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People's Commission Report on
Special Rehabilitation Scheme

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Bigger challenge ahead

S. Viswam

With the announcement of the official closure of rescue work in Uttarakhand, the first phase of the monumental challenge posed by the Himalayan disaster can be said to have been completed. The second phase, which will comprise the organization of relief and rehabilitation and more importantly, reconstruction and renovation, will now begin. The last group of 150 pilgrims were airlifted to safety on Tuesday last. Hopefully, no pilgrims remain stranded.

Unfortunately, there is no certainty on this aspect of the situation. If stranded pilgrims remain, it will take a long time to locate them or rescue them. This is for the simple reason that the entire Garhwal region is "threatened" with another spell of heavy rainfall. The authorities, reports suggest, are proceeding on the assumption that nature's fury is all set to unleash another wave of floods, leading to an even greater destruction of what little is left of the infrastructure of the affected area. The state government confirms that at least 3000 people are missing or are untraceable. One UN agency puts

the figure of missing at 10,000. The truth perhaps lies in between, but whatever the figure, Uttarakhand has paid a heavy price for facing up to a challenge it neither anticipated nor was prepared for. Natural disasters do claim lives, but in the case of the Uttarakhand disaster, we are constantly being reminded by many news sources and authorities that many deaths resulted from poor management of the crisis. It is therefore saddening to hear Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna declare that the exact number of the dead, the missing and of those buried under the debris or washed away in floods or who reached safety before the official rescue operations began will never be known. It is bad enough when disaster management fails to rise to the occasion. Worse when we cannot even compile reliable statistics to know the precise dimensions of the tragedy.

The state government fell flat on its face when confronted with a challenge of immense proportions. Its performance evokes no confidence on whether it will be able to cope with the bigger challenge that faces it now, the challenge of

reconstruction and rehabilitation. If the state has lost three years of development in one miserable week, how long will it take to restore the state to its erstwhile levels of progress? It was heart-breaking to look at a photograph published in most English language dailies of a boy sitting alone and forlorn in front of his damaged house and looking at the sweeping waters that brought misery in their wake. The photograph symbolized the despair on the one side and the hope on the other of the Uttarakhand state and its people.

In this context, civil society will fail in its duty if it does not acknowledge the debt it owes to the armed forces for their contribution and management of the heroic evacuation exercise. The nation was impressed by the performance of the Airforce and the Army personnel in reaching victims to places of safety. But for these noble efforts the toll of the dead and missing would have been higher. The politicians exposed their irrelevance and their selfishness by doing precious little to help the victims. And, as for some sections of the local population, their display of the tendency to enrich themselves at the cost of the poor and needy, the less said the better.

The fact that the National Disaster Management Agency is still in its formative stages three years after its establishment brought to a sharp focus the lackadaisical manner in which state institutions function. First and foremost, the NDMA has to start functioning in earnest without further wastage of time. Second, the construction of residences, hotels and other structures of tourist infrastructure has to begin in a

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Between the lines

Kashmir's status

Kuldip Nayar

It is once again the Article 370 on special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Again the BJP has thrown the first stone. The party's top leader, L. K. Advani has said that the Article should be scrapped. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has said in reply: "Over our dead bodies." He tends to overreact but he is quite right in saying that the Article is sacrosanct.

The Article was the result of long discussions held between Srinagar and New Delhi at the time of the state's accession to India. When the British quit in August 1947, they left it to the princely states either to join India or Pakistan. Keeping in mind the geographical proximity and the complexion of the population, Jammu and Kashmir shared borders with both India and Pakistan. However, the state's majority of population was Muslim.

The state's ruler was a Hindu. He preferred to stay away from both India and Pakistan. But he could not do so since the state was land locked. Pakistan did sign a Standstill Agreement with him to extend all facilities even though he found that it wanted the state's ultimate integration with Pakistan. New Delhi was against the Standstill Agreement since it was negotiating with the ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, to join the Indian Union.

India was, however, prepared to leave all subjects with the state except foreign affairs, defence and

communications. The Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession on that condition. When the popular leader, Sheikh Abdullah, came to power he endorsed the arrangement because even at the time of Maharaja's rule he had supported the agreement privately.

But the Sheikh wanted strict adherence to Article 370 in letter and spirit. The authority of the Supreme Court, Comptroller and Auditor General and Union Public Service Commission was one thing which was to vest in the state exclusively according to Article 370. However, except for the subjects of foreign affairs, defence and communications, the state was supreme.

Those who demand the scrapping of Article 370 or changing it through Parliament are making one big mistake: It is Kashmir which joined the Union of India on certain conditions. If they are to be changed the people of the state have to give their consent. The Union cannot alter the undertaking unilaterally. Omar Abdullah's angry reaction to Advani's suggestion on Kashmir represents his viewpoint. His grandfather, Sheikh Abdullah, paid a bigger price for not letting New Delhi spread itself beyond the three subjects. He spent 12 years in detention because he reminded New Delhi that it could not cross the line drawn by the Instrument of Accession.

In fact, most people in Kashmir,

not Jammu, want to nullify the Instrument of Accession and they demand *azadi*. Many remind New Delhi Prime Minister Jawaharlal's promise that once things settled down in the state, the people would be asked what their choice was. Pakistan was the alternative. Yet, those agitating against New Delhi for not making Nehru's promise good forget that he himself withdrew the offer and said that the situation had changed when Pakistan had introduced in the region weapons by joining the military pacts—the CENTO and NATO—which the West, led by America, had framed against the Soviet Union during the cold war.

Notwithstanding the past, India cannot close its eyes to the alienation in the Kashmir Valley. It has increased after the hanging of Afzal Guru. The youth is particularly boiling. There is, however, little realization that he was tried in the court and sentenced to death by the Supreme Court for the attack on Parliament which is the citadel of democracy for the peoples in the entire South East Asia to appreciate and duplicate it in their own countries without bringing the army into picture.

The question of Kashmir is far from settled. Pakistan has to be associated at some stage and the wishes of the people in the Kashmir Valley have to be taken into consideration. The talk of scrapping Article 370 will only frustrate the efforts of pro-India-elements in the state. They have bravely withstood all pressures and punishments. Many have lost their life. Their struggle has not ended yet.

On top of it is the role of the army which is not careful some

times. It is there in the state to defend the borders and come to the assistance of civil administration in rare cases. But this is not happening. It is there all over. Even the state chief minister has asked for its withdrawal to allow his police function. A recent incident in which two civilians have died at the hands of the army soldiers has enraged people and Omar Abdullah. True, the army has ordered an inquiry and promised to take action against those soldiers who are found guilty. Still the suspicion is that the army has taken revenge for eight jawans killed by militants. A way has to be found out to distance the civil and military sides from each other to avoid the combustible situations.

One way to satisfy most people in the state is to implement Article 370. New Delhi should consider scrapping the laws extended by the Union after the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah who never doubted or challenged Kashmir's accession to India but questioned the measures

taken beyond foreign affairs, defence and communications, the crux of Article 370. The Sheikh also accepted many other things in an agreement with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. That agreement requires another look. Legal or other steps are not the end by themselves. People have to be won over. New Delhi is doing little in that direction.

Advani's demand for scrapping Article 370 only provides fuel to the fire. It is, however, surprising that he made the demand. He was the deputy Prime Minister in the BJP-led government which gave an undertaking to its allies not to touch Article 370. Even tomorrow if the BJP were to form the government it would have to make a similar promise to get the support of other parties joining it. Then why raise the issue which he knows is not acceptable to practically all non-BJP and non-Congress parties? Is playing to the gallery more important than the national demand? Advani should know it better.

Letter to the Editor

Supreme Court's encroachment

I have gone through the article "who should appoint the Judges" penned by our comrade Babu Heddurshetti. (*Janata, June 16, 2013*). I wholly agree with the forthright views expressed by him. He has very rightly accused the Supreme Court of encroaching upon the executive sphere of the President and the Council of Ministers in the garb of interpreting the word "consultation" and holding that the opinion of CJI and its collegiums is binding on the Executive. They have invented their own meaning of the word "consultation" - totally opposite

to the plain dictionary meaning. It defies the whole honest concept of "consultation" which is employed deliberately to convey that both the Executive and the Judiciary must discuss to decide mutually and never unilaterally as is being done by the Apex Court's judicial pontiffs in their Chamber meetings where, it is well known, mutual exchange of the names of the candidates takes place as it happens at the State level between the CM and the CJ to prepare the list of the nominees to be elevated as the High Court judges. It is trite to know that the outsider

Shoving won't solve Assam's woes

Nitish Chakravarty

CJ hardly knows any advocate or a subordinate judge to be able to assess his calibre, character and ability to tip him for such a onerous duty to man the post to impart justice and to rise to such a high pedestal worthy of worship by the people. He is always guided or misguided by his colleagues in the collegiums. Very often some misfits also creep in, quietly, in the system, to pollute the stream of justice. It is forgotten altogether that a Judge is regarded as a 'Yati' by the society and adorned as an ideal person to be revered as an idol for the people. It is most unfortunate that the people become extremely sad and disillusioned when they hear stories of corruption on the premises of the holy temple of justice.

It is therefore, high time that like Union Public Service Commission there should be an independent body like National Judicial Commission to select the judges for the higher judiciary and to govern their judicial service. This body should get a constitutional status accountable to the Parliament.

At present there is absolutely no transparency of any nature in the judicial appointments which are hit by the Article 14, it being arbitrary in nature and shrouded in utter secrecy. None knows why anyone is recommended and why the other one is secretly condemned, as is done by the outgoing CJI in the case of three CJS of the High Courts. I was shocked to hear that one of the three had written 24 judgments of Full Benches headed by him. But our outgoing CJI has stamped him to be "incompetent" and has sealed his fate for ever for the reasons which were developed in some

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Out of sight out of mind, goes the saying. Since a sort of surface calm prevails in Assam, and no major outbreak of communal or sectarian hostilities has occurred in the state during the last few months, peace seems to be taken for granted. The long suffering state is now out of focus and there is no sign of any meaningful effort to restore Assam to the haven of peace and harmony it once was. Everyone familiar with the issues triggering ethnic and communal strife knows only too well that the current calm is no indicator that Assam is over the hump. It will be naive to imagine that militancy and communal strife, the two burning issues that have rocked the state for decades, can be resolved by shoving them under the carpet.

Tarun Gogoi has just completed a dozen years as chief minister of Assam. Shri Gogoi's tenure as chief minister of this trouble torn state for an unbroken spell of 12 years is indeed an extraordinary achievement, if for nothing else certainly for the fact that, barring the late Bimala Prasad Chaliha, none has occupied the exalted position for as long as Shri Gogoi has. No wonder the Gogoi administration has turned his long tenure in the high office into a celebration. And what can be a better platform to celebrate the occasion and win friends and gain political mileage than the media? A considerable amount of tax-payers' money has been spent on special supplements in selected publications to build Tarun Gogoi's image as the state's most enduring chief minister.

The sponsored features have trumpeted what is described as "a remarkable turnaround in the law and order scenario, with peace and stability ushering in development and investment" during the years Shri Gogoi has been at the helm of the administration. But Shri Gogoi's image would not have been dented if facts about the damage done to the state, nay the entire north-eastern region of India, by militancy and communal strife were not buried under tonnes of newsprint glorifying Shri Gogoi and his government's achievements. Some light could be thrown on the damage done by mindless violence.

There has been little echo in the rest of India - barring some curiosity over the occasional arrest of, or incident involving, an insurgent or trouble maker in some place far away from the north-east - of the ethnic and communal strife as well as multiple insurgencies that have set the clock back for Assam. Indeed, the strife and insurgency in India's northeast has remained almost hermetically sealed within the region since its beginning in the 1950s in the form of the Naga demand for secession from India. Indeed many people in key positions in successive governments in Assam have been complicit in helping illegal migrants to move in lock, stock and barrel. Shri Gogoi's observation in the wake of the disturbances in the Kokrajhar area of Bodoland in June-July last year that "there are no Bangladeshis in the clashes but Indian citizens" provided comfort and a much needed alibi to illegal migrants.

The long unresolved problem in Assam - not a residual problem - is the infiltration of hundreds of thousands of people from Bangladesh since the times when it was a part of Pakistan. Successive administrations have refused to address, and indeed have variously tried to cover up, illegal migration that has destabilised the state and much of the northeast. The government of the day usually cites the refrain that no authoritative estimate of the number of illegal migrants is available. Since it is the administration that alone can compile such an estimate and has defaulted persistently on its responsibility, who is to be held accountable for wilful dereliction of duty but government functionaries top to bottom? Indeed, even the Supreme Court's strictures on this issue have fallen largely on deaf ears or met with fitful efforts at "compliance", quickly abandoned at the first signs of predictable resistance.

Far from seeing the mischief inherent in the recurrent troubles, the authorities have sought to impose a pall of confusion over the most basic issues. In the event the danger of a fresh communal flare-up looms large following the announcement of the government's intention to launch a fresh attempt to prepare/update the long shelved National Register of Citizens (NRC). Some minority groups, apprehensive of the citizenship claims of illegal immigrants being exposed, have already thrown a spanner in the works questioning the very rationale of a National Register of Citizens.

