquire why we were spending time enquiring into the crops under irrigation. When I explained that we were trying to find out why farmers were keen about irrigating sugarcane instead of seasonal crops, he told me: You see, we call sugarcane *alsi mansacha peek* (idle man's crop). Once you have planted it, there is nothing else to do but give some fertilizer and water every 12-15 days. And it does not matter if the water at any watering is much in excess - after all it is a bamboo variety and no harm can come of that. But, despite this farmer's comment, I am not saying that farmers ask for water for sugarcane because they are lazy. The reason is basically different.

In most canal irrigated areas in western Maharashtra, very few farmers have more than three-four acres of land in the command area. If they are getting water for one or two acres of sugarcane, denying them water for cane would require that they have five to ten acres in the command area for growing at least two seasonal crops every year under irrigation with the same amount of water. But, this is the case with negligible number of farmers. For most farmers under the present

pattern of irrigation, what is in relative short supply in the command area is land, not water. Hence the demand for water for sugarcane to maximize the return from irrigation.

We see that in this situation what is in the interest of the society and the state in the irrigation project area is not quite in the interest of the farmers that have land in the project area. They want to get much more income from the water at the cost of others who may get some water for seasonal crops if there was a method of giving water for only such crops, from which the total return to the total water would be much more.

Let me tell you how farmers try to corner water for their lands in the new irrigation projects. I learnt this from a very senior engineer who was the first Director of WALMI and was then doing a detailed study of the Mula irrigation system. You see, in a new irrigation system, the first thing that is completed is the dam. The engineers are very proud of the dam they build. By the time the new dam is ready the main canals to carry water from the reservoir are also ready as are a few distributaries nearer the head of the main canal. The lower down distributaries and minors take many more years to complete. In case of Mula, it took 20 years for the tail end distributaries and minors to be completed.

As water begins to flow in the main canal, the farmers with land under the distributaries nearer the dam tell the engineers: Why do you waste water? - give us more water for more sugarcane area. When the lower down distributaries and minors are ready, you can withdraw water for our excess sugarcane lands. But, as we saw, it takes many years for the lower down minors

to be ready. By then the farmers under the upper distributaries are settled sugarcane farmers and with their political clout they retain large part of the excess water they had obtained. The lands at the tail end of the main canal go largely dry.

Our investigation results, checked with the experts in WALMI, showed that if water is given in the command areas for essentially seasonal crops, with two or three different seasonal crop packages on every plot of land, at least twice the total land can be irrigated, benefitting as many more farmers, the total income from irrigation will at least double and will be more widely distributed amongst farmers, and agriculture of the region will be stabler, meaning less fluctuation in production from year to year. And finally, even labour use in agriculture will be much larger, both family and the hired. If such a policy is followed, not one-third, but nearly two-thirds of the total cultivated lands of our dry region can be irrigated.

But then a question arose: What about sugarcane? We have now so many sugar factories. Are they to be closed? We realized this is a serious question. But, there was an answer that appeared appropriate for a water short state like ours. We found that nearly forty five to fifty per cent of the water coming into the main canals, distributaries and minors are lost in transit due to seepage and evaporation, mainly seepage. We thought that if the farmers in the command area can be permitted and persuaded to sink wells or tube wells on their land to recycle the seeped water, they can use this water to irrigate sugarcane crop on some of their land. Indeed, the first Irrigation Commission of Maharashtra had strongly advocated sinking of wells

in the command area to supplement canal water. True, if farmers sink such wells, the total land that can be brought under sugarcane may not be as large as under particular projects to-day. What this would mean is relatively smaller factories to crush the cane from the command area. The engineers of our state had suggested that such smaller factories should produce only brown sugar. And there can be a co-operative factory of a number of such smaller factories which will work the year round converting brown sugar to white. Sugarcane and sugar will not disappear. There will be more economical and fuller use of our very scarce water for irrigation and a far larger number of farmers will be the beneficiaries from this.

It is true that changing the existing irrigation projects in to this new method will take some time. The first thing that can and should be done is to follow this approach in all new irrigation schemes that would be executed henceforth. For the existing projects, a step by step approach for such policy should be followed. The government now has promoted water users' associations under each minor. These are today working as agents of the irrigation department. I suggest they should be made into registered associations which should own the minors, buy water from the irrigation department at the main canal and supply it to their members. Every such association should sign an agreement with the owner of every plot of land to supply the calculated quantity of water at agreed intervals during each crop season. The water should be charged not according to the crop to be irrigated, but according to the quantity of water given to the field. The farmer should be free to grow any crop he wishes on his land. The quantity of water

per irrigation, under our Warabandi system, is easily calculated on the basis of the number of hours water is let out into the field from the water course. The maintenance of the water course and of the minor shall be the responsibility of the association. The Patkari (the canal inspector) shall be the employee of the association, not of the irrigation department. Once these steps are taken, the association shall be asked to sink wells in the command area under its control. Once the wells are ready, the association shall negotiate the new water supply schedule and volume with the irrigation department for the seasonal crops pattern on the basis of which the water supply to an acre in a season is calculated. When this is done, the association shall estimate the water that will be available from the wells in the season and distribute it as supplementary water to as many plots as can be helped during the year with water for sugarcane. The price for such supplementary water will be fixed by the association. This will tell the factories how much cane would be available. The factories can then either produce only brown sugar during the crushing season, and later use their equipment to convert the brown sugar in to white in the rest of the year, or negotiate with other factories to set up a pure white sugar mill. Once we start this process, the redesigning can be completed in about five years. When brand new crop come into the field, its water requirement may be estimated to see if it is in the range of the crops taken into account till then. If not, it may be given supplementary irrigation from the wells.

We are today faced with growing water scarcity. An approach like this is necessary to use the irrigation water to the maximum extent and produce the maximum income from

every inch of irrigation water.

Some people can say, why do all this? Why not bring water from Ganga and Brahmaputra to the dry lands? Let me give you the basic facts relating to this scheme. With the help of data collected by the Institute of Engineers of Pune I had made a calculation of what will be the capital cost of irrigation water from this, per year per acre of, say, hybrid Rabi Jowar and of sugarcane. I shall not go into details. But their information shows that the simple capital cost of water per acre of hybrid jowar per year will be at least 2,015 rupees and for Sugarcane, it will be 20,150 rupees. This, if the capital cost of the project during the twenty year period over which the work is to be carried out is interest free. If interest is charged during this period then the capital cost of hybrid jowar will be 4,130 rupees and of sugarcane, it will be 41,300 rupees. These are at prices prevailing ten years ago. At current prices, these would be much higher. In addition there will be the cost of annual repair, maintenance and administrative cost of providing water. Who can bear this?

This simple account shows that this linking of rivers is no solution to our problem. We have no worthwhile alternative to devising a system where we use water as such that we produce the best income per acre-inch of water. This will ultimately irrigate nearly 60 per cent of our lands. As for the rest, I have talked about horticulture and production of sheep and goat above.

I have been advocating this for the last 25 years through writings. The Dandekar-Datta Deshmukh-Deuskar Committee for Ujani Dam had followed this logic and made

their recommendation for 8-month irrigation. None of these suggestions have yet been accepted. You may say: then why talk about it? The reason is: this is clearly the only rational alternative for us. And one, like me, has nothing else to do but write and speak about what from our studies appears rational and useful. The village woman back in Odisha asks (in a saying): what does Dhinki (the leg operated paddy de-husking device) do when it goes to heaven? After a pause, she says, de-husk paddy. That is what I am doing. Shrikrishna says in Geeta: *Karmanyevadhikaraste Maphaleshu Kadachana*.

I not only hope but believe that such an approach will ultimately be accepted. When our study report

(Continued from Page 7)

during this period that reforms in the capital market were launched with Companies (amendment) Ordinance promulgation on 31st October 1998 and again in 1999 to facilitate to buy back shares by companies, amendment to SEBI facilitating equity funds in government dated securities both in primary and secondary markets. Interestingly a new concept of "sweat equity" consisting of equity shares used by a company can be transferred to its directors and employees at a discount or for consideration other than cash was introduced. In other words, different sectors of the economy were capitalized that seemed to have given scope for several scams later. As the ordinary politicians of Nandi category are not cognizant of such sophisticated operations; they are confined to millions and those who have access to capital market and a tradition of knowledge have become billionaires overnight through manipulations.

was prepared, one of my friends who had read the report, gave it to (late) Appasaheb Pawar of Baramati who was a very knowledgeable person about agriculture. On reading it, he told my friend: I do not quite agree with its suggestions. My friend said, does not matter. I do. But, a little over a year later Appasaheb suddenly told my friend one day, 'I was again reading the report you gave me. Now I think it is right. I agree with its suggestions'. I believe our political class will come to a similar conclusion one day. The only sad part of it is, when one is driven to the wall, one takes a desperate decision. That makes the new decision rather hurried, unsystematic and clumsy. Taking a decision after due thought and care saves one from such risks.

The official information from the surveys contains several such incidents, but can be revealed only when analyzed in a broad framework of political economy or social economy of India.

Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist



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Bravo RBI

Pannalal Surana

A leading daily, in its 18th March 2013 issue, on page 14, carries three stories: 1. FinMin: case exists for ratings upgrade, 2. Strict regulations, assets stress to hit banks: Survey, 3. RBI action: toss up between pause and 25 bps cut.

A cover page of a leading weekly magazine was saying "End of Buying"

End of Buying?

One finds that all shops on main roads of all cities and towns are crowded during the major part of day and evening time. Quantity purchased is declining day by day, thanks to inflation. But the leading auditing and ranking agency, Crisil, said (as reported at the end of the third story mentioned above) "Core inflation - an indicator of demand side pressures on prices - fell below 4.0 per cent for the first time in past 35 months, strengthening the case for a repo rate cut by the RBI on March 19"

What is the difference between core inflation and inflation afflicting the aam adami? Price of a cup of tea on railway platform has jumped from Rs 5 to 10. Autoriksha and taxi fares are on the rise. Prices of medicines, paper, newspaper - all are on the higher side.

All those so-called experts who are engaged in increasing pressure on the RBI to reduce the rate of interest on advances to the traders and corporate industrialists use all types of arguments to prod the RBI to ease money supply situation. They should

explain why the economy is suffering from inflation, unemployment and stagnation in manufacturing sector. The economy is being run, for the last 20 years or so, as per the advice of these very experts. Almost all leading mainstream political parties have been supporting those free trade policies. All sorts of concessions in charges for water and power have been showered on the corporate sector. The State helped them to acquire control over natural resources like land, minerals, spectrum, etc. And yet the spectre of stagflation is hounding our economy rendering lives of majority of the people miserable.