Efforts to update the NRC are not new. In 2005, the Union Government decided to update the NRC within a period of two years with 1971 as the base year. The exercise failed to take

off. Four years later, in tripartite discussions between the Central and State Governments and the All-Assam Students Union (AASU), it was proposed to take up the work of updating the NRC in two revenue circles in Kamrup and Barpeta districts. Even though the long pending process began on June 7, 2010, as a "pilot project", it ran into trouble almost immediately, with law and order problems surfacing in Barpeta. On July 21, 2010, protesters under the banner of the Barpeta district unit of the All-Assam Muslim Students Union (AAMSU) demonstrated violently outside the Deputy Commissioner's [District Collector] Office demanding that the process must end immediately. Police eventually opened fire, killing four and injuring 50. While no suspension of the process was announced by the administration, the "pilot project" did not go forward thereafter.

Nearly two years later [March 26, 2012] the Government once again declared its resolve to re-launch the Registrar General of Citizens' "pilot project" to update the NRC in three phases from July 1, 2012. AAMSU, together with 24 other minority organisations, objected to the move. The process has not been revived yet, and official action to resume the task of updating the NRC is in limbo. Against this backdrop of unresolved issues thrown up by the upsurge in Assam on the issue of illegal infiltrators/migrants, the Tarun Gogoi administration's claim that a climate of peace and tranquillity prevails in the state is utterly misleading. There is no way durable peace will return to Assam without effectively tackling the issue of illegal migration. The least that needs to be done is to identify

- not necessarily segregate or deport - those who have moved into the state from across the international border since 1971 and prevent further immigration.

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planned manner, and the state government has to ensure that this process does not attract or encourage greed and corruption. Third, food supplies have to be reached to areas which were denuded of all basic amenities by the floods. The Congress party and the government it controls are on test. They need to set a good example at this hour of crisis. It is only clean administration and honest governance that can meet the big challenge ahead.

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personal dark room. In the chamber of collegiums, careers of many good judges have been destroyed by the personal whims and vendetta rather than on the merits or demerits. This Henry 8th Rule by the few in the Collegiums must be buried soon and be replaced by a very dignified body comprising of the really eminent jurists of high calibre and character to discharge such a highly pious function along with highly reputed and able executives in the government which is an equally important partner in the justice delivery system which is not the exclusively ruled province of the Judiciary which is only one of the three Constitution organs. And all are equal and on par with each other with different constitutional functions.

Will the present Law Minister Kapil Sibal take up this cause as a holy mission of his life?

—(Justice (Retd.) Rajan Kochar

Uttarakhand

Dear Friends,

You will be happy to know that Yusuf Meherally Centre has decided to work for relief and rehabilitation of the victims of the recent calamity in Uttarakhand. We have set up YMC Uttarakhand Relief Committee.

The priorities that have been identified are:

1. To identify those victims who have not received any aid from the government and help them secure it. And if necessary supplement it.
2. To liaise, co-ordinate and help the official machinery in providing relief and broadcast the rehabilitative measures that the state decides.
3. To work for employment generation for rehabilitation.
4. To co-ordinate its activities with other agencies or set up a network. And lastly
5. To identify the model of development which is eco-friendly for the beleaguered state and advocate it.

The Centre has considerable experience of relief work. In early period it provided relief to Orissa and organized a student committee in Mumbai to help the draught affected students of Maharashtra. Later, we provided relief in Raigad when there were flash floods, and after the cyclone and earthquake, in Kutch. Again after the earthquake in Kashmir we undertook relief though we could not do much for rehabilitation there. After the floods in Ladakh too we worked, but not much. But after the tsunami in Nagapattinam we did a lot of relief and rehabilitation work. After the Koshi floods too we were active in Bihar.

In short, we have rich experience and have learnt many lessons.

In Uttarakhand we have a good unit of the Yusuf Meherally Yuva Biradari and have a larger number of workers. The in-charge of our activities (YMC's and YMYB's) is a reputed journalist with contacts in the government as well as different civil society groups. We have set up a soap unit in that state with a view to generating employment.

In this background of our vast experience and the fact that we have some presence in the state we are sure that YMC can do a lot of good without replicating what others are doing.

This is an appeal to you to send financial assistance for relief and we will also appeal to you to give separately some money to take care of traveling and administration.

Awaiting for your prompt response, we remain

Yours sincerely,

Haresh Shah
Sudhir Gandbhir

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Who is Guilty of Char Dham Disaster Deluge of faith or Market Mantra ?

K. S. Chalam

Hardly four months have passed in disremembering the tragic death of about 40 people in a stampede at Allahabad when the devotees of Kumbh were on their way home in the month of February 2013, when the great tragedy of Char Dham has taken place. The horrible experiences narrated by the survivors, to the media, point out the sudden and unexpected suffering of the pilgrims who were brought there by tour operators. Though it is a sensitive issue with the media reach, a dispassionate academic discussion on the commercialisation of faiths is essential to envision the future to avoid such incidents.

Leaving the evolution of Chota Char Dham from the original Char Dham as part of the transformation process of conversion of Shiva sampradaya into militant Vaishnavism, the role of Adi Shankaracharya needs to be reconciled here. Even today, the rawals (traditional Hindu holy men) of Kedarnath are drawn from Karnataka and Namboodiris of Kerala for Badrinath (built on a Buddhist temple). Interestingly, not many pilgrims from these two states from the South are found in the present episode. However, Telugu folk are reported to have been there in large crowd. (It is reported that about 10000 people have already registered in Hyderabad for Amarnath yatra. Is it voluntary?)

There are several paradoxes in the Char Dham episode. The Himalayas are known after lord Shiva and all the river systems

including Ganga are devoted to him. It is out of place here to know how phallus worship of Indus valley civilization transformed into Rudra, Muruga, Shiva or Eswar. But, a perceptible observer can find out the defilement of traditional norms of calling Hardwar the gateway of Lord Shiva as Haridwar seems to be a bit niggling about the conspiracy of silence. In fact, the whole Natha tradition of North India is related to Shaivism and Tantra where majority of the followers were drawn from the so-called lower castes in the past (See D. P. Chattopadhyay). South Indians claim Siddha sampradaya. Some of the tantric traditions have been incorporated as part of Badrinath and Kedarnath rituals. We do not know who the multitude of Nag a Sadhus who descended on the Kumbha are?

The popular belief systems of the people of the South were influenced by saints - Nayanars (Shivaite) and Alvars (Vaisnavite). Some of them seem to have migrated from Kashi during the 7th 8th centuries after Sri Sankaracharya cleared the way for their arrival.

This is a turning point in our history and the Dakshinapath lost its identity and was linked with the pan Indian ethos. They have influenced our local languages and brought uniformity with their use of Sanskrit. This had facilitated conversation with local people (who had different belief systems) leading to convert them to Hindu sects before the Abrahamic beliefs descended. Thus,

the South Indians particularly the Telugu speaking people are found to be fond of the pilgrimages to the North due to proselytizing. It appears, every Hindu in the South believes that once in lifetime one should visit Ganga and the Dhams so as to attain Jeevanmukti or physical deliverance (Bondito kailasam). There are instances where old people are thrown into the Ganga or corpses are burnt on the banks to attain salvation.

But, we never realised that our pious Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri and other river systems of the South do equally deserve attention of the North. We hardly find any one from the North ever visiting them, indicating the disregard or bias in our credence of faith. While anxiously watching the TV for clues about some of our kith and kin in the devastation, I had an occasion to witness an advertisement in a Hindi channel about trips to Chardham. It is a very interesting display where a baba was sitting on an altar sermonising on the mundane and spiritual benefits one gets in a pilgrimage to Badarinath, Kedarnath, etc. The hostess in her beautiful attire gives a commentary as to how to get a reservation, the facilities and other arrangements provided by an agency along with the phone numbers. Of course, our media created a wonderful space of scrolling beneath and above the main content as Breaking News to attract the attention of the viewer. The traditional temples are also using now the ICT facilities like e darshan, e

prasad and other e related services to reach out the customer rather than the devotee. As far as Telugu devotees are concerned, they have more advanced information through regular and special devotional channels all the time. In fact, there are special Babas , Gurus, Brothers and Priests who have emerged and sustained through the media coverage. After all Telugus are in the forefront to declare that they have come of IT age. Thus, faith and devotion related services are packaged and sold in the market better than many other items of goods.

The impact of TV, ICT and other complimentary developments in the so-called service sector after liberalisation has enhanced the contribution of this sector to GDP manifold. As noted in my earlier articles, the number of places of worship in India has increased four times over a period of two decades that stood at around 30 lakh involving billions of rupees worth of properties and business. Almost all faiths in general and Hindu in particular (due to size) have accumulated huge properties in all the important holy places and cities (people know of only Anantpadmanabha of Trivandrum). We know some of the developments in Visakhapatnam city. Most of the properties are binami and a source of concealing black money. Though, we have sincere and honest philanthropists and devotees, some of the criminal minds are behind several dubious operations. A friend has commented that it is how all the faiths have grown over a period of time. May be. We don't know. However, the growth of a faith in terms of quantity is found widespread while the depth of spiritual commitment is shrinking.

It is in the context of the Char Dham disaster, certain distressing events are reported. How do we understand the wade of missing cash in the hands of some babas and the raping and killing of hapless mother and daughter (lost pilgrims) who were searching for help? Does it any way help a traditional country? In fact, the spiritual commitment of humanists and non believers for the enhancement of human happiness and good will is reported to be everlasting and permanent irrespective of political and economic swings.

The influence of the growing market culture on the religious practices seems to have distressed our contemporary life and living. The present tragedy in Chardham viewed under the above context poses several issues for reflection by concerted citizens and leaders including sane religionists.

Uttarakhand where the Chardhams are located is a very small state of about one crore people planned about a decade ago. It might boast of several natural resources, but all of them are subjected to the vagaries of weather and climatic changes. The state has 13 districts and 15761 inhabited villages with 70 Vidhan Sabha and 6 parliamentary constituencies. Though the state is part of Himalayas, it does not come under either fifth schedule or sixth schedule since there are only 2.6 per cent adivasis and 16 per cent scheduled castes. Yet, the Hindu population of the state is about 72 per cent. The literacy rate is above 80 per cent with several premier educational institutions located there. The per capita SDP of Rs 48114 is above the national average. Interestingly, 47 per cent of the population live below poverty

indicating the precarious position of the population relying on Tourism. Keeping the typical social and economic conditions of the state, the planners must have designed some projects for economic sustenance. The present disaster about which everyone is concerned needs to be analysed scientifically. There are several definitions of disaster, explaining an accident or natural catastrophe that causes damage and loss of life due to the fact that the calamity far exceeds the resources. We have recently identified more than 50 issues relating to disasters (Manmade and Natural) in connection with a World Congress on Disaster Management to be organised early next year. We had an opportunity to know about the work of two premier research institutes on Himalayas, one at Dehradun under Geological Survey of India and the other at North Bengal University. It is necessary to know that the Himalayas in which the Chardhams are situated are the youngest and the highest mountain range in the world with an age of 70million years on earth (which is 4.54 billion years old).

The earth scientists have reported that the Himalayas were formed when Indo Australia plate collided in to the underbelly of Eurasia plate. Thus, it is geologically unstable and seismologically active. It has 15000 glaciers providing perennial source of water to Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra, Yangtze and several others. The sedimentary and metamorphic rocks of the region seem to be responsible for fragile slopes and landslides and also exposed to occasional cloud bursts. Uttarakhand is abode of not only Hindu shrines, but there are ancient Buddhist and indigenous sects, Sikh and Muslim places of worship. It has

a limited carrying capacity with fragile environmental implications. The region is considered as 'Devabhumi' and some of the people are called as paharias or hill people referring them as innocent. They love the land, the forest and therefore when deforestation initiated in the name of development, a counter movement as Chipko was started to stall the deforestation. However, a large number of hydro electrical projects in the region including the highest and controversial Tehri dam, Srinagar dam etc. were completed making the region prone to geophysical disasters.