All those experts should see with eyes wide open that great distortion in the distribution of national wealth, produced by the hard work of men and women belonging to the lower income groups, has been caused by the high technology adopted by the industrialists and also by their unrestrained greed. There has been high size corruption in which a number of corporates, both indigenous as well as foreign, are involved. Some of them had taken help of a lobbyist, namely Radia, who is reputedly unscrupulous. All this is a natural outcome of the western model of development so blindly followed by the policy-makers of India. The USA itself is suffering from the same plight. There, one per cent of the population has grabbed control over 90 per cent of national wealth.

If we want to get out of this rot, we will have to bid goodbye to that western model of development and

adopt alternative model by placing full employment as its goal. Avenues of employment can be increased vastly by making substantial investments in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, small and medium level industries to be located in a diffused manner in the rural and underdeveloped areas and by adopting cooperative mode of management. That will also help even distribution of purchasing power which, in its own turn, will stimulate demand for socially useful goods and services.

The RBI should regulate money supply very carefully and prod the banks to cater to the needs of farmers, village artisans, small and medium sector industries run by the backward caste and minority enterprisers.

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By

Asoka Mehta

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Media and social concerns

Brij Khandelwal

Like other professions Indian media too is undergoing an exciting process of transformation. Some people are naturally alarmed. The old order thinks it is a steep degeneration and cites countless examples of distortions and devaluations. Obviously perceptions and priorities have changed. The Indian media seems to be struggling to free itself of the stranglehold of the 1947 missionary mindset and gradually shift its focus to profit-making industrial activity.

The Indian media is a product of the freedom struggle/ movement. Without newspapers the focus of the crusade against the British would have been fundamentally different. It is interesting to recall that the foundation of the press in India was laid by a white man in 1780. The weekly Bengal Gazette was the first newspaper published from the Indian soil, and its mood and temperament was anti-establishment. James Augustus Hickey, the editor and publisher had the guts to challenge the mighty empire of the then viceroy Warren Hastings.

In the past 200 years, the Indian media has largely maintained this tradition, of opposition and generally played an adversarial role. As the fourth estate it has functioned as an opposition party. Even today one of the chief functions of the press is to strengthen civil society through continuous monitoring and exposure of the wrong doings of those in authority.

Nothing wrong with that, I suppose. But what has happened in

the last 20 years or so, particularly after the process of liberalization and globalization was triggered in the 1990s, has sent alarming signals all around. If the Indian media today appears reduced to an appendage of the corporate culture, it may not be wholly possible to halt the downslide and a paradigm shift in its relations with the masses? This is the question that has caused widespread concern among social and political activists fighting for the rights of the people. The negative trends that have lately crept in are demonstrated by the increasing role of commerce which has catapulted the original goals of journalism out of the orbit of public concern. Editors of newspapers are accused of sacrificing and doctoring content to suit fund raisers' interests.

This is nowhere else more eloquently highlighted than in the electronic media whose TRP obsession has initiated a wholly undesirable trend of misinformation and disregard for factual representation. One can draw attention to some recent cases in which the television medium went out of its way to take advantage of very serious human predicaments:

In the first case a trader in Patiala burnt himself to death in the full view of camera persons, none of whom came forward to save him. In another case in Madhya Pradesh, family members fighting economic distress were provoked to consume poison to end their lives, again in full view of the camera. And the latest is the case of Puja in Surat in Gujarat who was persuaded to walk

the streets in her undergarments to draw attention of the world to her sufferings and plight. Those of you who have seen the latest Amir Khan production *Peepli Live* would agree how events are being stage-managed and orchestrated. Surely this is misuse of liberty which is becoming a licence.

The deliberate attempts to seriously skew information dissemination, over-hyping the absurd and abominable efforts of a section of the society, sensationalising or allowing page three features to confer social distinction and respectability to those who are not worthy of it to dominate the contents, information overload, class predilections and prejudices and pathetic attempts to play to the galleries through promotion of the superstitious and the obscurantist orientations of the society - are danger signals that need to be addressed urgently.

To quote eminent journalist Kuldip Nayar: "Our print media is suffering a mad disease which has played havoc with newspapers. I will call it the tabloid syndrome. You open any paper in the morning. They are full of pictures of young models, super models, actors and fashion designers - some names you have never heard - garnished with information on what they love to eat, what kind of dress they like to wear what they often do when they relax, what they think of love and sex and such trivia. This shallow, unthinking attitude gets reflected even in the news stories and articles that are printed in the papers. Reporters

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do not cross check the information they get. They often write one sided versions of events and about people who do not matter. Often good stories are not followed up properly. Planted stories make the front pages. Journalists have turned into politicians and newspapers into projectors of a particular point of view. News columns have come to be editorialized in the name of interpretative reporting.”

But the course to doom cannot be altered till those at the helms of affairs in the media world are men of vision and social commitment. The media today is dependent on hollow men of low IQ, depending on unreliable sources of information. The internet technology has further speeded this process of trivialization through mass proliferation of undesirable and phoney information through a tested system of doctoring and cannibalisation in the form of wholesale plagiarism. One always thought and believed that the desirable goals that the media should pursue are fostering of creative ideas that lead to social cohesion, to privilege facts and figures, to promote rational thinking and to keep in check the baser predatory instincts of humans.

Unfortunately what seems to be happening is just the opposite. Media barons in India do not realize that the goals and objectives of the press in a developing country like ours have to be different from those in the Western media. Many of us mistakenly think Globalisation means westernization or Americanisation. One question that is often asked relates to the freedom of the press.

Indian media today is definitely the most free in the world, but unfortunately this freedom is

misused by people in power. Let it be stated quite candidly that the freedom of the press today does not mean the freedom of the writer or the journalist to write anything or to project views that are at variance with the establishment. It is essentially the freedom of the owners or the managements to switch political loyalties or to often defend culprits and wrong doers who may be in a position to be milched by the media in the form of advertisements.

Some facts: While newspapers and magazines in many western

countries have suffered circulation losses and have closed down, the Indian media is growing phenomenally, registering a 42 percent increase in circulation. The readership figure for 2000 was 232 million and today it has crossed 350 million.

We have more than 50, 000 registered publications and more than 100 TV channels, plus scores of FM radio stations. Add to this the extensive reach of the internet and you have a lively media with a very positive outlook for expansion in the coming years.

Yusuf Meherally Centre

Low cost Medical Care for Rural Areas

Yusuf Meherally Centre is keen on promoting low cost, but quality, health care in rural areas. One model the Centre tried has been to create awareness among the Mumbai doctors that it is their duty to do something for the surrounding villages. It succeeded. It set up a Sunday clinic at Tara, a village on Mumbai-Goa highway in 1967 and that is still continuing. There is no dearth of doctors willing to serve patients free once a month or so.

Now there is a proposal to undertake a new initiative and do a similar experiment with a view to attracting medical men to rural areas committed to providing medical care, curative as well as preventive, without their expecting market salaries. For this, one idea that makes sense is to appeal to retired government doctors who do not wish to start private practice. It is possible they will respond. The same with the retired military medical officers. And there are quite a few medical men who are motivated by their ideology – Gandhian or Socialist who too may respond. The freedom movement, as also the early socialist movement, did succeed in making ideologically committed people to move to rural areas to provide health care.

The Centre appeals to Janata’s readers to identify such people and introduce them to it.

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many exemptions.”

But the budget proves that both of them have conveniently forgotten their promise. And now eight years down, the giveaways, far from being scrapped, have more than doubled from Rs.2.35 lakh crore to Rs.5.73 lakh crore. Turning a blind eye to these elephantine sums, Mr. Chidambaram says he has only to look at the 42,800 rich for levying surcharge for a few thousand crore. Of course he was right in taxing them as their tax rate is low. The question is: why did he not scrap the giveaways worth lakhs of crores enjoyed by the corporates as he had committed to do in 2007? That could be the game changer not only for the government and its balance sheet but also for the national economy. Are the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister listening?

– *The Hindu*

Fourteen per cent of earth's land is covered by deserts. Global warming is not due to developmental activities of the people of the world. Grow more trees to get more rains and solve the drinking water, global warming and climate change of the world. It is the duty of the UNO to advise all the nations of the world to reclaim all the deserts of the world by growing trees in abundance which will reduce global warming and strengthen world peace. On 27-01-2010 British Prime Minister had asked his Direct Communication Unit in-charge Mr. G. Edwards to thank me for my letter to U.N. Secretary General on the subject Grow More Trees to get more rains and stated that the contents of my letter have been carefully noted by the Prime Minister.

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Budget with an eye on elections

G. V. Sunder

P. Chidambaram is an old hand at presenting union budgets. He is also not new at presenting poll eve budgets. It is the last chance, before the general elections, for the government to please everyone by claiming to do all things to all people.

Whatever may be the content of the budget, the typical reaction from the opposition leaders and others are all same and cliché-ridden over the years. For example the typical comments are, “it is anti-poor and anti-farmers budget” “There is nothing for the middle class”, “it is a pro-rich or pro-corporate sector budget”, etc. We are used to hearing these comments over the decades. It looks like it is opposition for the sake of opposition.

Annual budget is not the only instrument for the government to usher in changes and to improve the financial conditions of the citizens. There are many other policy initiatives like credit policy, trade policies and new legislative enactments to bring in the financial progress by giving directions through these policy announcements. Therefore, it would be better to look beyond a single budget, and generally see what are the policies and programmes of the UPA-II and the results at the ground level.

Discussing all the proposals of the budget would be a very lengthy exercise. It would be better to confine only to a few aspects of the economy which affect the majority of Indians. The rural and agriculture sectors could be such focus areas.

UPA-II took charge of its second innings, in the backdrop of a global economic turmoil and related issues and impacts on the Indian economy. The two major challenges before the Finance Minister were the deceleration

of growth and current account and fiscal deficits. The major thrust of the UPA-II is inclusive growth by improving the conditions of the rural poor.

To achieve higher growth, the Finance Minister has proposed, among other things, huge allocations to rural and farm sectors with a belief that the resilient rural economy may help the economy in general to recover. This year also, the Finance Minister has chosen to allocate more funds for all the existing rural and social sector programmes.

The Finance Minister has allocated more funds for MNREGS. He has substantially increased the agricultural credit. During 2007-08, the same P.Chidambaram had given a huge i.e., Rs. 60-70,000 crores of loan waiver to the farmers. This time he has proposed an incentive of 4 percent interest on all prompt repayments of agriculture loans. He has allocated Rs 10,000 crores for national food security. At present, almost two to two-thirds of our population is getting subsidized food on BPL cards. He has allotted more funds to continue green revolution in eastern states, more funds for agricultural research, more funds for integrated watershed programmes, more funds for rural housing and village roads and more funds for Integrated Child Development Scheme.

In the earlier budgets also, the UPA-II had focused more on rural and farming sectors by announcing new programmes and higher allocation of funds. In the last five years, the support prices of various crops have been doubled.

The farmers have responded positively to the programmes and

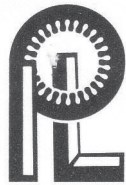
incentives given by the government, producing a record of 259 million tonnes of food grains in 2011-12. During 2012-13, in spite of 8% deficient rains, the food grains production is about 250 million tonnes. The average annual growth of agriculture during 11th plan was 3.6 percent. Rice and wheat production in our country grew at a faster pace than in the rest of the world over the same period. India is the largest producer of fruits, vegetables and milk. Export of agricultural products is also growing and it is expected to cross \$ 40 billion during 2012-13. The rural wages have gone up more than 3-4 times during the same period. The surplus cash in the rural India will help in increasing the demand for the industrial products.

During the last 5-6 years, the world has seen huge spikes in food prices. However, the FAO identified India as one of the very few countries who have successfully reduced food insecurity, when the whole world was facing food price spikes during the last 6-7 years.

The UPA-II is confident of introducing direct cash transfer in lieu of subsidies by 2014. To pave the way for early and proper implementation of direct cash transfers, the Finance Minister is trying to strengthen the post office network. The post office network is well spread out in the rural areas compared to the banking sector. There are more than 1,50,000 branches of post offices in the entire country. The Finance Minister has allocated huge funds to develop and integrate these post offices with the core banking system.

The success of MNREGS and subsidized distribution of food, prompted our agriculture minister Sharad Pawar to make a stunning and

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insensitive observation: “Two days’ MNREGS wages are enough to buy food grains for a month and hence men prefer sitting idle”. Does he mean that the desire and ambition to go up the financial ladder is the privilege of the rich and the middle classes? We are seeing a large scale migration of marginal farmers and landless labourers from the rain dependent areas, to cities and towns, during the lean periods. The desire to make best use of the lean period is an indication of the desire of the rural poor to earn much more than they can earn in the rural areas.

All these initiatives in rural India will also help in achieving two objectives. One is of sending a strong message of inclusive growth and second, thereby appeasing the traditional vote bank of Congress in the rural areas i.e., backward castes, SCs & STs and the rural poor. Sociologists and economists should take note of this changing rural economy.

The Finance minister has also indulged in tokenism since this is the last budget the government will be presenting before the next general elections to the Lok Sabha. The recent gang rape of a lady in New Delhi had aroused a lot of protests and criticism. As if to show the concern of the government to such incidents, the Finance Minister announced ‘Nirbhaya Fund’ and ‘All Women Bank’. Whether it is sufficient to assure the women or not, the opposition leader Sushma Swaraj was seen smiling and thumping the desk in the Lok Sabha when the announcements were made as a mark of her appreciation and approval.

Another factor that has been worrying the Finance Minister has been the Current Account deficit. Finance Minister is obviously worried about heavy imports of gold and petroleum products. Indians’ love for gold is legendary. I understand that during the 17th century Indians were insisting on payment in gold for their

exports and many a parliamentarians of England and Spain would lament that the gold that they had brought from the American continent was being splurged and wasted on imports from India. No wonder the Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Kerala has so much of gold in its hidden treasures.

The import bill on account of gold appears to be as high as 16 percent of our total imports. It is the next big ticket import after the petroleum products. It is certainly a huge drain on our foreign exchange reserves. It increases the current account deficit and is a worrying factor. But the Finance Minister does not appear to have done much to restore the current account balance except of course, appealing to the Indians not to buy gold.

Obviously the budget has been presented with an eye on the coming elections. However, isn’t that the demand of democracy?

While growth is unquestionably necessary for substantial poverty reduction, it appears that growth is getting weakly linked with poverty reduction. In other words, the growth elasticity of poverty (GEP) is not high enough. GEP gives the percentage change in a chosen poverty measure in response to a 1 percentage change in GDP or mean income and can be interpreted as the poverty reducing impact of growth. In the poverty literature, GEP is found to be a function of initial income distribution, and it has been shown that rising levels of inequality lower GEP. The rationale for this is that the higher the initial inequality, the lesser the poor will share in the gains from growth. Martin Ravallion explains this succinctly as: “Unless there is a sufficient change in the distribution, people who have a larger initial share of the pie will tend to gain a larger share in the pie’s expansion”.

The National Sample Survey (NSS) data point in the direction of rising inequality in India. The Gini coefficient for rural India increased from 0.27 to 0.28 between 2004-05 and 2009-10, with rural inequality rising in 11 states. The Gini coefficient for urban India increased from 0.35 to 0.37, with urban inequality increasing in 18 states. Moreover, the ratio of per capita income between the top 15% and bottom 15% of the population has risen from 3.9 to 5.8 in rural areas and from 6.4 to 7.8 in urban areas during this period. This indicates that not only is inequality between the two groups on the rise, but also that the benefits of economic growth have not trickled down to those at the bottom of the distribution. Importantly, this rising inequality has reduced GEP.

Moreover, these inequality measures need to be interpreted with caution as India measures inequality based on consumption rather than incomes, and consumption inequality tends to be lower than income inequality because of consumption smoothing by households. Also, the NSS estimates of consumption expenditure fail to capture the top income groups, thereby resulting in underestimation of inequality. Therefore, inequality in India is higher than what we believe by looking at these estimates.

Importantly, inequality of consumption is about ‘inequality of results’ and not ‘inequality of opportunities’, which may be more important but are much harder to measure. Such inequalities are associated with gender or caste, access to key social services, particularly healthcare and schooling and access to credit markets; and these tend to undermine productivity, retard growth and consequently impede the task of poverty reduction.

—Radhicka Kapoor



Rural India Focus

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Mixing sports and politics

S. Viswam

Rivalry between the two Dravidian parties of Tamil Nadu has impacted on national and international sports. The ruling Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Opposition Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam have together urged the prime minister to boycott the forthcoming Commonwealth summit because it is scheduled to be held in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo. Similar antipathy towards Sri Lanka and its majority Sinhala population, combined with sentiments of solidarity and identity with Sri Lankan Tamils has provoked a move against Sri Lankan cricket players. The Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalithaa has taken the initiative to get Sri Lankan cricketers banned from playing in the ten matches scheduled to be played in the state.

The chief minister informed the prime minister that their participation will aggravate an already surcharged atmosphere and further offend the sentiments of the people. The IPL general council conceded the demand, leaving no option to the Centre to intervene. IPL Chairman Rajeev Shukla said the organizers had to take note of the local sentiment but more important the safety and security of the Sri Lankan players were paramount.

First, politics has been allowed to intrude into the arena of sports. Second, an already tense situation between the Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamils is being given the opportunity to become more tense. Thirdly, an already tense situation between the Sinhalese and the Tamils in India is being encouraged to grow more intense and complicated. One wishes that this development which will have bad consequences for Indo-Sri Lankan bilateral relations had not taken place. The Asian Athletics Championship to be held in Chennai in July has been shifted out as Jayalalithaa was not in favour of Sri Lankan participation in it. Now, another scheduled event has been sacrificed. Nobody denies that the Tamils of Sri Lanka and of India are unhappy with the atrocities committed by Sri Lankan military on the ethnic Tamils. India voted in favour of the resolution against Colombo in the UN. But to ban Sri Lankan players from participating in cricket matches in India is wrong in principle and tantamount to discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and nationality. Pakistani players are being discriminated against because of Shiv Sena protests, and now Sri Lankans are being kept out because of hurt Tamil Nadu sentiments. Cricket should be played as an enjoyable game and not be used to politicize sports.

Government on brink

Kuldip Nayar

Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav said last month that elections for parliament were possible in September, he was not indulging in sensationalism. He had been sounded out by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) president M. Karunanidhi that he was withdrawing support to the Manmohan Singh government from the ensuing parliament session. The DMK patriarch has lived up to his utterance, putting the future of the United Progress Alliance (UPA) government in the realm of conjecture. Even when the government has agreed to support the resolution against Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council, Karunanidhi has stuck to his word conveyed to Mulayam Singh.

Mulayam Singh is in a spot because the government, which has been reduced to 277 members, is just more than the half way figure of 273 for a majority. He can pull down the government, but what does he do afterwards? In fact, no political party is yet ready to face the next elections and contradictions within some parties are so strong that it would be difficult for them to go through the requirements for the polls. However, with an eye on the future Mulayam Singh has praised BJP leader L.K. Advani, describing him as the tallest. Does it mean the post-election alliance between the BJP and the Samajwadi Party is a possibility? It is too early to say that but one thing is sure that the Samajwadi Party may compromise with the forces which it once said were "communalist and anti-national."

The overall scenario is dismal. The government which is already known for non-performance has become more halting in taking steps. It does not know how long it will be in office and therefore it is reluctant to take any long-term measures. The UPA, over which Congress President Sonia Gandhi presides, supports the Manmohan Singh government and is trying its best to placate its allies which number more than 20. Now even tiny parties, with two or three members each, matter because they hold the balance.

The UPA has already done the rope trick to keep the Manmohan Singh government in office for nine years. One cannot blame it for mismanaging the coalition because the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), with 24 parties, lasted for eight years. In fact, the UPA did very well in its first term and went about it methodically. It had constituted a coordination committee to keep in touch with all its allies and take them into confidence. This time, however, the Congress government has hardly consulted any constituent, not even big parties which were giving support from outside. Had it kept them in the loop, probably the government would not been in such a sorry plight today. But it is still not too late to cobble together the alliance and give the allies a feeling of confidence, even if not governance.

The situation has affected the economy which is now down to 4.5 per cent and it has told upon our prestige abroad. That nobody is

looking at India economically is a sad spectacle. Worse is the impression that India has no worthwhile policy on foreign affairs because it is too engrossed in its domestic problems.