It is reported in the media that an RTI question has revealed of plans to construct 557 hydropower projects on the pious rivers. Interestingly, most of the contractors are South Indian operators like GVK, Lanco, GMR and others and the NTPC project in 2010 was scrapped due to people's resistance. The state government seems to have developed Tourist destinations with the support of some operators as the demand for trips to these dhams beyond Rishikesh increased several fold. It is reported that there are about 10000 beds available for use by the tourists in different categories of hotels, dharmasalas, etc. The number of tourists who visited Uttarakhand during 2010 amounted to 3.11 crores, three times the size of the population which was hardly in thousands few decades ago. One can imagine the amount of pressure put on the fragile natural resources of the region by around 20 lakh visitors particularly in the Alakananda, Bhagirathi and Mandakini river banks where the dhams are positioned. Given the hydrogeological formation of the region and the river systems, the state

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Harrassment of researchers

Pannalal Surana

There was a *janasunwai* at Alapalli (Gadchiroli district) on 8th May, 2013 on the proposed lease to JSW Ispat Ltd. The thick, rich jungle spread over the talukas of Etapalli, Bhamaragadh, Mulchera and Dhanora are supposed to have large stocks of iron ore. Hence a number of leading industrial houses like Tata, Lloyds, Adani and Jindal have applied for lease of tracks of land and permit to undertake mining there. Formalities for granting permission to some applicants have been completed without notifying the residents of the villages that would be affected by the proposed mining. The one about the Jindal somehow got enough publicity to attract public attention. The villages likely to be affected are Gatta, Gilgunda, Jajwadi, Mohodi, Kunjemarka, Watali, Besewada, Wadali and Gudantur. These villages have already passed resolutions in their Gram Sabhas recording their opposition to the proposed mining lease and license. The Jindal management, however, held the "janasunwai" at Alapalli, situated about 50 km. from Damakondawadi, the proposed HQ of the enterprise, and had gathered a few hundred people from the Chamorshi taluka which is far away from the area. likely to be affected. The actually would-be affected villagers, however, got wind of it and attended the *janasunwai* at Alapalli on that day and recorded their protest by giving written petition as also by shouting slogans like "Jindal, vapas jav." Harshali Potdar, a research student of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, had joined the demonstration and

participated in the slogan shouting. There was huge police force to protect the management people. The police must have noted her presence and hence was keeping an eye on her movements.

On 19th June, Harshali along with her colleague Mahesh Raut had gone to a small village near Gatta to attend a marriage of her friend. When they started on motorbike to return to their place of residence at Aheri, the police stopped them near the Pranhita police station and took them inside. Harshali and Maheh were separately interrogated for long and permitted to leave in the early morning of 22nd June, i.e. about 30 hours after being taken to the police station. The police suspected that the duo had links with the Naxalites. The police seized from them books by Bhagat Singh, Karl Marx and Dr. Ambedkar - without touching or noting down that there were many textbooks about MSW curriculum with them. After that, off and on, they were called to the police station for interrogation.

This is highly objectionable. Keeping books by renowned revolutionaries or participating in peaceful demonstration by the villagers is not a crime. Those activities are part of the fundamental rights of the citizens as enumerated in the third chapter of the Constitution of India. Actually one of the students, Mahesh Raut, is a recipient of the Prime Minister's fellowship to do research work, based on field study, on the theme of Developmental Conflicts. Socialist Party (India), wrote a letter

to Prithviraj Chavan, Chief Minister of Maharashtra on this incident.

What is of more concern is the proposed destruction of very thick and rich jungle of Gadchiroli which has grown in full bloom over centuries, There has been no capital investment done by anybody. No irrigation is needed. It is all rain-fed. Fortunately, the area gets good rainfall of both South-western and north-eastern monsoons. Besides timber of Sag and Shisam varieties, there is ample bamboo growing without any effort by man. And the jungle provides 2-3 months' employment to the tribals nearby in collection of forest products like tendu-patta or moha flowers. Last year, village by name of Mendha-Lekha, sold bamboo worth Rs. 60 lakhs after getting community patta over the forest in the revenue area of that village. Now, a number of villages are following that example and engaging in bamboo-cutting and selling after obtaining community pattas. The villagers also enjoy nishitar rights for head-loads of firewood and building material. There are also minor products like charoli. All those concerned with genuine development should ponder over this. If this natural forest is destroyed for mining iron ore, then the loss would be permanent and irreplaceable. And the tribals would lose self-employment plus other benefits for ever. Mining cannot provide employment for a large number of people forever. It would be small duration of say 20 years. In these days of zero employment growth process, such natural avenues should not be lost forever. And the forest is supplying so many valuable things to the society at large. It would not be proper to allow this

(Continued on Page 15)

Decision to raise height of SSP illegal and political conspiracy

Central Authorities cannot permit drowning of two lakh population without rehabilitation

The decision to permit raising of the height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam from the present height of 122 mts to the final height of 138.68 mts, as per the news published in the Times of India, has been taken by the Resettlement and Rehabilitation Sub Group of the Narmada Control Authority (NCA) on 26th June. This is supposed to have been done on the basis of the reports by the four states, including Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra, confirming that 'rehabilitation is complete'. All this is absolutely unbelievable and unacceptable since there are more than 40,000 families in the 245 villages in the submergence area spread across these three states, with the maximum villages (193) being in Madhya Pradesh alone.

There are at least 4,000 families in M.P. and about 1,000 in Maharashtra who are yet to receive alternative agricultural land as per the eligibility. Thousands of landless including agricultural labourers, fish workers, potters and other artisans are yet to get an alternative source of livelihood as per the state policy and Action Plan, endorsed by the Supreme Court. Those at the resettlement site in Gujarat or Maharashtra or at a very small percentage in M.P. are certainly not rehabilitated, till date, as there are hundreds of families without full land, as per entitlement or amenities, yet to be attained.

When huge corruption through a massive scandal of about 5,00 to 1,000 crores, misappropriated by

officials and agents in rehabilitation is under inquiry, by Justice Jha Commission, appointed by the High Court, for the past 5 years, there is no way that M.P. can approve the fake rehabilitation. M.P. has allotted land only to 21 families till date, that too in the past two months, while 4,000 plus remain to attain their due, many of whom are cheated through fake land registries. These include hilly adivasis habited in the Satpuda and Vindhya ranges, who are to be taken special care of as per the policy and judgements. Maharashtra too is still searching and locating land to establish R&R sites, more and Gujarat's oustees are also awaiting declaration, allotment of land and/or amenities in the original villages as well as resettlement sites.

The Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award and all the Supreme Court's judgements, (1991, 2000, 2002, 2005) and the last interim order that has clearly directed full and fair implementation of the NWDTA, are to be violated once again, if there is any raise, in the dam height at this stage. Flooding the villages, where life is on with pucca houses, shops, markets, schools, temples and mosques and lakhs of trees will be a gross injustice, against law and contempt of court. The Prime Minister himself had given a written commitment to the Apex Court on 17th April, 2006 i.e. on the 21st day of fast in New Delhi, that all the families upto 122 mts were not rehabilitated while that height was sanctioned and that rehabilitation would be complete within three

months i.e. by June, 2006. The same has not yet happened and hence there could be no permission granted for further work at the dam.

Moreover, not one, but many committees of MoEF and the latest chaired by Shri Devendra Pandey have clearly concluded based on the documents and data that almost all the conditions in the environmental clearance are not fulfilled, but violated. Be it Gujarat on the non-compliance of CAD Plans, or Maharashtra and M.P. with targets and plans on protective/preventive measures, compensatory afforestation, health measures for all the three states.

It is, therefore, obvious that any clearance granted is only a result of political expediency. Narendra Modi since, last few months had been raising SSP issues publicly to blame or challenge the UPA Government, which is succumbing to these pressures unnecessarily and unjustifiably. When Gujarat doesn't have its canal network ready and not built beyond 25-30 percent over the last 30 years, what is the need to raise the height and fill more water to drown the valley? Why can't the MoEF and the Narmada Control Authority under the Ministry of Water Resources compel Gujarat to complete execution of all environmental measures and building of canal network phase-wise and thereby utilize the already ponded waters?

The issue is being politicized with nearing of 2014 elections, no doubt but people's lives and livelihoods being at stake, we can't allow such a heinous crime to be committed by flooding houses, communities, fields, and forests any more, not till all legal

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Why India Trails China

Amartya Sen

Modern India is, in many ways, a success. Its claim to be the world's largest democracy is not hollow. Its media is vibrant and free; Indians buy more newspapers every day than any other nation. Since independence in 1947, life expectancy at birth has more than doubled, to 66 years from 32, and per-capita income (adjusted for inflation) has grown fivefold. In recent decades, reforms pushed up the country's once sluggish growth rate to around 8 percent per year, before it fell back a couple of percentage points over the last two years. For years, India's economic growth rate ranked second among the world's large economies, after China, which it has consistently trailed by at least one percentage point.

The hope that India might overtake China one day in economic growth now seems a distant one. But that comparison is not what should worry Indians most. The far greater gap between India and China is in the provision of essential public services — a failing that depresses living standards and is a persistent drag on growth.

Inequality is high in both countries, but China has done far more than India to raise life expectancy, expand general education and secure health care for its people. India has elite schools of varying degrees of excellence for the privileged, but among all Indians nearly one in every five males and one in every three females are illiterate. And most schools are of low quality; less than half the children can divide 20 by 5, even after four years of schooling.

India may be the world's largest producer of generic medicine, but its health care system is an unregulated mess. The poor have to rely on low-quality — and sometimes exploitative — private medical care, because there isn't enough decent public care. While China devotes 2.7 percent of its gross domestic product to government spending on health care, India allots 1.2 percent.

India's underperformance can be traced to a failure to learn from the examples of so-called Asian economic development, in which rapid expansion of human capability is both a goal in itself and an integral element in achieving rapid growth. Japan pioneered that approach, starting after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, when it resolved to achieve a fully literate society within a few decades. As Kido Takayoshi, a leader of that reform, explained: "Our people are no different from the Americans or Europeans of today; it is all a matter of education or lack of education." Through investments in education and health care, Japan simultaneously enhanced living standards and labor productivity — the government collaborating with the market.

Despite the catastrophe of Japan's war years, the lessons of its development experience remained and were followed, in the postwar period, by South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and other economies in East Asia. China, which during the Mao era made advances in land reform and basic education and health care, embarked on market reforms in the early 1980s; its huge

success changed the shape of the world economy. India has paid inadequate attention to these lessons.

Is there a conundrum here that democratic India has done worse than China in educating its citizens and improving their health? Perhaps, but the puzzle need not be a brainteaser. Democratic participation, free expression and rule of law are largely realities in India, and still largely aspirations in China. India has not had a famine since independence, while China had the largest famine in recorded history, from 1958 to 1961, when Mao's disastrous Great Leap Forward killed some 30 million people. Nevertheless, using democratic means to remedy endemic problems—chronic undernourishment, a disorganized medical system or dysfunctional school systems—demands sustained deliberation, political engagement, media coverage, popular pressure. In short, more democratic process, not less.

In China, decision making takes place at the top. The country's leaders are skeptical, if not hostile, with regard to the value of multiparty democracy, but they have been strongly committed to eliminating hunger, illiteracy and medical neglect, and that is enormously to their credit.

There are inevitable fragilities in a nondemocratic system because mistakes are hard to correct. Dissent is dangerous. There is little recourse for victims of injustice. Edicts like the one-child policy can be very harsh. Still, China's present leaders have used the basic approach of accelerating development by expanding human capability with great decisiveness and skill.

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The protests around the world

A familiar face appeared in many of the protests taking place in scores of cities on three continents this week: a Guy Fawkes mask with a roguish smile and a pencil-thin moustache. The mask belongs to "V", a character in a graphic novel from the 1980s who became the symbol for a group of computer hackers called Anonymous. His contempt for government resonates with people all over the world.

The protests have many different origins. In Brazil people rose up against bus fares, in Turkey against a building project. Indonesians have rejected higher fuel prices, Bulgarians the government's cronyism. In the euro zone they march against austerity, and the Arab spring has become a perma-protest against pretty much everything. Each angry demonstration is angry in its own way.

Yet just as in 1848, 1968 and 1989, when people also found a collective voice, the demonstrators have much in common. Over the past few weeks, in one country after another, protesters have risen up with bewildering speed. They have been more active in democracies than dictatorships. They tend to be ordinary, middle-class people, not lobbies with lists of demands. Their mix of revelry and rage condemns the corruption, inefficiency and arrogance of the folk in charge.

Nobody can know how 2013 will change the world—if at all. In 1989 the Soviet empire teetered and fell. But Marx's belief that 1848 was the first wave of a proletarian revolution was confounded by decades of flourishing capitalism and 1968,

which felt so pleurably radical at the time, did more to change sex than politics. Even now, though, the inchoate significance of 2013 is discernible. And for politicians who want to peddle the same old stuff, the news is not good.

The rhythm of protests has been accelerated by technology. V's face turns up in both São Paulo and Istanbul because protest is organised through social networks, which spread information, encourage imitation and make causes fashionable (see article). Everyone with a smartphone spreads stories, though not always reliable ones. When the police set fire to the encampment in Gezi Park in Istanbul on May 31st, the event appeared instantly on Twitter. After Turks took to the streets to express their outrage, the flames were fanned by stories that protesters had died because of the police's brutal treatment. Even though those first stories turned out to be wrong, it had already become the popular thing to demonstrate.

Protests are no longer organised by unions or other lobbies, as they once were. Some are initiated by small groups of purposeful people—like those who stood against the fare increases in São Paulo—but news gets about so fast that the organising core tends to get swamped. Spontaneity gives the protests an intoxicating sense of possibility. But, inevitably, the absence of organisation also blurs the agenda. Brazil's fare protest became a condemnation of everything from corruption to public services (see article). In Bulgaria the government gave in to the crowd's demand to ditch the newly appointed

head of state security. But by then the crowd had stopped listening.

This ready supply of broad, fair-weather activism may vanish as fast as it appeared. That was the fate of the Occupy protesters, who pitched camp in Western cities in 2011. This time, however, the protests are fed by deep discontent. Egypt is suffering from the disastrous failure of government at every level. Protest there has become a substitute for opposition. In Europe the fight is over how to shrink the state. Each time the cuts reach a new target—most recently, Greece’s national broadcaster—they trigger another protest. Sometimes, as in the riots of young immigrants in Sweden’s suburbs in May and of British youths in 2011, entire groups feel excluded from the prosperity around them. Sweden has the highest ratio of youth unemployment to general unemployment in the OECD. Too many young Britons suffer from poor education and have prospects to match. In the emerging economies rapid real growth has led people to expect continuing improvements in their standard of living. This prosperity has paid for services and, in an unequal society like Brazil, narrowed the gap between rich and poor. But it is under threat. In Brazil GDP growth slowed from 7.5% in 2010 to only 0.9% last year. In Indonesia, where GDP is still below \$5,000 a head, ordinary families will keenly feel the loss of fuel subsidies.

More potent still in the emerging world are the political expectations of a rapidly growing middle class. At the end of last year young educated Indians took to the streets of several cities after the gang rape of a 23-year-old medical student, to protest at the lack of protection that the state

affords women. Even bigger protests had swept the country in 2011, as the middle class rose up against the corruption that infests almost every encounter with government officials. In Turkey the number of students graduating from university has increased by 8% a year since 1995. The young middle class this has created chafes against the religious conservatism of the prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who wants large families and controls on alcohol. The 40m Brazilians who clambered out of poverty in the past eight years are able for the first time to scrutinise the society that their taxes finance. They want decent public services, and get overpriced sports stadiums instead.

How will this year of protest unfold? One dark conclusion is that democracy has become harder: allocating resources between competing interest groups is tougher if millions can turn out on the streets in days. That implies that the euro zone’s summer will surely get hotter. The continent’s politicians have got off lightly so far (the biggest demonstrations in Paris, for instance, were when “Frigide Barjot” led French Catholics in a bid to stop gay marriage). Yet social instability is twice as common when public spending falls by at least 5% of GDP as when it is growing. At some point European leaders must curb the chronic overspending on social welfare and grapple with the euro’s institutional weakness—and unrest will follow.

Happily, democracies are good at adapting. When politicians accept that the people expect better—and that votes lie in satisfying them—things can change. India’s anti-corruption protests did not lead to immediate change, but they raised

graft up the national agenda, with the promise of gradual reform (see article). To her credit, Brazil’s president, Dilma Rousseff, wants a national debate on renewing politics. This will be neither easy nor quick. But protest could yet improve democracy in emerging countries—and even eventually the EU.

Democrats may envy the ability of dictators to shut down demonstrations. China has succeeded in preventing its many local protests from cohering into a national movement. Saudi Arabia has bribed its dissidents to be quiet; Russia has bullied them with the threats of fines and prison. But in the long run, the autocrats may pay a higher price. Using force to drive people off the streets can weaken governments fatally, as Sultan Erdogan may yet find (see article); and as the Arab governments discovered two years ago, dictatorships lack the institutions through which to channel protesters’ anger. As they watch democracies struggle in 2013, the leaders in Beijing, Moscow and Riyadh should be feeling uncomfortable.

—*The Economists, June 29th 2013*

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pre-conditions are fulfilled. We warn the NCA not to clear the raising of the dam height and also warn R&R Sub-Group to withdraw its decision. The people of the valley will compel these authorities to comply with law and are prepared to fight for it tooth and nail.

—**Surbhan Bhilala, Devram Kanera, Kamla Yadav, Kailash Awasya, Ghokru Ranveer Tomar, Madu Machuara, Medha Patkar, Shannobehan,**

People's Commission Report on Special Rehabilitation Scheme Demands Cancellation of Fraudulent Projects

People's Commission Report on Slum Rehabilitation Scheme in Mumbai was released on June 24, 2013 by Justice (Retd.) B. N. Deshmukh. The Commission was appointed by NAPM in order that a thorough enquiry could take place into the irregularities and illegalities complained by hundreds and thousands of the slum dwellers included in the Scheme. The Commission was also appointed since the government of Maharashtra went back on its promise to appoint a joint enquiry committee to look in to 15 SRA projects, with Justice Suresh as Chairperson. This promise was given during the nine-day fast by Medha Patkar and others while the official notifications were modified giving false reasons of Court's directive and the enquiry was transferred to High Power Committee. Having no faith in the HPC, the people's movements, Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan and others decided to continue the struggle, and forcing the State government to finally appoint a Committee under the Principal Secretary, Housing to undertake the enquiry into six SRA projects in January 2013.

In this context NAPM decided to go in for a parallel enquiry by eminent experts' panel as an initiative from the civil society, under the chairmanship of Justice H Suresh. Other members included Prof. Amita Bhide, urban habitat policy expert and member of the High Power Expert Group appointed by High Court, Mumbai in 2005; Chandrashekhar, architect and member of High-rise

Buildings Committee, Government of Maharashtra; Suradkar, former Inspector General of Police and Simpreet Singh, senior social activist. The panel went through a long process of investigation for months, conducted public hearings, visited the SRA areas and communities, invited and heard developers who appeared before the Commission and referred to the submissions made by the residents, their groups and organisations as well as the developers. The Commission also referred to secondary data and information available in various policy documents and reports.

The Report has brought out a number of frauds and illegalities infesting the SRA projects and the serious flaws in the SR Scheme itself. It indicates how the developers-politicians-bureaucrats together have favoured the builders more often than the residents and permitted violations of laws, rules and the scheme itself. The Scheme's objective of the rehabilitation is often marred since displacement of hundreds of families without rehabilitation has also been a result of wrong application and corruption in the eligibility criteria and the list of beneficiaries evolved thereby. With no registered agreements in the hands of the residents, the Commission has reported a number of cases where they are cheated or kept hanging in the non-livable transit camps or the rented houses without the rent being paid regularly. The report brings out the stories of oppression and repression of the residents of decades old communities who are driven out

using intimidation and luring tactics, ultimately to dump them, violating their rights. False cases filed against the residents and unnecessary questioning of residents by police are used as harassment tactics. The Report exposes the role of the police in favouring the developers, many a times not admitting the FIRs and compelling the residents to run from dawn to dusk and reach the Courts at enormous costs.

An important highlight of the Report is regarding the transfer of the land to the builders which the scheme legitimizes, going against the expected principle and goal of equitable land use in the megalopolis of Mumbai where 60 percent of population, being slum dwellers, resides on not more than 9.24 percent of Mumbai's land. The allotment of land out of the communities' land to the investor builder has attracted the politicians and others to also come forward and become partners in SRA schemes. This, as Report brings out, has resulted in complacency and favouritism within the sanctioning and monitoring authorities such as SRA and Revenue department with the builders and have left the residents with little or no channel for redressal of their grievances. The Commission has concluded, going beyond the CAG report which shows that instead of 8 lakh houses only 1.5 lakh houses have been constructed under SRS since 1996 till 2011, that the Scheme is more or less a failure in terms of strengthening the cooperatives of slum dwellers and rehabilitating them at a better standard of living.

The Report goes into the details of six SRA projects including Shiv Koliwada, Ramnagar(Ghatkopar), Ambedkar Nagar (Mulund), Indira Nagar (Jogeshwari), Chandivili (Mahendra and Sommaiyya quarries) and Golibar (Khar). These are the very projects which are also being enquired by Principal Secretary Housing, Government of Maharashtra, whose report is also expected soon.

The report's recommendations

includes urgent review of the six SRA projects under scanner as also the overall SR Scheme itself. Where the projects are not consented to by the communities those should be cancelled and amalgamation to big chunks of land diverted to the builders under 3k clause of the slum act 1971 or otherwise under some pretext should be withdrawn. The Commission suggests that with the people's consent and readiness the community should be permitted and promoted to build their own housing

schemes in truly cooperative way using their own labour force and artisans as also retaining land underneath the slums in their own rights.

The recommendations include alternative housing schemes on the basis of PublicPublic Partnership that would include Rajeev Awas Yojana, with due participation and vision coming from the people, and people's organisations.

–**SumitaWajale and
Madhuresh Kumar**

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had an average of 1606 mm rainfall. It is reported that the rainfall in the region on the fateful day was 380 mm. One scientist has alleged that the forest cover of the 53483 sq KMs of the state that was 84.9 per cent in 1970 is reduced to around 50 per cent by now. Thus, the tragedy was anticipated by scholars and activists who were studying the region. The International Panel on Climatic Change has already warned of extreme weather conditions and of

course the CAG warning to the state government for not following the guidelines is now in the public domain.

Thus, the June 17th disaster is a consequence of a vicious circle of leisure time activity promoted by market strategies, capitalist industrial expansion for cheap power, unworldly religious jingoism together with surplus cash invested in mindless construction in an ecologically sensitive area. This is substantiated

by the statement of the priest of Kedarinath Sri Vagesh Lingachar, after the incident that Tourist operators and the business interests have made the area a virtual market place that masked the temple that could be seen from a distance a few years ago. This is an emerging situation where faith is conditioned by market, and if it becomes a practice that is the end of the significance of religion in human society.

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The case for combating debilitating inequality in India is not only a matter of social justice. Unlike India, China did not miss the huge lesson of Asian economic development, about the economic returns that come from bettering human lives, especially at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid. India's growth and its earnings from exports have tended to depend narrowly on a few sectors, like information technology, pharmaceuticals and specialized

auto parts, many of which rely on the role of highly trained personnel from the well-educated classes. For India to match China in its range of manufacturing capacity — its ability to produce gadgets of almost every kind, with increasing use of technology and better quality control — it needs a better-educated and healthier labor force at all levels of society. What it needs most is more knowledge and public discussion about the nature and the huge extent of inequality and

its damaging consequences, including for economic growth.

– *The New York Times*

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valuable natural asset to be destroyed so that a handful of capitalists earn huge profits for a very limited span of time.

Coming back to the two TISS researchers, the police have stopped harassing them.



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A missed opportunity

S. Viswam

Mistrust is thy name politics?
Kuldip Nayar

**Circulation of Families
under Capitalist Patronage**
K. S. Chalam

**Assam's Illegal Immigrant
Imbroglio**
Nitish Chakravarty

Silence over the Emergency
Rajindar Sachar

**Revenue foregone is
loot of economy**
Krishna Swaroop Anandi

Caught in the line of ire
Gopalkrishna Gandhi

Muslims that 'minority politics'
left behind
Khalid Anis Ansari

**Government needs to cut subsidies
that benefit the rich**

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The UPA government has been forced to resort to the ordinance route to introduce its over-ambitious Food Security Bill in Parliament. This is really unfortunate for two reasons. Resort to an ordinance to usher in a debate on a welfare legislation especially when Parliament is in session denotes the government's lack of confidence in the goodness of the legislation to sell itself. Secondly, it sets an unhealthy example in parliamentary processes since an ordinance exposes the government's willingness to bypass parliament when it suits it. Third, the latest resort to the ordinance route is clearly born out of the fear that the BJP-led opposition may well stall proceedings and bring the monsoon session to a halt were the FSB to be introduced in the normal manner. This fear is not misplaced. The BJP opposition is known to play politics whenever an opportunity arises to corner the ruling coalition.

That the FSB is one of the most important welfare measures to have been conceived by the UPA is well known. Indeed, the legislation has been in preparation for the last three years and has been scrutinized by the National Advisory Council and

various related ministries, apart from the Planning Commission and a parliamentary committee. Surprisingly, apart from the BJP opposition, which opposes it for the sake of opposition and not because it has an alternative proposal, some of the UPA allies, like Sharad Pawar and Mulayam Singh Yadav have also opposed it. They fear that the bill, when fully and efficiently implemented, will hit the small farmer hard, force him to shut shop because of inability to market his produce, and also hit the small exporters of grains. However, it is typical of the unprincipled nature of competitive Indian politics that no political party has made a serious study of the problems involved in ensuring food security for millions of hungry people and made practical and positive suggestions. Parties are more interested in ensuring that the UPA does not get any credit for a welfare measure than in ensuring that millions of hungry people benefit.

It will be useful for our political class to remember that most countries in the world, including the Third World nations, are currently obsessed with the problem of hunger and how to fight it. The UN is tracing the progress of its Millenium Goal

Between the lines

Mistrust is thy name politics?

Kuldip Nayar

targets to reduce world poverty and hunger by 50 per cent before 2015. According to published reports the UN recently expressed appreciation for the efforts of 38 countries for having attained notable results in implementing the UN deadline. India is not among these 38, but that is no black mark. India has been planning a food security programme on a massive scale for at least a decade.