There was a chance when a resolution against Sri Lanka was discussed at the UN Human Rights Council. India was impaled on the horns of dilemma because it would not annoy a neighbour, Sri Lanka, and also could not let down the DMK which wanted a strong resolution of condemnation because the party was being pressured by the Tamils.

Indeed, Sri Lanka had indulged in unprovoked killings, especially in the last phase of war against the LTTE. New Delhi preferred to placate the DMK but it turned out to be a bit too late because by then Karunanidhi had made up his mind to withdraw support from the government. New Delhi could have acted earlier. The question has been pending for discussion between the DMK and New Delhi for some years. How one wishes they had found some common way out.

Where do we go from here? New permutations and combinations are possible, but the room for manoeuvrability with the Manmohan Singh government is very limited. Probably, the sick state of India will remain like this for some more time until somebody pulls out the plug and forces early polls. Both Mulayam Singh and Bahujan Samajwadi Party's Mayawati are trying to have their

pound of flesh, but the Manmohan Singh government can concede only up to a point, not beyond. They are confident that the cases against them, probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), can be managed because the agency is a government department.

Mulayam Singh's tiff with central minister Beni Prasad may be justified but the Manmohan Singh cannot afford to drop him from the cabinet, at least not yet, when he has a few seats in parliament. Even those seats are crucial for the sustenance of the government. Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar is a help in the sense that he has joined issues with the BJP. Nitish Kumar's no to Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi as the prime ministerial candidate has put a spanner in the wheels of the BJP. It wants him but at the same time does not like to jolt the alliance. One BJP leader has said that if the choice is between the NDA government without Modi and no government with Modi, the BJP would prefer the former.

Probably, the best way out for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is to declare fresh elections. He should go to Rashtrapati Bhavan, submit his resignation and recommend new elections. At present, there is not a single party which can claim to form the government in place of Manmohan Singh's. Therefore, elections become inevitable.

Whether elections will give India a strong government is yet to be seen. It is often said that the same hotchpotch alliance will come back. Maybe, some party wins 200 seats and stakes its claim to form the government. Much will depend on the mood of the electorate and this is the best part of democracy that nobody can take them for granted.

Development and Dignity

K. S. Chalam

The Human Development Report, 2013 of UNDP was released recently with HDI ranks of different countries of the world. The theme of this year's report is 'Human progress in a diverse World' and appears to have covetous tone towards the rise of the South or developing countries. We are aware that HDI is popularly used now in all debates to insinuate the development of a country and not GDP. It is because of the fact that Human Development Index (HDI) gives a better understanding of the human progress achieved in a country than the mere income expressed as GDP. HDI is an aggregate estimate of three indicators of life expectancy, education attainment and income of a country during a year. The UNDP has been publishing the annual reports from 1990, incorporating new and innovative ideas in each report.

The Indian subcontinent takes pride in the intellectual inputs contributed by Pakistani and Indian scholars for the popularization of the concept which is universally accepted now. I may also add an anecdote that Andhra University is nostalgic for the vision of Prof Sarveswara Rao who offered a course in 1970s at the Department of Economics and had correspondence with Amartya Sen. The subject based on human capital theory in the West later seemed to have degenerated in the hands of one group of scholars and Nobel laureates (Schultz, Buchanan, Becker and others) who considered education as an investment in man. The premise has enabled World Bank scholars to

reduce education, particularly higher education as private investment and made countries like India to play nominal role. One of the reasons for the present crisis in higher education can be attributed to this plunge. Yet, it has also enabled scholars like Huq, Sen and others to take it to a different level and produce a civilized concept called human development.

The 2013 HDR has made an important statement that, "no country for which data was available had lower HDI value in 2012 than in 2000". It has further added that there is convergence of HDI values across the world. A key message of the report is: economic growth alone does not automatically translate in to human development progress. Therefore, it is necessary to concentrate on four important issues: 1. enhancing equality, 2 including the gender dimension, 3. enabling greater voice and publicity of citizen including youth, and 4. manage the demographic change. The report has demonstrated by data and regression results how inequality holds back human development in many countries. While discussing some individual countries, it is pointed out that "India's performance in accelerating HD, however, is less impressive than its growth performance". Indeed Bangladesh, our neighbor is doing well compared to India's rate of growth in HDI over a period of time.

The report has also presented HDI ranks for different countries over a period of three decades. We feel sorry to note that India is

ranked 136 in 2012, a few ranks down over the years. It is strange to find that the rank of India has been lingering around 131-136 during 1990-2012 with increase in the member countries over time. It is notable that among the BRICS, India is the only country that is not even close to any one of them: Brazil 85, Russia 55, China 101 and South Africa 121. The HDI value of India was 0.345 in 1980, raised to 0.410 in 1990 to 0.507 in 2000 and now stands at 0.554. If the ranks are adjusted for inequalities, the value of HDI comes to 0.392, a loss of 29 per cent.

What is like to be a human being? It is given in Box 1.3 of the report referring to dimensions of freedom, well being, deprivation and even cited the classic paper by philosopher Nagel on 'the experience of being a bat'. But, the authors of the report have failed to grapple with philosophical nuances of the essence of man in the context of freedom from fear as an important human value. Did human society learn any lessons from events like Auschwitz (Poland), the place where millions of Jews were butchered? Are there similar, may be less malicious practices, perpetuated even in contemporary world or in India?

Human dignity seems to have something to do with the essence of man. It is not possible here to discuss about the metaphysical elucidations of Kant or Indian sages like Sankara or Ramanuja to convey that essence as per their exposition being spirit is outside mind and body. Is it consciousness or higher feelings beyond self that bring the essence of man? Or is it simply reduced to

(Continued on Page 13)

A Mutually Beneficial Indo-Pak Relation

Rajindar Sachar

An innocuous private visit by Pakistan Prime Minister and his family to India to pay homage to one of the most revered shrine of Sufi saint Khwaja Mahinuddin Hassan Chisti, where persons of all religions including Hindus and Muslims pay respectful obeisance to the great soul and where the Mughal emperor, great Akbar, had once walked barefoot to seek blessings for the birth of a son, was bungled so badly by the pusillanimous attitude of Indian government and the deliberate ranting of the mischievous Anti-Pakistan lobby.

Bad as it was for the Deevan of Chisti shrine, to have queered the pitch by saying he would boycott the Pak PM visit, the encouraging approval given by a B.J.P. leader, M. V. Naidu has to be strongly deprecated as a crude attempt to derail Indo-Pakistan good relations.

I can understand Prime Minister not hosting a lunch (not for the reason of beheading a soldier by Pakistani Army at the LOC) but for practical reason, namely that Raja Ashraf was a care-taker Prime Minister with general elections in Pakistan to be held shortly, so obviously no worthwhile political talks could be held at this stage. It was therefore a wise decision to depute Foreign Minister to interact with Pak PM.

But the atmosphere created by small time politicians as if extending normal courtesy to Pak Prime Minister was to insult the memory of soldiers who were killed at LOC was such nasty that our Foreign

Minister was not personally allowed to receive the Pak Prime Minister at the airport. Why this half-hearted approach? Government of India could have treated the visit as a non-event in which case luncheon was also an intrusion. But when Government of India acted rightly and diplomatically - why this half-hearted approach. The matter was compounded badly by the Rajasthan Chief Minister by not receiving Pak P.M. at Airport. After all Pak PM was visiting his State. That he kept away and further did not extend the courtesy of asking one of his own Ministers to accompany the Pak P. M. to the shrine flies against the Rajasthani culture where guests are given the highest honour.

I have always believed that India and Pakistan are like Siamese twins. Though even totally separate, independent entities, the pain and tribulation of each will get reflected in the other. It is not possible for either of them to attain their legitimate due in the comity of nations unless both the countries genuinely and in the shortest of time accept that bleeding of either will bleed the other too.

But somehow our past history seems always to put us on collision course. Any effort at impartial assessment gets mired by the fear of public opinion generated by some act of terror or other allegedly arising from some hostile elements operating in Pakistan. Thus though last year there was celebration in both countries on Pakistan having agreed to give India the most favored nation status, it has not happened. It got caught up in the unfortunate

border incident and the beheading of an Indian soldier. It was certainly a ghastly act calling for the maximum of condemnation. So we cut off sports matches and even quawali teams from Pakistan - that was unfortunate. But while individuals may permanently cut off relations, nations have no such freedom, and their leaders must know the consequences of taking action born out of anger.

Just recollect the almost collision between Soviet union and USA in 1962 over Cuba, and which was averted at the last minute by the realization by both the countries of immeasurable damage which would be caused to both the countries, notwithstanding the immense superiority of U.S.A. As Khrushchev, said with ironic simplicity "I know USA can destroy USSR many times with its nuclear power. But I have sufficient nuclear power to destroy USA once and that is sufficient for me", sensible and practicable. Two neighborly nuclear powers have no option but to have friendly relations. But that does not mean any letting down of security considerations. Nor does it mean to overlook or being unprepared against the rogue elements in Pakistan, whether officially supported or not. No one denies that actual working of Pakistan government vis-à-vis India's security consideration can even for a minute be ignored, but larger considerations of peace and security with our neighbor must not be jeopardized by taking up jingoist posture in mutuality relations with Pakistan. Thus, when some time back when unfortunate LOC incident happened, anger, even gross indignation was natural. It is at this time that a responsible government behaves with dignity, confidence but does not get into panic reaction.

(Continued on Page 6)

Who organised the attack?

Sandeep Pandey

Afzal Guru has been hanged. Afzal was hanged so that 'collective conscience of the society could be satisfied.' Hopefully, the collective conscience is now satisfied. The "nationalists" danced with joy, offered sweets to each other and burst crackers. The objective of hanging was also to probably close a chapter.

However, one question remains unanswered. Who plotted the attack on Parliament? The five who pierced the security to reach the Parliament building were shot dead on the spot. The investigating agencies claim that Masood Ahzar, Ghazi Baba and Tariq Ahmad, the main conspirators are in Pakistan and hence inaccessible.

The question then is who was Afzal Guru and what was his role in the attack on Parliament? Let us see the contents of letters written by Afzal Guru from jail and his wife which were made public quite sometime back.

Afzal was sentenced to death on the basis of Special Police version which works in collusion with STF which made him accept the crime under duress and threat by Special Police ACP Rajbir Singh. Special Police had threatened to harm his family members if he did not obey them.