Even on a programme that aims at eradicating poverty and hunger through planned and legislated measures, there is no national consensus. Most parties would protest that they are as committed to food security as is the Congress. However, they are loathe to cooperate when a draft bill reaches a stage where it can be introduced in parliament and debated. All the parties could have decided, if they wanted, to debate the bill in parliament seriously and ensured that all the provisions it thinks are of no benefit to the hungry are deleted. But this is expecting too much of Indian politics and politicians.

It has been a general experience of parliamentary history in India that there is a wide gap between adoption of a legislation in parliament and its implementation by the government. The Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act, on the strength of which the UPA is credited with winning a second term in office, was a legislation from which much was expected. But it is still bogged down in administrative quagmires and the benefits of the scheme, which guarantees employment to a worker for 100 days in a year, have yet to reach even 25 per cent of the intended beneficiaries. The cash-for-subsidy scheme, the UPA's latest

(Continued on Page 3)

In the penultimate year of nearly one-decade rule by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government, I find the biggest casualty is the people's confidence in political parties, particularly the ruling Congress. In fact, the public is so exasperated that it has come to believe that dishonesty and politics are synonymous and those who have come to politics have done so only to make money.

I was aghast to find that many well-placed people have not contributed to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund because they suspect that the money given for the Uttarakhand victims would be used by the Congress in elections. I can understand the argument that the assistance is mismanaged, but the suspicion about the PM's Fund should awaken the rulers to the extent that the people have lost faith in them. The scandals like the 2G Spectrum regarding the mobiles and the allotment of coal blocks to unknown persons have, no doubt, damaged the credibility of the Congress. But the inference that those in positions, to whichever party they belong, is a sad commentary on politicians.

Consequently, there is a question mark against any report or probe conducted by the government. Even a judicial verdict is taken with a pinch of salt. The fault is not that of the people, but the manner in which the affairs have been conducted since the seventies. Very little has been done to restore confidence.

In fact, the official machinery is in disarray.

Take the case of Ishrat Jahan encounter. The Home Ministry at the Centre and the state government had taken the stand that Ishrat, along with her three accomplices, were terrorists who were killed in an encounter with the police suspecting them to have a plan to assassinate Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said that it was a cold-blooded murder. The agency found no evidence to involve Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Toiba which the Intelligence Bureau (IB) had done.

Who does the public believe? Both the CBI and the IB are parts of the same government. The public is further confused because the CBI has alleged that Ishrat and her accomplices were picked up from different places and shot dead. The weapons they had on them were allegedly planted by the police and none of it had been used for days.

Assume that Ishrat and the others were terrorists. Does the police force have the right to kill them without proving in a law court that they were terrorists? If this rule is to apply, the killers of Mrs Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi should have been shot dead in encounters instead of proceedings even in the Supreme Court. We should not have spent crores of rupees on the trial of Mohammad Kasab, who was

hanged, and done away with him for the attacks on Mumbai.

The food security bill which will subsidize food for 65 per cent of the population is a prey to suspicion. The government is to be blamed for introducing the measure through an ordinance when the parliament session has only three weeks away. (It has now been postponed to mid-August after the ordinance). Most political parties are in favour of the bill but want a legitimate discussion in parliament before it is enacted. The Congress prefers the route of ordinance on the plea that political parties, particularly the BJP, have not allowed parliament to function. This is true. But the ordinance too has to be passed by parliament. For that a consensus would be required. Why couldn't the government bring about it before the ordinance?

There is something in the allegation that the Congress eyes are fixed on the parliamentary elections which is due in May 2014. It is possible that a mid-term poll may take place in November or December. Such are the suspicions which have nullified the food security ordinance which would enable roughly 850 million people of limited means to buy per kilo rice at Rs. 3, wheat at Rs. 2 and bajra for Rs. 1.

The case of CBI's autonomy is yet another example worth dwelling on. People have no faith in the supervision by the three retired High Court judges. The suspicion is that the government would appoint pliable judges. Since the CBI will be under the government, any measure it takes fails to evoke faith.

The other main political party, the BJP, is suspect because it is selling Modi thesis of Hindutva.

The latest is the building of the Ram temple at the site where the Babri masjid stood before its demolition. The party should realize that the religious card cannot be played again and again. The demand for temple and a uniform civil code are supposed to be parts of development, a camouflage for Hindutva. The party is as much engaged in power politics as the Congress is.

That the leftist parties have social justice and federalism on their agenda is to the liking of a preponderant majority. To their admiration, a convention of the leftist parties at Delhi last week reiterated the two points. Indeed, the Manmohan Singh government has made the rich richer and has made a mockery of political autonomy.

Yet the CPI (M) was found wanting during their rule of 15 years in West Bengal. The Sachar Committee has said that the Muslim community in the state was the most backward in education (only 2.7 per cent). The CPI supported the authoritarian rule of Indira Gandhi during the emergency. Janata Dal (United) evokes hope to be a third alternative because its chief, Sharad Yadav, has said that his party will fight totalitarianism of communists and communalism of the BJP. Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar has shown in his rule that a government can rise above gimmicks. Rightly Nitish Kumar has given the National Investigation Agency to probe the Buddh Gaya bomb blasts.

The nation's problem is how to reignite the spirit of confidence and idealism. Alas, no political party, even in the states, comes up to that standard. Will the next election throw up such people is in the realm of conjecture. Persons like me are

still optimistic that India would return to the path of values which it took after winning independence.

(Continued from Page 2)

pro-aam aadmi scheme is facing difficulties at the initial stage itself. And, as for the FSB, the government has yet to finalize the mechanisms for ensuring production, storage and distribution of the vast quantities of grains that would be needed throughout the year for sustaining its provisions. One reason why the opposition as well as critics of the bill itself, feel that the legislation is politically opportunistic and being enacted with an eye on votes in 2014. Yet another opportunity to do real good to the people seems to have been lost. The challenge is really daunting, but the government seems unprepared.

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Circulation of Families under Capitalist Patronage

K. S. Chalam

There are certain traditional practices that do surface even in modern social relations due to their strong internalisation by people. Family as an institution is one of the strongest foundations of Indian society. It is re-emerging in some of our contemporary socio-economic and political organisations. Though we lament for the disregard of the younger generation to family norms and values due to their exposure to Western ways of thinking and practices, it is still surviving in other forms. For instance, most of the marriage advertisements and the innovative business practices introduced by the media clearly show that most of our young people oblige family stance on caste. Even those that wear their ultra-modern attitude on their sleeves verify the sub-caste before dating a colleague in IT hubs. The media is full of allegations and counter-allegations of political families opposing one another in public and united in private.

The definition of Hindu undivided family adopted by the Income Tax Department for purposes of property and income is related to coparceners to fix up the legal share is a complicated description. The common understanding of family as a group of parents and children living together can be taken as a working definition since the meaning keeps on changing with the culture, era and other considerations. It is demanded that individuals and their families attending on a dominant leader should come under the notion of family for political patronage

(after the allegations regarding recent political nominations in Andhra Pradesh). However, we must recognise that the Hindu or Indian character is based on the founding fathers of Varna system. We are of the view that a structure (paradigm) that was designed for a small settlers group has outlived its purpose due to the user-friendly dynamism in it. It appeared to be basically designed for and by the *saptarishis* (seven sages). The Indian family is somehow linked to the traditions of *saptarishis*. Even if the dominant *shudras* and some non-*kshatriyas* became rulers, they were later linked to the *saptarishis* through *gotra*, a bygone purported practice of *dvija* clan(s). It is also mentioned by the law-givers that it shall keep on changing in different *yugas*. Therefore, the original seven *rishis*; Vasista, Bhardwaja, Jamadagni, Gautama, Atri, Viswamitra and Agatsya are the routes of family trees which are given to everyone including the Hindu dalit and *shudras* and they are supposed to follow in their rituals. Therefore, the number conferring this status seems to have increased several folds with the availability of modern gadgets like computer and Internet. One can find one's own *gotra* on the net. Thanks to the Hindu social net.

The PR exercise done by Western experts for Modi brought out a pioneering clue that the British crown has its roots in Gujarat to give a fillip to his stature as a PM candidate. In fact, the West is now looking for its roots in India due

to the enormous hard work done by our IT professionals as part of their leisure time activity under the guidance of shrewd elders. Is it a new consciousness? No, it began during the East India company rule when William Jones declared, looking at the Bengali Bhadrakal at the Asiatic Society lecture (1786), that they were all his long lost kin and blood relations in terms of language, colour and other parameters (see Trautman TR). Therefore, there has always been a family link between the West and the East. Strangely, it is the native Indians who are forced to keep on changing their faith and masters have lost their roots and history. However, some intellectuals are trying to build their links with the West through language and religion and the emerging Dalit capitalists are embracing the West if not converted to their faith already under the same scheme. This is a very interesting dimension of twentyfirst century global capitalism.

Thus, family bond and its preservation is one of the pious duties of every Indian irrespective of his faith in an organised religion due to the traditions of the country where one belongs. As members of a traditional society, Indians value the family. It is also not difficult to maintain it unlike the West where family is an aggregate irrespective of social class (either Malinowski or Morgan-Engels). Indian family is a basic unit for caste solidarity with ritual sanction and family antiquity in terms of *Gotra*. However, there are only few, about 5-10 per cent of

the population who are offered this facility. Therefore, it never created problems and we could find people lavishly sporting family names/titles after their proper names to indicate their ancestry (For instance, only for illustration and not with any ill will, Fernandes, Christ Reddy, Mastan Choudary, etc.). Some of them have emerged as big players with business empires perhaps capitalising on this advantage.

Family name as a status symbol has not been widely used by certain dalit castes, particularly in the recent phenomenon of Pydi, Jangam, Mala, Madiga upsurge in AP, while everyone has started copying Sarma, Varma, Sastry, etc. In North India, one can notice even in institutions like JNU, Vikram Harijan, Ravi Kuswah, Prem Jhatav, Ram Julaha (mostly ascribed to signify the caste and not chosen). There seems to be no relief to some of those who converted to other faiths in search of a different identity as noted above and the caste titles haunt them. In fact, a new dimension of social dynamics is evolving particularly among the caste-based reservation communities, mainly among the scheduled castes. As the number of places reserved in public sector (including education, employment etc) is limited to the proportion of the caste in the total population, it is restricted to a few among them as it is not an open ended affair. Thus one can find that out of 1.7 crore jobs in the public sphere, it is limited to just 27.2 lakhs (at 16 per cent) for SCs. Out of a population of 20 crores of scheduled castes, it is a small fraction of 0.013 or 1.36 per cent. It is not even unguent cream. Naturally there is intense competition among the relevant eligible families only and in terms of numbers, they are under great stress.

A cursory look at the history of the so-called affirmative action after Independence clearly shows that there is a trend of accretion of the benefits by few. Given the present scheme of selection, it is alleged that they are appropriated by few families. This is not a typical phenomenon of reservations alone as the Indian ethos irrespective of the caste is family based. This trend among upper castes has not created tensions since the number is small and open ended with opportunities in a growing private sector. But, the restricted number has set a rat race among the dalits and seems to have been cornered by few families among the reserved castes. But, bulk of the dalits in the rural areas and in urban bastis is untouched by any scheme and is happy with the 'Antyodaya Anna Yojana', NAREGA, etc. that keep them alive and do not motivate them to raise any demands.

It appears that no political party is interested in the affairs or welfare of the dalits today as they, allegedly, are quarrelsome, disunited and susceptible to manipulations. A senior Professor of a big university in Andhra Pradesh confessed to me that how the dalit boys have destroyed the Social Sciences and Humanities where they are now concentrated. He (himself a dalit) was dismayed that instead of strengthening the disciplines and making use of the opportunities, they have vandalised the institutes for short term gains and thoughtless benefits. The trend therefore, seems to be to co-opt or engage someone (family) for a consideration at the time of need and do not engage them on a permanent basis. It is not expensive and can save the vast resources required to involve 'others'. This is found to be universal approach among all

parties, left and right, including their front organisations. Some of them claim that it is not their duty to organise, educate and unite them for movements. There are thousands of civil society organisations that are funded to organise or disunite them. The spirit of family is present even here to satisfy the norm of some representation to dalits. The left and progressive groups are not an exception to the family menace.

The intelligent and wily intellectuals of a particular ideology are now encouraging and theorising that if dalits can capture with globalisation and create 100 billionaires, it is easy to resolve the problems of the community. The "paid intellectuals" have produced reports and dozens of papers including edit page articles with half-truth and fabricated data of Own Account Enterprises of 2005. They cite the information to manufacture a story of favourable impact of globalisation among the weaker sections saying that there are 43 per cent OBC and 9 per cent dalit enterprises today. Interestingly, they have never reported that majority of them do not have own premises, the enterprises include boot polish bunks, vegetable vending and so on. And their total asset value is not equal to one day earnings of some top business houses (for example, in the recent share market boom). Some of them do not know about the history of the artisan guilds, freehold of lands, etc. that were under the jajmani and slowly appropriated by the so-called big business families with the connivance of the company law officials. In other words, the theory seems to be in consonance with the idea of circulation of Hindu families is adequate to make them viable within the system (as is practiced in upper castes where

the number is very few). In fact, the spirit of the dalit activism, it is alleged, had already gone into the family mode, long back. It is strange that those who eulogise dalit capitalists as a solution to the vexed problem have not produced any evidence/indication that the emerging capitalists are called as capitalists without the stigma (or from different backgrounds). Or is the system as in the past created a residual mechanism of 'panchama' in a different garb?

A detailed analysis of the enrolments into higher educational institutions and the job seekers for organised sector jobs for instance, clearly indicate that they are all from particular family backgrounds. Some of them may be comparable in terms of quality, merit and etiquettes with that of the elite. But they are a small fraction of the whole and do not convey the complete story that needs a sound and empathetic indigenous thought like the Lohia-Ambedkarite understanding to comprehend it. There is no significant change in the lives of the poor after globalisation and particularly those who missed the opportunities a few years ago have remained in the rural areas and in the urban bastis stereotyping the past. Is it the devious upper class inspired theory of creation of Dalit billionaires, as a permanent or even a partial solution to the problem?

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Assam's Illegal Immigrant Imbroglia

Nitish Chakravarty

Assam is widely known as a land of peace loving people. The climate and the terrain sustained for generations a laidback style [lahe lahe, literally leisurely leisurely]. So much so that invaders from across the mountains ringing the north-eastern region met with little resistance over the centuries. Ahom conquerors from the Thailand-Burma intersection, who ruled the Brahmaputra valley for 600 years, virtually had a cakewalk. The Ahoms, their kings included, integrated with the indigenous population, and adopted and enriched Assamese culture and literature. Many others who made Assam their home during Ahom rule have also merged in the larger Assamese society.

When the British occupied the Brahmaputra Valley in the 1820s the province was sparsely populated. Manpower to run the administration or commercial/industrial enterprises was scarce. Having established their rule in Bengal decades earlier, British traders turned soldiers and/or administrators had acquired a working knowledge of the Bengali language. No wonder they chose Bengali personnel to man junior positions in the administration they set up, and imposed Bengali as the language of the courts and also as the medium of instruction in schools. Lord Cornwallis' land tenure system - permanent settlement - was extended to parts of lower Assam and the Surma Valley (Sylhet district and adjoining areas).

Thus began an inflow of people from outside, the bulk of them from

Bengal. Hindus from undivided Bengal started arriving in Assam from mid-19th century onwards to take up occupations in teaching, legal practice, medical services, engineering as well as helping hands in commercial enterprises. Marwari businessmen arrived soon to engage themselves in wholesale - occasionally retail as well - trade. British businessmen lorded over the administration and commercial and industrial enterprises such as tea plantations, petroleum production and refining, coal mining, river transportation, railway services, etc. The planters fetched thousands of labourers from central India to run their tea estates. They lived in ghettos without much contact with other people.

The story of migration from undivided Bengal into Assam, which started as a trickle towards the end of the 19th century and turned into a flood in the 1920s and 1930s, has been chronicled extensively. Bengali Muslims - the bulk of them from Mymensingh district in Bangladesh - began trickling into the Brahmaputra Valley towards the end of the 19th century. Most of them were landless people eking out a miserable existence under the tutelage of often oppressive Hindu zamindars. Some landlords of Assam - (known as mauzadars, for the land tenure system in the Brahmaputra Valley, barring the erstwhile Goalpara district, was different from Bengal's) encouraged Bengali cultivators to settle in the fallow or waste land holdings under their control.

Silence over the Emergency

An embarrassing moment for the judiciary

Rajindar Sachar

Any debate on the migration issue leads people to look back at the region's past and recall the forebodings of C. S. Mullen, ICS, who was the Census Superintendent of Assam in 1931, about sweeping demographic changes in the province. "Probably the most important event in the province during the last 25 years - an event, moreover, which seems likely to alter permanently the whole future of Assam and to destroy, more surely than did the Burmese invaders of the 1820s, the whole structure of Assamese culture and civilisation - has been the invasion of a vast horde of land hungry Bengali immigrants", observed Mullen prophetically.

"Whither there is vacant land", wrote the British civilian, "thither flock the Mymensinghians. In fact the way in which they have seized upon the vacant areas in the Assam Valley seems almost uncanny. Without fuss, without tumult, without undue trouble to the district revenue staffs, a population which must amount to over half a million has transplanted itself from Bengal to the Assam Valley during the past twenty-five years. It looks like a marvel of administrative organisation on the part of Government, but it is nothing of the sort; the only thing I can compare it to is the mass movement of a huge body of ants."

Migration received a boost under Sir Syed Muhammad Saadulla, who was a key player in Assam's public life for three decades (1920s-1940s) and served as Premier (as the chief minister was designated those days) three times, the last stint spanning the years until after World War II. To stem the tide of migration and prevent outsiders from trespassing

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Nations which do not remember their tragic past are in danger of repeating the tragedy. This thought came to me on June 26, 2013, (the day the Emergency was declared in 1975) when a random questioning of youth aged up to 35 (who are said to make up about half the population of the country) revealed that an overwhelming number of them did not know any particular significance of the day, and more tragically, a fairly large number of people above the age of 35 fared no better.

The reason was obvious. Most in this hyped age group get their information from newspapers, which having a commercial angle in view, never fail to remind us of the Valentine's Day. But on 26th June, newspapers did not even carry a small news item about the Emergency on an inside page - leave apart on the front page. Even many opposition parties, which were the victims of the Emergency chose to keep a low key. Even though the PUCL and other civil liberties organisations, as usual, held protest meetings, TV channels and newspapers viciously avoided any mention, overwhelmed as they are with the government's neo-liberal policies. Or, is it a sense of fear because the perpetrator of the Emergency is the ruling party - so much for freedom of the Press.

And yet tragically it was the day when India lost its democracy and the US President sarcastically boasted that the US was now the largest democracy. It is a different matter that thankfully, because of the sacrifices made by Indian people under the inspiring leadership of

Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), the boast of the US President was to end, but only after 18 months.

But, the wounds have remained - the danger of it being repeated in the same manner may have been eliminated, yet the government's use of the various security laws against human rights activists and trade unionists continue to haunt us.

A question often asked is: How come the Emergency could happen despite our Constitution giving us all the fundamental rights and democracy being a basic feature of the Constitution as was so refreshingly held in the Kesavananda Bharati case as far back in 1973 by our Supreme Court?

It is not that there was no resistance to the Emergency. Thousands went to jail, including former Central ministers, ex-Chief Ministers, ex-Governors, lawyers, legislators and a few brave journalists. Many human rights activists went underground, but, there was a limit for unarmed people to fight an intolerant and a near fascist State that India had become those days. A total fear had enveloped the country. And all this because the rule of law had completely been eliminated by the Supreme Court ruling in ADM Jabalpur case (April 1976), which overruled the view of nine High Courts that the legality of a detaining order passed by the governments could still be examined - in fact in some cases the High Courts had ordered the release of detainees. Had this view been upheld, the Emergency would have collapsed. But to our shame the Supreme Court

by a majority of four judges against one honourable exception (Khanna H.J.) laid down a proposition of law, which will remain forever a hallmark of shame, thus: "In view of the Presidential Order dated June 27, 1975, no person has any locus standi to move any writ petition under Article 226 before a High Court for habeas corpus or any other writ or order or direction to challenge the legality of an order of detention on the ground that the order is not under or in compliance with the Act or is illegal or is vitiated by mala fides factual or legal or is based on extraneous considerations."

Is it not obvious that the Emergency could not be fought in a legal and democratic manner because the Supreme Court accepted the Attorney General's argument that if a policeman under orders of his superior was to shoot a person or even arrest a Supreme Court judge, it would be legal and no relief available.

Naturally in this situation, no peaceful opposition to the Emergency could continue. I am shocked how the majority decision could rely on *Liversidge vs Anderson* decided during the war time in 1942 by the House of Lords, but with a memorable dissent by Lord Atkin. English courts subsequently felt so ashamed of that decision that a conscious effort was made to throw that decision into a dung heap.

Lord Akin caustically remarked about judges who "show themselves more executive minded than the executive" and commented that such arguments might have been addressed acceptably to the Court of King's Bench in the time of Charles-I. In fact, Justice Stable, a Judge of the High Court of London, was so upset that he was constrained

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Government needs to cut subsidies that benefit the rich

For a nation which accounts for more hungry and poor people than any other in the world, for a country where the number of malnourished children is more than that of 26 countries of sub-Saharan Africa, the need for Food Security law can't be debated. But as with everything else in India, implementation will be the key. Social activist Harsh Mander joined IBNLive readers for an interaction on the pros and cons of the Food Security law.

Q. "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime" Don't you think the Congress party is more interested in "giving" the fish rather than "teaching" how to fish thereby keeping people weak and dependent rather than making them empowered?

A. The idea is not of an either/or. Of course, we have to struggle for lasting solutions to poverty and hunger. But while we sort that out, every second child is still malnourished. Her body and brain are not being formed today. So until we sort these bigger structural issues out, the law places duties on the state to provision food to those who are most food vulnerable and deprived.

Q. While civil supplies is a state subject why is the centre enforcing it as a national Law when states like Tamil Nadu are far ahead of what is being attempted to achieve in states like Bihar? Asked by: sundar1950in

A. The central law will offer a floor of entitlements. The best states

like Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh are free to offer more than this floor.

Q. Punishing the performer seems to be the motive of this ordinance. Tamil Nadu will now have lesser allotment of food from centre is what the Chief Minister says. Is it true? If so why is being done?

A. As I said, Tamil Nadu is free to offer more than the entitlements guaranteed by the state law. For example, if any state wants under MG NREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) to offer more than 100 days with its own resources, who can stop it in a federal structure? But no state can offer less than 100 days. Likewise, for the Food Bill entitlements.

Q. Does the government at center and state levels have machinery to effectively implement this scheme, which is going to cost heavy to exchequer? How can we be sure that this will not lead to another scam and a national disaster?

A. The idea of a legal right to food is to create a legally enforceable duty on the part of states to implement the law. Governments will of course need to gear themselves up to fulfill these legal obligations. We saw this gradual gearing up so as to implement RTE (Right to Education), RTI (Right To Information) and NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act). These are still far from perfect, but it is better than prevailed before legal duties were created. We can expect the same to happen over time with the Food Rights law, incrementally - the only way improvements in governance are accomplished.

Q. Seeing the adulteration done even in non subsidized food, who will make sure that the food content distributed will meet the quality required? The past record by any government is not impressive in this regard.

A. Quality of food is not explicitly covered by the new law, and this is a gap. But it is still covered under grievance redress systems. However we should try for its explicit inclusion when the law is debated.

Q. I am sure these are good ideas even though major portion will go to the wrong hands. Streamline can be done with Adhaar and other identifications in the days to come.

A. Food entitlements will have to couple with stronger transparency and people's monitoring systems, like social audits. This alone can reduce leakages.

Q. What do you think will be impact on labour costs? Will higher labour costs as a result of this law impede growth?

A. I feel better nourished labourer will be more productive, and the economy will benefit as a result.

Q. Food security bill is net result of corruption, this government has done for last five years. It is trying to hide behind this bill and save its face.

A. I will not speculate on the political motives behind the Food law. But I am convinced that in itself the law is historic, because for the first time it creates legal duties enforceable in courts for governments to ensure that none sleep hungry.

Q. Lakhs of crores of rupees if spent on creating jobs could have improved the economy and improved GDP. This would have been a long time solution to the problem of malnutrition?

A. I agree that job creation will help reduce vulnerability to hunger. But the data shows that the period of high economic growth has been one of nearly jobless growth. MG NREGA has been helpful where implemented well. But we must recognise that some vulnerable groups are or should be outside work - like old people and children, the destitute, and pregnant and nursing mothers - and they would need special food transfers.

Q. The law will grant a minimum food to improve the malnutrition in population. But at whose cost?

A. In evaluating the cost, please compare with the cost of hunger and malnutrition, of every second child malnourished, meaning that for half the young workers in the economy, their bodies and brains are not developing to full potential. What are the costs of that? What indeed is the cost of a destitute mother trying to teach her children how to sleep hungry? Please remember that 230 million people sleep hungry every night.

Q. Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen has openly supported the move of Food security. He has no political axe to grind. Why no one from academia in India has stood by Sen?

A. There is wide support from segments of the academia for the Food law, but other segments oppose this. This I think is a healthy and important debate.

Q. Which are the states not providing even a gram of grain to

the BPL population, who will get benefited out of the ordinance?

A. The PDS is functioning to some degree in all states. In near universal states like Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh, the law will not add more numbers, but it may add in some cases to quantity. But in many states, there will be quite an expansion in coverage.

Q. Getting the Ordinance passed shows the weakness of the UPA 2. In spite of opposition from their own allies, supporters rushing this through is worthwhile?