Afzal was attracted to JKLF movement in 1990. He went to Pakistan for training. However, he got disillusioned soon as he did not support the pro-Pakistan groups.

He stayed there for three months and returned to pursue his studies in Delhi. He was doing MBBS before he joined the movement.

With the intention of leading a normal life he surrendered to BSF. He realized very soon that it was very difficult to live as a surrendered militant in Kashmir. They are continuously harassed by BSF, STF and security forces. The surrendered militants were obliged to follow their legitimate and illegitimate orders for the sake of security of their families. People who could pay were left alone. There was corruption even in this situation! Being a surrendered militant he could not have got a job and therefore started a business of medicines and surgical instruments in Sopore. Once, much before the attack on Parliament, a policeman Akbar of the Parimpore police station extorted Rs. 5000 from him and threatened to charge him with selling spurious medicines and instruments if he did not comply. Akbar became a witness against him in the attack on Parliament case. Afzal had to also pay Rs. 300-500 every month to Special Police Officers, who were surrendered militants assisting the STF, to keep them safe from the security agencies. Sometimes SPOs became the target of attack by militants.

One day he was going by his new scooter at 10 am when he was arrested by STF and taken to Palhallan camp. There he was tortured and Rs. one lakh was

demanded from him. Then he was taken to Humhama camp where again he was tortured. He had to ultimately sell the jewelry of his wife which could fetch Rs. 80,000. The STF kept his scooter which he had bought for Rs. 24,000 just two months back. After these torture sessions one had to spend days to recuperate.

When Afzal was studying at Delhi University during 1990-96 he used to offer tuitions. This was known to Altaf Hussain, brother of SSP of Badgam Ashaq Hussain. Altaf employed him to teach his children. One day Altaf took Afzal to DSP Humhama Dravinder Singh. He was asked to accompany a non-Kashmiri man Mohammed to Delhi and help him find accommodation. He helped him buy a car and took him to meet different persons in Delhi that he wanted to meet. One day Mohammed gave him Rs. 35,000 and told him that he could go back to Kashmir if he desired. Meanwhile, Afzal, wanting to get away from life in Kashmir had rented a room in Indira Vihar and left the keys with landlady telling her that he would soon return with his wife and four-year old son.

He reached Kashmir after the attack on Parliament. As he was preparing to board a bus to Sopore he was arrested by Srinagar police and taken to Parimpore police station. Rs. 35,000 was taken from him. He was brought to STF headquarters and from there taken to Delhi where he landed in Special Police torture cell.

During a press conference organised by Special Police when he told the media that his co-accused S.A.R. Geelani was innocent, ACP Rajbir Singh became angry with him

and requested the media to delete that portion.

Afzal was told that it was in his and his family's interest to cooperate with the STF. He was taken to all those places from where Mohammed had bought different things. He was taken to Kashmir once again and brought back. He was made to sign on a number of blank papers.

Afzal was not given a chance in court to narrate his story. The judge told him that he would be given a chance in the end. His statements were not recorded and he was not shown what was being recorded. If merely the phone call records were examined it could have been seen how many times the STF called him. Until the High Court judgement was pronounced he had very little idea of how his case was proceeding as he could not keep an advocate of his choice.

It is quite likely that Afzal made up this story to protect himself. However, in case what he said is true it is a very serious matter. Afzal's only connection with the attack on Parliament is that he accompanied and helped Mohammed who seems to have had a role in that attack. But then he was doing this on instructions from STF, something which was not accepted by the court. Wouldn't it have been appropriate to examine STF's role in the attack on Parliament to ensure that justice was done in this case. It is also STF's responsibility to come clean on this count.

If we do not investigate and find out as to who it was exactly that plotted the attack on Parliament, threat of such attacks in future will remain. For the sake of our security we need to find the truth in this case.

(Continued from Page 5)

A message, even a warning that terrorist acts and LOC violations and brutal conduct will not be tolerated, and that a conducive atmosphere has to be created to revive mutual dialogues at government level, is the right approach. But one does not go into jingoist posture, not permissible for such close neighbors, as cutting off all sports or musical concerts or keeping on hold agreement of immediate border visas for senior citizens at the Indo-Pak border.

In diplomacy one has to keep fine balance even with the unfriendly allegations. If not, how would Indian government treat the visit of newly appointed U.S. Secretary of Defense, Mr. Hegel, who has made calumnious statement that India is financially interfering in the internal matters of Baluchistan (Pakistan) a charge, no doubt false, but not made even by Pakistan. U.S.A. has not disowned this charge publically. Should we cut off relations with U.S.A.

No doubt India has legitimate complaint that Pakistan is doing nothing to keep in check the terrorist planning attacks on India from Pakistan soil. It claims to do its best, but its best is of no avail. But then we must realize that Pakistan has created a Frankenstein which even it is finding difficult to control. Jehadi terrorists attack in cities like Lahore, on Shias in the holy precincts of mosques show the terror created by Pakistan is refusing to go back within the bottle. Pak Government. is also paying the price of its past mischief. Should not this reality make our both countries hold their hands together – a more mature and dignified response to recent Pak Prime Ministers visit would have been the correct response.

Distress Migration: Panchayats Hold the Key

Selvam V

What does the phenomenal increase in urban population in the last decade mean? Do the Panchayats have anything to do with that? In an insightful analysis of the Census 2011 figures on migration, P. Sainath (*The Hindu*, 26 September 2011) points out the difference between the growth in rural and urban population over the last three decades. The rural population increased from 628.7 million in 1991 to 747.5 million in 2001 and further to 833.1 million in 2011. Whereas the urban population increased from 211.6 million in 1991 to 286.1 million in 2001 and further to 377.1 million in 2011. But if we carefully look at the differences between these figures, we would interestingly find that the rural population actually decreased from 113.8 million in 2001 to 90.6 million in 2011 and the urban population increased from 68.5 million in 2001 to 91.0 million in 2011. This, indeed, points to an alarming situation in the countryside. The striking increase in urban population during the last decade could possibly be due to migration, among other reasons, as the Census 2011 cites. Loss of livelihoods, collapse of agriculture and poverty would perhaps be the major factors influencing distressed people's decision to migrate to urban centres in search of livelihood.

If we look at the incidence of chronic poverty per se, it seems to be very high among unorganized labourers and marginalized cultivators in the rural areas. The National commission for Enterprises in unorganized sector set up by the

Government of India in 2004 found that roughly 92 percent of India's total workforce was engaged in informal/unorganized sector and most of them remained poor with an average per capita consumption of less than Rs. 20 a day. To be specific, the Commission found that 836 million people forming three-fourth of India's population were poor and vulnerable including those 6.4 percent of people falling under the category of extremely poor. The Economic Survey 2010-11 citing the 64th round National Sample Survey data suggests that the incidence of unemployment on a current daily basis increased from 7.31 per cent in 1999-2000 to 8.28 per cent in 2004-05 with rural unemployment growing higher than the urban. A large chunk of people are living under chronic poverty as a result of either unemployment or loss of livelihoods in rural areas which eventually force them to migrate. Where do these poor unemployed vulnerable people ultimately go? Obviously, they land up in urban centres where some of them become part of urban slums and live under inhuman conditions. Probably this tendency explains the phenomenal growth of population in urban areas in the last decade.

Now we need to ask why the programmes of the union and state governments aimed at ameliorating rural and urban poverty have not been effective? The answer could possibly be due to the fact that the development models and the policies were dictated by our rulers

from the top without taking the local needs and social realities fully into account. Does it mean that the people were left with no alternatives at all? No, we did have and still have the option to evolve alternative models of development and governance. The 73rd and 74th amendment to the Constitution tried to do that by decentralizing the power structure and by putting the power in the hands of people to decide their own fate. The Panchayati Raj Act, 1992 distinctly empowers the state to devolve funds, functions and functionaries to local government institutions (PRIs) thereby enabling them to draw their own development plans - that are suitable to their local needs. Although the implementation of the same has not been very impressive in most of the States, there is still hope that the decentralized governance would empower and facilitate PRIs to promote economic activities and generate employment opportunities at local level which would surely alleviate rural poverty and check distress migration.

If Panchayats are empowered, as per the Panchayat Raj Act, with funds, functions, and functionaries to create their own economic activities according to their local needs, the rural poverty and distress migration can be arrested at the local level itself. Migration, otherwise, will continue on a large scale in the times to come. If timely action is not taken, both rural and urban areas will be in great miseries. The urban centres will become much more

miserable as there will be severe burden on civic amenities whereas rural areas will suffer due to shortage of workforce for the farming, agricultural and related activities that form the basis of rural economy. It has been observed ever since the implementation of MGNREGA that those labourers available during sowing and harvesting seasons in rural areas were not available as they were engaged in MGNREGA activities. If better wages and social security are the major concerns of the available workforce that MGNREGA promises to provide, the activities under this programme can very well be merged with the activities of PRIs thereby institutionalizing the workforce at the grassroots level with protected wages and social security measures. It needs to be emphasized that it is vital at this juncture for the performing Panchayats to relook at their current style of functioning and think beyond their traditional rote to evolve a mechanism that would facilitate the local governance truly participatory community oriented and collective.

–Panchayat Raj Update

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Bihar Socialist Party

A meeting of members of the Socialist Party was held in Patna on 10-11 March 2013. After due deliberations, Dr. Sushil Kumar was nominated as the president, Ranjeet Mandal as the senior vice president, Dr. Bhanu Udayan as the general secretary and Ashok Kumar Thakur as the media in charge of Bihar state. Ayasha Khan, Jyoti Singh, Stela Lotika, Prabhakar, Dr. Uma Shankar Bharti, Ganesh Gutt Singh, Jeevan Chaudhary, Yogendra Sharma, Dr. Subodh Kumar, Devanand and Dr. Manikant Singh were nominated to the state executive committee. The team will be extended further in the next six months. The meeting was attended by Dr. Prem Singh, national general secretary, as chief guest and chaired by national executive member Ranjeet Mandal. Gautam Pritam, president, Socialist Yuvjan Sabha (SYS), Bihar, Rakesh Kumar Dubey, convener, SYS Delhi University were also present.

Dr. Prem Singh emphasized that the path of development of Bihar goes through its enormous work force, fertile land and agro-based and other small scale industries. He made an unrest appeal to all genuine socialists of Bihar to join the Socialist Party which takes inspiration from the thoughts of JP, Lohia, Archarya Narendra Dev, Yusuf Meherally, Achyut Patwardhan, Madhu Limye, Kishan Patnaik and other socialist stalwarts.