A. I would support a full and deep debate in Parliament before the ordinance gets converted into a law, so as to strengthen the law which has many gaps still.

Q. Sir, who will ensure the proper implementation of the scheme? What about the accountability aspect? Will it be wrong to say that the scheme is being pushed vehemently because of forthcoming elections?

A. I agree that there is too little time before elections for a full roll-out of the law. I agree that the haste today is probably because the elections are looming. I wish it had come much earlier. There are accountability mechanisms in the law, but these are not as strong as in RTI (Right To Information). This is a flaw which I hope is remedied when the law is discussed in Parliament.

Q. Sir, Problem of implementation can be overcome by involving people. Use of IT and internet extensively can check the malaise.

A. Chhattisgarh went in for end to end computerisation in PDS, and this helped greatly enhance

accountability and transparency and reduce corruption. Even more important is regular people's audits, informed review by PDS consumers, parents of children in ICDS and schools, pregnant mothers and so on.

Q. At one side government is saying to cut down the subsidies

and on the other side they are providing subsidies through Food Security Law. Please comment on this.

A. Government does need to cut subsidies which benefit the rich and middle classes. Each budget for instance offers more than 5 lakh

crore rupees tax holidays to the corporate sector. But I think that public spending is necessary for people's basic rights, including food, clean water, sanitation, health care, education and housing. In addition, we need to support the small farmer, who is sadly today among the most food-deprived people in this country.

- Aman Biradari

Revenue foregone is loot of economy

Krishna Swaroop Anandi

The revenue foregone by the government each year in favour of corporate is perpetually sucking Indian economy. It is generally the consolidated figure of the exemptions, rebates or concessions doled out to corporates by the government through its annual budgets. It reveals that if the government collects all the taxes genuinely from the corporate entities, then there would be no fiscal deficit at all. The following is the statement of the revenue gone from the financial year 2008-09 onwards up to 2012-13:

For the financial year 2012-13, the total fiscal deficit of the Central government has been put at Rs. 5,29,925 crore which comes out to be 5.3 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). During the year, the revenue foregone (Corporate income tax + excise duty + customs duty) in favour of companies has been estimated at a whopping total of Rs. 5,28,163 crore. If in this figure the amount Rs. 45,464 crore of the revenue foregone under the head 'personal income tax' is added up, then the total revenue foregone was Rs. 5,73,627 crore. Thus during the financial year 2012-13, the total revenue foregone was somewhat 10 percent higher than the total fiscal

Revenue foregone (in `rupeesa crore)

Head	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Corporate income Tax	66,901	2,44,725	57,912	61,765	68,008
Excise duty	1,28,293	1,02,858	1,92,227	1,95,590	2,06,188
Customs duty	2,25,752	85,847	1,72,740	2,36,852	2,53,967
Revenue foregone in favour of corporates	4,19,946	5,33,430	4,22,879	4,94,207	5,28,163
Total tax collection	6,09,705	6,24,527	7,93,072	8,89,176	10,38,037

deficit of the government of India.

The statistics of the revenue foregone laments the enormous loot of our economy by carports. In the financial year 2012-13, the customs and excise duties foregone actually stood at 146 percent of the tax realised, meaning thereby that for every Rs. 100 tax amount collected, the tax amount sacrificed by the government was thus Rs. 146. For the year 2010-11, the percentage of customs and excise duties foregone was 132. In India, the statutory corporate tax rate is 32.5 percent. It is one of the lowest in the world. It is somewhat 40 percent in the USA, 38 percent in Japan, 35 percent in Argentina, 34 percent in Belgium and Brazil and so on. It is an established fact that corporate entities never pay taxes even at the lower rate of 32.5 percent. Keeping in view the huge tax giveaways, corporates are actually paying taxes at the effective rate of almost 16 percent which is

well below the half of the normal rate of 32.5 percent. If the total tax giveaways are calculated since 2005-2006 till 2012-13, they would come to be Rs. 31.11 lakh crore. Instead of successively reducing the tax giveaways to preferred tax payers, especially to the privileged corporate sector, the government of India has more than doubled the revenue foregone from Rs. 2.35 lakh crore in 2004-05 to Rs. 5.73 lakh crore in 2012-13.

What to talk of scrapping various forms of tax preferences that are net subsidies to corporates in the real sense of the term, the government has announced to dole them out investment allowances from the year 2013-14. Corporates in India are reaping windfalls out of special tax rates, exemptions, rebates, deductions, deferrals, accelerated depreciations, direct concessions and credits.

-(PNN)

Caught in the line of ire

Gopalkrishna Gandhi

Those who remember Shakespeare's Julius Caesar will remember the murder by the Roman mob of Cinna, the poet. As the cortege carrying the slain emperor set out, the infuriated mob sighted Cinna. Mistaking him for Cinna the conspirator, it set upon him. 'I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet', the man shouted to save himself. Shakespeare gives us the responses of 'citizens'. One of these, hearing the poet's screaming self-exculpation, was matter-of-fact: 'It is no matter; his name is Cinna...' Another said, simply, 'Tear him, tear him...' while yet another, not missing out the poetic dimension decided to clothe his murderous intent with a creative subterfuge 'Tear him for his bad verses, tear him for his bad verses'. The charge was changed but the punishment was perpetrated.

The phrase 'mob' is classist, elitist. It conjures the superior air of the much-bathed, well-swathed talking through lavender and talc (or Old Spice and vibhuti) of the 'vast unwashed'. There is an anti-Demos sentiment hidden in the word 'mob', a Patrician dismissal of the Plebian. But as in Caesar's and Mark Antony's and Brutus' Rome, so also in our times we must not forget where 'mob' gets its 'mentality' from. The Great Calcutta Killings of 1946 came after August 16, that year, had been ordained by the Muslim League as 'Direct Action Day'. It was that coolly arrived at decision of a political elite that brought out the worst in both communities. In the

space of 72 hours, 4,000 lay dead on the streets of Calcutta. The slayer and the slain were both victims of the sly.

The pattern has been re-played. Three films have strengthened public memory of how this has happened. *Amu* (2005) directed by Shonali Roy about the 1984 riots in Delhi, *Parzania* (2007) directed by Rahul Dholakia and David Donihue about the 2002 Gulburg Society (Ahmedabad) massacre, and *Nandita Das' Firaq* (2008), on the Gujarat riots are all about manipulation and murder. They are also about how politics can disfigure the political imagination of people.

Mass murders are not the only things that are orchestrated.

Like the 'citizens' in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, people can be turned against particular persons by the merest suggestion. There are many versions about what led to Sheikh Abdullah's dismissal from the office of Prime Minister of Kashmir and arrest in August 1953. Overnight, everything to do with him was suspect, all his associates were under surveillance, most prominently, the intrepid Mridula Sarabhai. Jayaprakash Narayan was pilloried for suggesting talks with Sheikh Sahib and for having the 'temerity' to suggest a measure of autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir. It was only weeks before prime minister's death, in 1964, that he rolled a discredited policy back and ordered Sheikh Abdullah's release "ba-izzat", with the past forgotten,

and the path cleared for his return to power.

The Akali leader Master Tara Singh, the Dravida movement's charismatic leaders EV Ramaswami Naicker and CN Annadurai in Tamil Nadu, Phizo in Nagaland, Laldenga in Mizoram, the youthful leaders of the ULFA are among the better-known politicians who went through a phase of being described as 'secessionist' and 'anti-State', before being seen in the natural light of democratic dissent.

If non-officials and political personalities outside of the architecture of the State (which, in our country, includes the parties in power) as much as consider alternatives to an armed response to Naxalism or what in West Bengal, at least, is simply called 'Maovad', they are served the medicine that was given to JP and to Mridula Sarabhai in the 1960s. In fact, the draught is bitterer, accompanied now by the insinuation that they are spreading anarchy and encouraging manslaughter.

The violence perpetrated by men and women, many of them incredibly young, in the name of Maovad is abominable, politically and civilisationally. It needs to be countered emphatically and not, as minister Jairam Ramesh warned, 'romanticised'. But branding individuals who do not repeat the received 'line' about Maovad as Maovadi is, to use a phrase Amartya Sen coined in another context, "valuationally gross".

‘Maoism’ and ‘Maoist’ are, like ‘Naxalism’ and ‘Naxalite’, generalisations, over-simplifications. Layered attitudes, varied beliefs, differentiated responses nuance their creed, mottle their code, disaggregate their catalogue of heroes and heroines. Their Kauravas and Pandavas are different from what other readers make of Vyasa’s characters. Their gods are not Hastinapura’s elite, nor are their demons forest chieftains. Their minds hold bruised memories, their hands bloodied bayonets. Jayaprakash Narayan would have said: ‘Let us try understanding the mind, heart and language of this India. We do better with disease; fellow-citizens cannot be a disease’. He would have been in the establishment’s line of ire for not speaking from an official script. He would have also been in the Maoists’ line of fire, for not justifying them. He would have been a Cinna with both.

Fortunately for veracity, the India of 2013 is not quite Caesar’s Rome and the collaborator tag cannot be so easily pinned on the poet’s lapel. Aruna Roy, Medha Patkar, BD Sharma, EAS Sarma, Harsh Mander, P Sainath, Jaideep Hardikar may not agree with each other on all matters. Nor would writers like Arundhati Roy and Mahashweta Devi or senior academics like Ramachandra Guha, Amit Bhaduri and Nandini Sundar. Their areas of interest, styles of expression and forms of independent action are distinct and autonomous. But all of them have this in common with Jayaprakash Narayan: they are feared by the powerful for being strong. They are resented by the authoritarian for being democratic. They are rejected by the violent for not endorsing their violence. Above all, they are pilloried by the insecure for being free.

Violence, including Maoist violence is anathema to a liberal political order. But so are illiberal rhetoric, disinformation, calumny.

We do not have to go to political theory class to understand this. It is enough that we take a look at our nation’s recent history.

–*Hindustan Times*

(Continued from Page 7)

into protected areas, the Assam Government enforced Inner Line Regulations in the mid-1930s. Opinion is split on the efficacy of the Inner Line Regulations in protecting the indigenous people from encroachers into their territory. Some people suspect that the line system shielded the immigrants more than it protected the locals. Whatever be the Inner Line’s impact, quite obviously outsiders flocking into Assam is not a post-independence phenomenon. The people of Mymensingh district, now in Bangladesh, formed the bulk of the pre-partition immigrants into Assam. Their numbers were so overwhelming that The Statesman, owned then by British businessmen, once chose “The Mymensingher Invasion” as the title of an editorial on the immigration issue.

The pre-partition immigrants who settled in Assam can by no means be clubbed together with illegal infiltrators who have swarmed into the state since the 1950s and even in the 21st century. The Mymensingh region - the major source of this influx - became a part of a foreign country after independence, giving the issue an international dimension, and reinforcing fears that Assam may one day be gobbled up by Bangladesh. The thrust of the anti-foreigner agitation which swept Assam in the 1980s was directed against these latter infiltrators. Even as the Asom Gana Parishad [many of its leaders majored into politics through the All-Assam Students’

Union (AASU)] climbed to power after the historic Assam Accord of August 14-15, 1985, with the single point agenda of detecting and deporting illegal infiltrators, the goal remains a chimera. They signed the Accord without realising that the specially enacted but toothless Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act [IMDT Act] would stymie their efforts. The AGP ruled the state for two five-year spells [1985-90 and 1995-2000] without making any headway towards its solemn pledge, and has much to explain for its failure.

The Congress has been in power in Assam most of the time since independence. The governments run by it have hummed and hawed over illegal migration but made no serious attempt to grasp the nettle. The illegal infiltrator has usually got the benefit of the doubt. On the all-important issue of safeguarding Assam’s highly porous international borders, the state’s attitude has for long been ambivalent. It has often tended to pass the buck to the Centre even in situations where firm action on its part could have a salutary effect. An authoritative estimate of the number of illegal immigrants has never been made. The Congress Government is dragging its feet even on the issue of preparing a citizens’ register. Suspicion is strong that in the name of secularism, the Congress is shielding the minority community to secure its partisan political interests.

Muslims that ‘minority politics’ left behind

Khalid Anis Ansari

‘Pasmanda’, a Persian term meaning “those who have fallen behind,” refers to Muslims belonging to the shudra (backward) and ati-shudra (Dalit) castes. It was adopted as an oppositional identity to that of the dominant ashraf Muslims (forward castes) in 1998 by the Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz, a group which mainly worked in Bihar. Since then, however, the pasmanda discourse has found resonance elsewhere too.

The dominant perception is that Islam is an egalitarian religion and that Indian Muslims on the whole, especially in the post-Sachar scenario, are a marginalised community. The pasmanda counter-discourse takes issue with both these formulations. In terms of religious interpretation, Masood Falahi’s work *Hindustan mein Zaat Paat aur Musalman* (2006) has convincingly demonstrated how the notion of ‘kufu (rules about possible marriage relations between groups) was read through the lens of caste by the ‘manuwadi’ ulema and how a parallel system of “graded inequality” was put into place in Indian Islam.