Dr. Sushil Kumar expressed full support to the agitation and demands of the contractual teachers and condemned the high handedness of the Bihar government. He made it clear that the Socialist Party is opposed to the contractual system in the appointments of teachers and privatization of education in any form. The party stands for 'free, equal

and quality education for all from KG to PG'. He made the demand for immediate implementation of the report on Common School System prepared by Prof. Anil Sadgopal and Prof. Muchkund Dubey.

Dr. Bhanu Udayan raised the issues about health services which are in a bad shape, particularly in rural and sub-urban Bihar. It is the duty of an elected government to provide proper health facilities to its citizens. He alleged that poor people are bound to die due to lack of minimum health facilities. He said that sale of spurious drugs and black marketing of medicines is prevalent on a large scale in Bihar, which makes the patients more vulnerable.

Ranjeet Mandal spoke about the vulnerable condition of farmers and agriculture in the state. The contribution of agriculture in the economy has been reduced due to negative growth rate. Even basic needs of farmers are not met and they are forced to abandon the occupation. He demanded that proper arrangements should be made for irrigation, seeds, manure, electricity etc. and special thrust and encouragement should be given to the agro-based industries to make agriculture a viable occupation. He further suggested that a public facility map should be prepared by the village panchayats so that no encroachment would be made on public utility lands like streets, roads, ponds, grazing grounds, schools, health centers, etc.

Gautam Pritam, announced that the SYS would open its students' wings in all Bihar colleges and universities very soon. SYS will fight decisively the neo-liberal onslaught on the education system.

–Ashok Kumar Thakur

Judicial opinions on Hindu religion and Hindutva

Irfan Engineer

Definition of Hinduism has confounded the Indian judiciary. Hindu nationalists and Hindu religious institutions benefit from this confusion. The pendulum of judicial opinions swing from defining Hinduism as a religion, albeit one that embraces a multiplicity of gods, texts and religious rites in *Commr. Of Wealth Tax, Madras Vs. Late R. Sridharan*, to “Hindutva is the way of life”, as in *Manohar Joshi’s* judgment, and “Hinduism is neither a religion, nor Hindus constitute a religious community”, as in the recent judgment by the Income-Tax Appellate Tribunal in Nagpur. The former interpretation suits religious establishments and temples while the latter suits Hindu nationalists as they conveniently seek to impose Hindu religion as national culture.

The IT Appellate Tribunal, persuaded by the Appellant Shiv Mandir Devasthan Panch, described Shiva, Hanuman and Goddess Durga as super powers of the Universe, not representing any religion. The Appellant wanted to claim exemption under section 80G (5) (vi) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 on the ground that expenses for maintenance of the temple and worship of Shiva was not religious activity and open to members of all the communities and therefore charitable in nature.

Contrary to the view that Shiva was a super power and not god, earlier Judicial opinions have held idols as Gods and gave human persona and attributes. In *Deoki Nandan v. Murlidhar*, Supreme

Court held that under the Hindu law, an idol is a juristic person capable of holding property and the properties endowed for the institution vest in it. In the *Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi* temple case, the Allahabad High Court held idols to be a minor in perpetuity with property vested in it, hence law of limitation does not apply. Deities can even seek partition of the undivided property under Hindu law by filing a suit in Court. Gift to the Deity reflects fiduciary capacity or position in shebait (Sri Sri Sridhar Jew v. Manindra K. Mitter).

Swaminarayan Sampraday argued before Supreme Court (*Shahstri Yagnapurushdasji v. Muldas Bhunadardas Vaishya*) that they were distinct and separate from Hindus, in order to claim that the Bombay Hindu Places of Public Worship Act, allowing Dalits entry into the temples, did not apply to it. The Supreme Court although accepting the diversity in religious practices in Hinduism and that Hinduism was way of life, held that “beneath the diversity in all these aspects lie certain basic concepts – acceptance of Vedas as the highest authority and philosophical matters, the great ‘Rita’ of the universe and belief in rebirth and pre-existence”.

Hindu Nationalists have claimed Hinduism to be a religion or culture and way of life according to convenience and context. When surya namaskar, yoga and teaching Gita in schools was made compulsory for all school students in Madhya Pradesh, the BJP led

State Government claimed that Gita was not a religious text as Article 28 of the Constitution of India prohibits teaching of religious texts in Schools receiving grant-in-aid from state. However, when state prosecutors initiated action against Russian edition of Bhagvad Gita in Tomsk in June 2011 to ban it on charges of religious extremism, BJP delegation sent a copy of Gita to the President of Russia along with a letter claiming that Gita promotes spiritualism. Minister of External Affairs S M Krishna in his statement to the Parliament on the subject described Gita as a “religious text”. MP Government even sponsors the senior citizens to perform pilgrimages to various religious places – only the pilgrimage centres are centres for Hindu pilgrimage. MP Govt. has belatedly included Ajmer in the itinerary after protests by secularists.

In the *Manohar Joshi* case’s judgment, the Supreme Court conflated Hinduism with Hindutva and opined that Hindutva was also way of life, contrary to the fact that Hindutva was political ideology constituting and defining Hindu community as a race by Savarkar and Golwalkar. Communal boundaries were defined to exclude Muslims and Christian from the nation and race and constitute them as enemies of Hindu Rashtra. Savarkar distinguished between Hinduism and Hindutva. While conflating Hinduism with Hindutva, the Court gave no reasons whatsoever, let alone cogent reasons. Savarkar’s Hindutva was to position Hindu

race rather than Hindu religion as superior. According to Savarkar, 'Hindus are not merely the citizens of the Indian state because they are united not only by the bonds of love they bear to a common motherland but also by the bonds of blood of the mighty race incorporated with and descended from the Vedic forefathers'. But Savarkar did not stop at this concept of a common fatherland and a common racial bond. Rather, for him, a Hindu was also one who inherits Indian civilization 'as represented in common history, common heroes, a common literature, a common art, a common law and common jurisprudence, common fairs and festivals, rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacraments'. Hindus are thus defined in terms of their common cultural heritage. A Hindu, according to Savarkar is a 'person who regards the land of Bharatvarsha from Indus to the Seas as his fatherland (pitrubhumi) as well as his holyland (punniyabhumi) – that is the cradle of his religion. It is through this elision of fatherland and holyland that Savarkar constructs the political category of Hindu in opposition to non-Hindus, particularly to Muslims and Christians. Despite the fact that Muslims and Christians 'have inherited along with Hindus a common fatherland and a greater part of the wealth of common culture – language, law, custom, folklore and history, (they) are not and cannot be recognized as Hindus.

The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal's order in a way is a double edged sword and cuts at the root of Hindutva ideology. Hindutva claims Hindus to be not only a community, but also a political community, taking advantage of the diversity of belief of Hindus. Hindutva aims to emulate the religions that it is opposed

to in many respects. Hindutva aims to homogenizing the beliefs of Hindus and militarize Hindu religious community. The political structure of such a community would be a benevolent authority to which all the members should submit and those who resist would be dealt with by necessary force and subject to punishments. The Tribunal's order runs contrary to such a vision of Hindutva by opining that Hindus did not even constitute a religious community.

The underpinning of all the varied judicial opinion is that they see varied cultural and traditional practices of Hindu religion and not its doctrines. Whereas when Islam or Christianity comes up for judicial scrutiny, they rely on doctrines and texts, not how it is actually lived by the communities professing the religion. Hence Hinduism appears to be diverse but Islam and Christianity appears to be doctrinaire and dogmatic. There are varied interpretations of Islam and Christianity and lived religion is as diverse as Hinduism. Thus Muslims in Lakshadweep and Christians in Meghalaya are matrilineal societies. There is lot of shared cultural and religious practices between Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. While Shiva, Hanuman and Durga are super powers of universe, even Allah is described in Quran as Rabbul Alamin, God of entire universe and not Rabbul Muslimeen – God of Muslims. One of the many names of Allah in Qur'an is "Jabbar", as God is powerful, therefore, Allah is also a super power of the Universe. In Christianity, God is the eternal being that created and sustains the universe. Church and Mosques are more inclusive spaces than temples as opined by the Tribunal. While Dalits do not have entry in most

temples, everyone is welcome in Sufi shrines, mosques and churches. However, Islam and Christianity will always be held as religion and Muslims and Christians to be one overarching community.

In the nineteenth century India, religion assumed new meaning. The term "Hindu" was used more as a geographical term to describe people inhabiting the geographical territory on the south-eastern side of River Sindhu which was mispronounced as Hindus. Hindus were people following diverse traditions and religious practices which had absorbed from various influences in different historical phases. However, this diversity was also punctuated with exclusion and caste based hierarchy. Diversity was perforce to maintain graded inequalities, forced traditional occupations and exclusion of vast sections from privileges. Rules of purity and pollution were invented to justify the exclusion. Excluded communities were left to their own religious traditions and rituals so long as they respected the boundaries of exclusion and followed their traditional occupations. While the privileged upper-castes guarded the purity of their traditions to justify their privileges, the excluded lower-castes were liberal in absorbing from various influences and traditions, including Islam and Christianity, as they had little stake in the hierarchical caste structure. On one hand this gave rise to religious diversity and on the other hand syncretic traditions emerged wherein community practices included traditions of more than one religion. It was difficult to clearly demarcate religious boundaries of the followers.

Colonial rulers needed to, and believed in enumerating their

subjects and naming their religions. It is the process of enumeration that necessitated rigid religious boundaries to be constructed. Religious identities were arbitrated by the colonial state. As numbers could mean power, the native upper caste elite triggered Shuddhi

movement to Sanskritize and Tablighi movement to Islamize the fuzzy communities, and deepen and strengthen religious boundaries.

It is this reality and history that judicial opinions have ignored which has resulted in discrimination

of and othering of minorities in spite of many landmark judgments protecting their rights. The judicial opinions are taken advantage of by the Hindutva forces as their stand gets legitimized. Hope this trend is arrested for survival of democracy in India.

Book on Socialist Leaders released

A book written by Advocate N. K. Gangadharan in Malayalam language was released on 16.02.2013 in a grand function held at the Public Library, Thrissur. The book includes the life sketches of fourteen Socialist Leaders who dominated the political scene during their life and times. The leaders who are included in the book are Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Dev,

Kamala Devi Chathopadhyaya, Madhu Limaye, Yusuf Meherally, S.M. Joshi, N.G, Goray, Prem Bhasin, Madhu Dandavate, Arangil Sreedharan, K. Chandrasekharan, Dr. K. K. Rahulan and P. Viswambharan. Of the fourteen leaders, thirteen have left us, leaving their foot prints on the sands of time. The remaining one is the veteran socialist- Gandhian Shri Viswambharan, a source of inspiration to the younger generation.

Inaugurating the function, Mampuzha Kumaran, Socialist thinker and renowned Malayalam critic observed that “there are very limited publications in Malayalam regarding Socialist heritage and the book written by Adv. Gangadharan “Jeevithaveedhiyile Margadeepangal” (Path-finders who guided destiny) is an attempt in the right direction. The younger generation should study and understand the heroic struggle

carried out by the socialist stalwarts during the freedom movement and especially in the Quit India movement”. Shri Kumaran made special mention about the book “why Socialism” written by Jayaprakash Narayan which attracted the younger generation to Socialist ideals. The Marxist leader E. M. Namboodiripad had openly commented on the influence the book created had on people like him. Shri Kumaran dwelt at length on Dr. Lohia and his contribution to the democratic socialist movement the world over.

Dr. P. V. Krishnan Nair, a prominent writer, who is also secretary of Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy emphasized the importance of the study of socialist Leaders of yesteryears, whose contribution to the political thought of India is a source of inspiration to the younger generation and also to posterity. He lamented that unfortunately in depth studies regarding Gandhiji, Gokhale, Tilak, Azad, M.N.Roy, Narendra Dev, Lohia and Ambedkar are few in number in Malayalam and said that the influence of the socialist movement is evident in the freedom struggle and the political scene of Independent India. The omission of the study of veteran leaders like Asoka Mehta and Dr. K. B. Menon came in for special mention. Dr. Nair desired that more socialist readers are required to be introduced to the

younger generation by bringing out more such books.

Kaikara Babu, former member of Kerala Public Service Commission who presided over the function spoke on the legacy of the socialist movement in Kerala state. Advocate Premnath, ex-MLA and prominent socialist leader, who received the book from Mampuzha Kumaran, stated that democratic socialism is the only solution to the present day ailments of the society.

Others who spoke on the occasion included Advocate V. A. Muhammed of the High Court of Kerala, Adv. V. N. Narayanan, Socialist leader, E. K. Sreenivasan, secretary, Socialist Party (India), Krishnan Karangatt and Kolathur T. Muhammed, former members of Kerala Public service commission, M. Peethambaran.

Advocate Gangadharan explained the factors which prompted him to write the book. He told that he was a student in the primary class during the period of Quit India revolution. He was fascinated and motivated by the socialist leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev, Rammanohar Lohia. He desired that the various socialist factions in India should shed their differences to build up a vibrant party of Democratic Socialism.

–G.N.K.

The despairing countryside

Harsh Mander

Less than four years back my friend Naren left the world, succumbing calmly to a malevolent tumour in his brain. I wrote in these columns how in life, as in death, my friend taught me many lessons in human goodness. A quarter century has lapsed since, opting for life as a farmer, he resigned his job as a banker and returned with his wife Uma Sankari and two daughters to his village Venkatramapuram in Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh. He tried to farm in ethical ways founded on multiple solidarities — with earth and water, with crops and trees, with his workers, and with dalits and women. After his passing, Uma was determined to continue their experiments with sustainable and just farming. She persevered bravely, but recently made an announcement to her family and friends which left them grieved.

She declared that she was defeated. She could not go on. She must sell her land and leave their village, forever. Uma wistfully describes emptying villages, hollowed out of their young people. They are crowding the shanties and footpaths of the cities, leaving behind only the old people to live or die. Except for a small minority lucky to be absorbed in the organised sector, the vast majority migrate with no certainties of either decent employment or a dignified life. At the same time in the village, government schools are closing one by one because there are

fewer children left; they are moving in droves to residential schools in towns, their parents convinced that they have no future in the countryside. Venkatramapuram once was served with a decent public bus service, making five to six trips a day. In the last 10 years, this was reduced to two trips and now none! The government says there are not enough people to support the service.

Until the 1970s, a third of the farmers irrigated their fields, with dug wells in which water was easily found at 30 to 50 feet, or through small tanks. The rest relied on rain-fed agriculture, and the soil was moist. But since then, the electric pump literally became a watershed in the history of their village. People started drilling bore-wells, and dug deeper and deeper to strike the elusive ever-receding water. In Venkatramapuram today almost all bore-wells have run dry. Some people in insane desperation have tried to drill bore-wells up to 700 feet without striking any water.

The crazed race downwards for vanishing water was accompanied by the shift from farming for food to farming for cash. “Agriculture is about food,” says Uma, a truism which everyone has forgotten.

“Farmers, planners, consumers have all come to believe that farming is about making money. Money is of course important, but it is a by-product of agriculture. The primary goal of agriculture is to provide ourselves with good nourishing safe variety of foods to eat and drink. But no longer!”

With the electrification of pump-sets was also introduced the epochal life-changing idea of cropping for cash. In Naren and Uma’s region, sugarcane, milk, meat and mango became the main cash crops. In the past, people grew a wide variety of crops in both wet and dry lands: paddy, millets, pulses, oil seeds, sugarcane, coconut, vegetables, herbs and spices. Meat, fish and milk was part of the diet even of the poor, because little was sold in the market. Cash payments to workers were rare; grain and clothes were given by the employers. There was year-round farming.

Farmers and farm workers, for the first time in history, are today forced to buy much of their food, dependent on a creaky and corrupt PDS, or volatile, inflationary private food markets. The largest numbers of persons who sleep hungry each night are ironically food-growers. When people grew food, there was also more sharing of food.

Uma recalls that “the first thing people would say at any time of the day to a visitor is ‘come and eat’. There was enough to give to beggars, cows, dogs, cats, birds, and so on. These days women calculate and cook just enough for food for the family, because everything has to be purchased and the incomes are meagre and uncertain. Beggars have become rare; they too seem to have moved to greener pastures, to the traffic signals in the cities...”

Even as water was steadily going down and under, an additional disaster struck: a seven-year drought between 1997 and 2004. “There was neither crop, nor food, nor cash!” This spurred mass migration. Farmers and farm workers became convinced that there is no future in agriculture and rural areas and started sending their children away to urban residential schools with a vengeance. Committed family labour became scarce. Since 2006, MGNREGA helped double agricultural wages. But it offers employment in their village for hardly 20 to 40 days in a year; that too riddled with corruption and delays, and nobody knows whether and when they will get work. Therefore landless agricultural workers have fled even faster than the farmers to the cities, as they cannot live on hungry stomachs. Vanquished and heart-broken, Uma may finally decide to sell the 10 acres of farmland Naren received in inheritance, and move in with

her caring daughters and sons-in-law in the city. She will leave behind in her village only those too old to move, or those whose grown children in cities are unable to share with them their poverty. This generation will pass somehow, but what about the next?

The Indian countryside has become, transformed into this wasteland of near-terminal despair and increasingly

(Continued from Page 4)

the feeling that we are all basically same humans? The West has tried to address this question and brought to the fore the idea of human dignity. In fact, the Frankfurt school scholars like Adorno, Horkheimer and others have published volumes on this question. But, the mundane sciences like biomedical and Human Genome project have brought out future issues like how the endangered human species (due to unethical bio-medical practices), a threat to human dignity. However, the genome project has clarified that the human DNA is 99 per cent common with chimpanzee and only less than 1 percent of genetic information is typical. Therefore, it is the intrinsic worth of human beings which is inalienable, irrespective of age, sex, religion, color, social group, nation, etc, seem to be identical. Then, why is that, there are more poor people in India than in China, Brazil, Cuba or Albania. Are the social institutions and practices responsible for this?

As part of human dignity paradigm, the HDRs have introduced a concept called Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) to identify how women are discriminated.

impossible survival, by new technologies, forced integration with globalised markets, and an uncaring state. For a sector which employs 51 per cent workers, contributes 14 per cent of GDP, the state invests as little as five per cent of total public expenditures. No wonder that tens of thousands of farmers each year drink pesticide or hang themselves; and millions of the young flee, when they can, wherever they can.

Interestingly, it never occurred to our scholars to use the methodology to produce a caste related development index (CDI). An attempt was made by me to estimate the CDI and published it in a professional journal has very few takers, as it is not a priority area of research. It is still surprising to note that when a paper, first of its kind, was presented in ISEC, Bangalore and published in ICSSR journal and also in a book in 2000, highlighting the unique contribution of reform movements in the South, as Dravidian marvel for gender equality, education and social mobility, etc. they were totally ignored in a report of a south Indian state in 2007. But, they seem to have claimed that they are the unique contributors of the idea. This is only an example to show how the dignity and respect for human beings are measured even in academic circles known to be above narrow considerations. Therefore, human dignity would become an important measure of advancements in future, if HDIs converge in a diverse world. India, being a country with several contradictions should learn from others and excel in dispensing dignity and fairness.

Our poor little Sanju

Shekhar Gupta

Honestly, I hardly know Sanjay Dutt well enough to form an opinion on him. I won't be able to say whether he was an innocent, gullible but decent and truly unfortunate boy with a heart of gold, or a fatally flawed superstar who routinely played with his own life and the law and mostly got away, thanks to his and his parents' fame and connections, and has now run out of luck. Not being a regular movie watcher, I am not even particularly qualified to speak of him as an actor. My personal and professional acquaintance with him is limited to a one-hour conversation for a Walk the Talk interview on NDTV 24x7 on May 20, 2007 (<http://goo.gl/vlq35>). I had found him gentle, even vulnerable, surprisingly honest and humble in talking about his past, his mistakes, even his tryst with drugs and his fightback. What had obviously helped was a phone conversation with his sister Priya on the way to their Pali Hill home. You could see how his younger sisters mothered and protected him. Priya had called to counsel him to be kind and open with me, and Namrata was in attendance on the sidelines along with her most adorable poodle.

So this is what we have: talented, vulnerable, gentle, well behaved, blessed with comic timing, a sometimes obedient older brother to two doting sisters, and now we have it on good authority, even on Justice Markandey Katju's, a good husband and father of three children. But here is the question that matters: does all that absolve him of the charges for which he was convicted in a verdict now confirmed by the Supreme Court? The answer, regrettably, can only be no. Because justice is about laws and evidence. It is not about

what a nice guy you have been, or how kind, wonderful and successful your parents and siblings are.

The clamour of support for Sanjay on these lines has come from Hindi heartland politicians (mainly of the Samajwadi Party, which he campaigned for sometimes) and all kinds of cinema personalities, ranging from Madhuri Dixit to Rani Mukherji, Kunal Kohli to Mahesh Bhatt. And now, never to be left behind, Justice Katju also jumps on the bandwagon. Not one of them says that he was innocent and framed, that the judicial verdict is flawed, that the evidence against him was dodgy. Kunal Kohli, a wonderfully talented young filmmaker and one of a handful of my acquaintances in Hindi cinema, asks what is the point of these convictions while the main perpetrators are safe in Pakistan. Now how does that logic work? And if it does, then why are so many others to spend much of the rest of their lives in jail or Yakub Memon to hang, while his more malevolent brother Tiger and alleged mentor-in-chief Dawood Ibrahim live happily in Pakistan?

Should we then suspend all these sentences until the government is able to get the Pakistanis to deliver these masterminds? Of course not. These guys are guilty. They wrecked Bombay. They were part of one of the most diabolical terror plots ever to destroy India — frankly more dangerous in its ambition and possibilities, if clumsier in execution, than 26/11 a decade and a half later — they must be punished. And you will add, most likely, why has the Supreme Court been so generous in reducing the death sentence earlier given to 10

of them to life? How can you be so kind to such bad guys? This is, therefore, not an argument for liberalism, nor for sparing the foot-soldiers while the generals live in their ISI-funded comfort in Pakistan. It is an argument about having two kinds of law, one for people like them who look, feel and sound so guilty. And the other about a nice guy like us, who was merely a victim of circumstances, insecure, being half-Muslim and thus brainwashed into arming himself for self-defence, and so what if it was with an AK-56 assault rifle. Mind you, this was relatively innocent 1993. And AKs were not weapons you almost ever saw outside some militant districts in Punjab and Kashmir.

Two decades make a story a generation old. So it is also necessary to remember what these bombings were all about. They came within two months of the horrible post-Babri riots in Bombay, when somebody in Pakistan saw a new possibility. The plotters thought bombings like these in sensitive places would most certainly invite reprisals from Hindus, particularly Shiv Sainiks, helped along by a police that had looked mostly one-sided in its sympathies in the riots two months earlier. That is why hand-grenades and AK series assault rifles were given to Muslims in "sensitive" localities. When the reprisal squads "inevitably" came, they were to be counter-attacked with weapons of lethality unknown in India yet. And once a few thousand Sainiks and policemen were killed, there would be no saving Bombay, or even India.

You might still say that your favourite star was innocent to all this. He was just a silly, insecure,

maybe even scared, dumb and stupid young fellow, what did he know about all this. Two questions, then, follow. One, how do you know, or certainly, how do you know better than the courts? And second, if so, why is the same test not applied to all the others convicted, or frankly, many more who rotted for more than a decade in jails as undertrials? That so many of them were later declared innocent and acquitted only compounds the injustice done to them. The prime of their lives taken away, their families devastated and their children reduced to a furious talent pool for groups like the Indian Mujahideen. Why did none of these influential voices speak out for them? Why don't they do so now? Only because these are poor, ordinary Muslims? They are not just guilty because they have been pronounced so by the courts, but they also "look and sound" guilty. That's the way bad guys look, that's where they come from. They are only getting what they deserve. But from where we come, given what we look like, how we dress, who we have for our friends and family, we can only be nice guys. And if one of us gets into an occasional mess, you must show a little more understanding. No one cried for Kersi Adjanja, now 83, who served a two-year jail term for allowing his foundry to be used to destroy Dutt's gun.

All the mitigating circumstances being quoted for Sanjay Dutt, sadly, are exclusive gifts of our elite privilege. Who else amongst the other convicts would have had the wherewithal to collect brownie points by working for AIDS charities, being on the board of Save the Children? Who else would have a father with such enormous love and goodwill among crores of Indians and across the political spectrum, one who could charm equally Indian soldiers on the borders and Balasaheb Thackeray, to whom he took a successful mercy mission?

Crime and punishment

The appeal from some quarters for clemency for Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt, who has been sentenced to a five-year prison term by the Supreme Court for possessing an AK-56 assault rifle two decades ago, lacks moral force. It singles out an individual for favourable treatment solely on the basis of his popularity. If accepted, the demand would entrench the belief that the country has two parallel systems of justice — one for the privileged and another for the rest. The irony is that the Court itself chose wisely to avoid any hint of softness by refusing to countenance supervised probation as an alternative to imprisonment. The appeal indicates a selective realisation that punishment involves deprivation of liberty and agonising court appearances — something that tens of thousands of suspects go through. The case did go on for 20 long years but surely this is not unique, as many cases take as long or even longer. And instances of the apex court enhancing jail terms years after the trial is over or setting aside old acquittals are legion. It is unfortunate that the appeal should have found immediate resonance in both the Union and the Maharashtra governments, which have spoken about considering it.

A question has also been raised about the proportionality of a five-year jail term for merely possessing a weapon that was not used, and was unrelated to terrorism. There is sound jurisprudential basis for treating possession of an assault weapon as an offence serious enough to warrant a minimum prison term of five years. The Kalashnikov came through underworld gangs and was linked to the consignment of explosives used to perpetrate the Mumbai serial blasts, though Dutt may not have known that. The very fact that a deadly assault weapon lies unaccounted for in private hands puts society at risk because the chances of criminal elements accessing it later are high. That is why punishing mere possession is necessary to curb the use of such weapons. The appeals being made on behalf of Dutt unmask an innate tendency among the Indian upper classes to identify a worthy cause only in the plight of the privileged. That he has already suffered imprisonment for 18 months and that he is married and has children are conditions common to a large section of Indian convicts. Invoking his respectable parentage or his screen depiction of a kitschy version of Gandhian protest as reasons for pardon is amusing. While these are circumstances that the Governor, or the President, may consider when a mercy petition comes up, it is passing strange that public figures should be quicker in pointing them out than the one convicted. As Shakespeare says in *Measure for Measure*, "Lawful mercy is nothing kin to foul redemption."

—Editorial in *The Hindu*

Let's flag, in particular, one of Justice Katju's arguments in defence of Sanjay: that he has, through his films, revived the memory of Mahatma Gandhi. Firstly, it is a bit rich coming from somebody who is always mocking popular culture, films as well as cricket that we so adore "while farmers are committing suicide". But then, since all are supposed to be equal before law, were the other convicts given the same opportunity to revive the legacy of the Mahatma, or maybe a founding father of their choice?

Justice Katju should have, on the other hand, chided the media, his supposed charge, for not having the courage to ask the most obvious question: why was the CBI so kind to Dutt as to not appeal against the special court verdict relieving him of charges under TADA? A usual filmi-type dude talking the them-and-us type of language is understandable: after all, many of the same people who sought sympathy and understanding for Shiney Ahuja also demanded instant and public lynching of the Delhi

gangrape accused. Their alleged crimes may have been similar, but one looked and sounded like us, an innocent, even an unwitting victim, and the others, so utterly guilty.

And finally, and I am conscious this is about an old friend whose political and secular commitment

I have admired, without agreeing with him all the time. Mahesh Bhatt can afford to talk with such passion in defence of Sanjay, or of the system being unfair to him. He should, instead, be grateful to the same blessed system and the media for how lightly his own son, Rahul, got away over the evenings he spent

with one David Coleman Headley. If he hadn't been his son, or frankly, if he too had been from what we so contemptuously dismiss as the great unwashed, or if only he had a Muslim name, the same Bombay police would have got him to do a lot more explaining. And if I may add, much less politely.

—*The Indian Express*

Pardon Convicts Below 35 and Above 50 Years!

Dear Mr President,

I understand that worthy Members of Parliament (MPs) have sent petitions to you to use your powers of pardon under Article 72 of the Constitution. This plea is also reported to have been made by the Chairman of the Press Council of India (PCI), which is a statutory authority, and Ministers. The framers of the Constitution gave the President unfettered power to pardon any convict, without any reasons. It is also true that the Constitution did not specify who could ask for pardon.

However, Shri Markandey Katju, a former judge of the Supreme Court, and chairman of PCI would not ask for pardon without any reasons. He is reported to have stated that since Mr Sanjay Dutt was not convicted under TADA, he was not a terrorist. Besides, he has stated that since the trial has taken 20 years, and Mr Dutt was less than 40 years of age at that time, he should be pardoned. To maintain consistency, he has also stated that Smt. Zaibunisa should also be pardoned since she is over 70. Though Mr Dutt has in a dignified and logical manner stated that he is not seeking pardon, this mounting cacophony from lawyers, MPs and the head of an important statutory authority may lead you to consider using your powers to pardon.

Considering the impressive voices asking you to show mercy, you may be tempted by Portia's lines:

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd,

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven

Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes....

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,

It is an attribute to God himself;"

to consider being blessed by showing mercy after some months.

The constant repetition to you to show mercy and gain the attributes of God may continue for months. Since I too was a statutory authority a few months ago, I would like to add my advice to this. The fact that our Courts take decades to decide cases finally is well known. Everyone, including the Courts has convinced themselves that this can only deteriorate.

If you use the power of pardon this time, consider using it in a logical manner, which should not result in allegations of partisanship. By the logic given by Justice Katju, cases in Courts can take fifteen to twenty years, and humanitarian grounds demand that senior citizens

should not be able to suffer in prison. On the other hand, people below 35 can make mistakes due to lack of maturity.

Taking this together, and to maintain consistency of action, I plead with you to consider recommending that all below the age of 35 and above the age of 50 at the time of committing a crime should be automatically pardoned under Article 72 of the Constitution, if they are not terrorists. It would look bad if you pardoned terrorists.

There are no conditions in the Constitution when the President can use this power, and I believe if you use it in the manner suggested above, it will also reduce the burden on the judicial system. You could consider this act to be in larger public interest.

The reduction of cases in the Courts, will lead to establishing the rule of law in our Nation, and Citizens will not have to complain any longer that 'Justice delayed is Justice Denied.'

You may then find justification in using the power of pardon under Article 72 in a Historic manner.

Yours truly,

Shailesh Gandhi

Former Central Information Commissioner
Moneylife