As far as the social sphere is concerned, Ali Anwar’s *Masawat ki Jung* (2000) has documented caste-based disenfranchisement of Dalit and backward caste Muslims at the hands of self-styled ashraf leaders in community organizations like madrasas and personal law boards, representative institutions (Parliament and State Assemblies) and departments, ministries and institutions that claim to work for Muslims (minority affairs, Waqf boards. Urdu academies. AMU.

Jamia Millia Islamia etc). The book also underlines stories of humiliation, disrespect and violence on caste grounds that various pasmanda communities have to undergo on a daily basis, at least in northern parts of India.

Thus, pasmanda commentators contest the two key elements of mainstream ‘Muslim’ or ‘minority’ discourse - Islam as an egalitarian religion and Indian Muslims on the whole as an oppressed community. Islam may be normatively egalitarian but actual-existing Islam in Indian conditions is deeply hierarchical. Similarly, all Muslims are not oppressed, or not to the same degree, at any rate:

Muslims are a differentiated community in terms of power, with dominant (ashraf) and subordinated (pasmanda) sections. Consequently, the so-called ‘minority politics’, which has been quite content in raising symbolic and emotional issues so far, is really the politics of dominant caste Muslims that secures their interests at the expense of pasmanda Muslims. Not surprisingly, a recurrent theme in pasmanda narratives is that minority politics has singularly failed to address the bread-and-butter concerns of the pasmanda Muslims, who constitute about 85 per cent of the Indian Muslim population and come primarily from occupational and service biradaris.

The notion of ‘minority’ and ‘majority’ communities in India - read primarily in terms of religious identity - is of modern origin and linked with the emergence and consolidation of a hegemonic secular

nation-state project. In this sense, while ‘secular’ nationalism becomes the locus of legitimate power and violence. Hindu and Islamic nationalisms become the sites of illegitimate power. The seemingly epic battles that are constantly fought within this conceptual framework - around communal riots or ‘Hindu’/ ‘Islamic’ terror more recently in the post-9/11 world - have been instrumental in denying a voice to subordinated caste communities across religions and in securing the interests of ‘secular,’ Hindu or Muslim elites respectively. In this sense, the pasmanda articulation has highlighted the symbiotic nature of majoritarian and minoritarian fundamentalism and has sought to contest the latter from within in order to wage a decisive battle against the former. As Waqar Hawari, a pasmanda activist says: “While Muslim politicians like Imam Bukhari and Syed Shahabuddin add the jodan [starter yoghurt], it is left to the Hindu fundamentalists to prepare the yoghurt of communalism. Both of them are Responsible. We oppose the politics of both Hindu and Muslim fanaticism.”

The structures of social solidarity that pasmanda activists work with are deeply influenced by the entangled relation between faith and ethnicity. The domains of Hindu and Islam are quite complex, with multiple resources and potentialities possible: in various ways they exceed the ‘Brahminism’ and ‘Ashrafism’ that have come to over-determine them over time. On the one hand, the pasmanda Muslims share a widespread feeling of ‘Muslimness’ with the upper-caste Muslims, a

solidarity which is often parochialised by internal, caste and maslak-based (sectarian) contradictions. On the other hand, pasmanda Muslims share an experience of caste-based humiliation and disrespect with subordinated caste Hindus, a solidarity which is equally interpreted by the discourse around religious difference incessantly reproduced by upper caste institutions. Since the express object of the pasmanda movement has been to raise the issue of caste-based exclusion of subordinate caste Muslims, it has stressed on caste-based solidarity across religions. As Ali Anwar, the founder of Pasmada Muslim Mahaz, says:

There is a bond of pain between pasmanda Muslims and the pasmanda sections of other religions. This bond of pain is the supreme bond. That is why we have to shake hands with the pasmanda sections of other religions.

This counter-hegemonic solidarity on caste lines is effectively encapsulated in the pasmanda slogan "Dalit-Pichda ek saman, Hindu ho ya Musalman" (All Dalit-backward castes are alike- whether they be Hindu or Muslim). At the same time, birth-based caste distinctions are sought to be transcended from

the vantage point of an egalitarian faith: "We are not setting the Dalit/ Backward caste Muslims against the so-called ashraf Muslims. Our movement is not directed against them.

Rather, we seek to strengthen and empower our own people, to enable them to speak for themselves and to secure their rights and justice...we welcome well-meaning people of so-called ashraf background...who are concerned about the plight of our people to join us in our struggle." It is in the midst of such complex negotiations the punctuated nature of faith and caste-based solidarities, that the pasmanda emerges as a political factor.

Overall, pasmanda politics has relied on transformative constitutionalism and democratic symbolism to attain its social justice goals - the deepening of existing affirmative action policies, adequate representation of pasmanda Muslims in political parties, state support for cottage and small-scale industries, democratization of religious institutions and interpretative traditions, etc. Obviously, it confronts all the challenges that any counter-hegemonic identity movement faces in its formative

phases: lack of resources and appropriate institutions, cooption of its leaders by state and other dominant ideological apparatuses, lack of relevant movement literature, internal power conflicts, and so on. Also, as Rammanohar Lohia said: "The policy of uplift of downgraded castes and groups is capable of yielding much poison. A first poison may come out of its immediate effects on men's minds: it may speedily antagonise the Dvija without as speedily influencing the Sudras. With his undoubted alertness to developments and his capacity to mislead, the Dvija may succeed in heaping direct and indirect discredit on the practitioners of this policy long before the Sudra wakes up to it."

These are the challenges that the pasmanda activists face while confronting the ashrafiva.-dominated minority politics. However, their struggle for a post-minority politics is on and one hopes it will democratise Indian Islam in the long run by triggering a process of internal reform. The pasmanda critique of the majority-minority or the secular-communal dyad will also contribute to a democratic deepening that will benefit all of India's subaltern communities in the long run.

(Continued from Page 8)

to say that the status of the judiciary had been reduced "to mice squeaking under a chair in the Home office".

In 1963 Lord Radcliff (HL) referred dismissively to the very peculiar case in *Liversidge Vs. Anderson* and said: "It should be confined apparently to a war time context and that it is already clear that the decision was regarded as an aberration".

All this trenchant criticism of the *Liversidge* judgment was available

in various law quarterly reviews since the beginning. Law Quarterly Review (1970) clearly spelled out how embarrassing the decision in *Liversidge* was becoming for the English judiciary.

That is why Lord Diplock (HL) in 1979 was constrained to rule, "For my part, I think the time has come to acknowledge openly that the majority view in *Liversidge vs. Anderson* was expedient and, at that time, wrong and the dissenting judgment right".

And Lord Scarman I caused the final demise by saying that "the ghost of that decision need no longer haunt the law".

Some commentators have ironically described the majority decision in the *Liversidge* case as the court's contribution to the war effort of England. Similarly many in this country are inclined to describe the majority view in the *Jabalpur* case as the Supreme Court's contribution to the continuance of the 1975 Emergency. Had the Supreme Court taken the same view as the nine High

Courts, the Emergency would have collapsed immediately because no court could possibly have upheld the detention of stalwarts and patriots like J.P., Morarji Desai, Raj Narain, George Fernandes, Madhu Limaye and thousands of others on the ground that they were a danger to

the security of the country.

The inevitable result would have been the immediate release of these leaders, leading to an overwhelming Opposition movement which would have swept away the Indira Gandhi government by mid-1976. Alas, how

sometimes the fate of nations can be influenced by the pusillanimity of a few individuals - in this case embarrassingly by the highest judiciary, which it can never live down.

An appeal

Dear friend,

You will be happy to know that the Centre has decided to work for relief and rehabilitation in Uttarakhand. We have set up YMC Uttarakhand Relief Committee.

The priorities that have been identified are:

1. To identify those victims who have not received any aid from the government and help them secure it, and if necessary supplement it.
2. To liaise, co-ordinate and help the official machinery in providing relief and broadcast the rehabilitation measures that the state has announced.
3. To work for employment generation for rehabilitation.
4. To co-ordinate its activities with other agencies or set up a network of voluntary agencies.
5. To identify a model of development which is eco-friendly for the beleaguered state and advocate it.

We have identified a cluster of villages for intensive work and are setting up an office.

The Centre has considerable experience of relief work. In its very early period, it provided relief to the victims of flood in Orissa. It organized a student committee in Mumbai to help the draught affected students of Maharashtra. We provided relief in Raigad when there were flash floods. And, after the cyclone and earthquake, we worked in Kutch. Again after the earthquake in Kashmir, we undertook relief. The floods in Ladakh made us go there. And after the tsunami, in Nagapattinam, we did a lot of relief and rehabilitation work. The same after Koshi floods in Bihar.

In short, we have rich experience and have learnt many lessons.

In Uttarakhand, we have a good unit of the Yusuf Meherally Yuva Biradari and have a large number of workers. The in-charge of our activities (YMC's and YMYB's) is a reputed journalist with contacts in the government as well as different civil society groups. We have set up a soap unit in that state with a view to generating employment.

In this background of our vast experience and the fact that we have some presence in the state, we are sure that YMC can do a lot of good without replicating what others are doing.

This is an appeal to you to send financial assistance for relief and we will also appeal to you to give separately some money to take care of traveling and administrative expenses.

Yours sincerely,
Hareh Shah
Sudhir Gandbhir

You could deposit your contribution in the following accounts.

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**Intelligence services
are not above the law**

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Premature campaigning

S. Viswam

Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi seems to be the only politician in the grip of election fever. While the 2014 Lok Sabha polls are still a few months away, Modi is behaving as if the polls have already been notified and that campaigning is in full swing. He is so busy delivering lectures and interacting with the media outside the state that one sometimes wonders who is minding the store back home in Gandhinagar. On the other hand, the Congress is still in slumber and its leading light Rahul Gandhi continues to display a healthy aversion to electoral politics. For him and his party stalwarts the polls are far and pose no immediate threat to the party's survival in office. This is true, but why then is Shriman Modi in such a great hurry to rush to the booths?

This could be because the Congress refuses to believe that Modi's candidature as the BJP's prime ministerial nominee poses a real challenge to the BJP or the NDA. It could also be because the Congress is waiting for the BJP's formal nomination of Modi. But the fact is that regardless of the BJP's role in this matter, Shri Modi believes that he is in the Lok Sabha

electoral arena, that he is the BJP/NDA's prime ministerial candidate, that the Congress has already lost both the battle and the war, and that he will be India's next prime minister. Nothing else can explain the fact that Shri Modi contrives, we use the word cautiously, to be in the news every day, and for the good (for the BJP) reason that he indulges freely in the vile abuse of the Congress in terms that go beyond clean and dignified politics. And, to such an unacceptable extent that the senior BJP leader Yeshwant Sinha has publicly advised Modi to pipe down and "stop preaching."

Actually, to call Modi's diatribes against the Congress as "preaching" will be doing violence to the word. The nation is used to be at the receiving end of "preaching" from a variety of sources, from the Anna Hazares, Kejriwals, Ramdevs et al on the one side and Mamata-Mayawati-Jayalalitha and Sushmas on the other side. But Modi is not preaching, he is indulging in the lowest form of campaigning, which is to abuse, vilify and stigamatise political opponents in vile terms. We had warned in these columns weeks ago that with the advent of Modi in

national politics the tone of political interaction would decline sharply and dignity and decorum would yield place to abuse and vilification. We are sorry to have been proved right.

Shriman Modi's recent comment that the Congress party hides under the "burqa" of secularism in order to conceal its weaknesses and shortcomings is not only a snide remark against that party. It is in fact a direct hit at the very concept of secularism, painting as it does the term in pejorative colouring, as if secularism is a dirty word. For the non-saffronised, non-Hindutva-obsessed, non-communal sections of Indian society, secularism is the very life blood of cherished Indian traditional values and ethos and a binding factor that keeps diverse elements of the Indian population united and bonded in a noble ideal. To call secularism as a protector of a party that does not even deserve to exist in India, as Modi does, is to drag down a lofty ideal to the street level and abuse it. It does not behove a self-proclaimed Indian Hindu Nationalist Patriot like Modi to vilify a noble concept and deride its value as a factor that unifies India.

The vilification of secularism is part of the strategy to promote the Hindutva values in general and the BJP's "core" issues in particular. The Mandir slogan has already been revived. The revival of the other two is bound to follow closely. Modi's assigned role seems to be to help the BJP and the saffron sections to return to the Sangh Parivar basics. In other words, go fundamentalist all over again, and revive a campaign which Atal Behari Vajpayee helped bury a decade ago.

Expose policy makers to public accountability

K. S. Chalam

The idea of accountability has been made popular by experts ever since the use of corporate mode of governance. This is used as a method of accounting obligations of functionaries of a business organisation and is ensured through different methods. There is a blend of business accounting and democratic participation in the system to ensure that the organisation is accountable to the shareholders or partners. It is basically a book keeping function. The objective of transparency in the decision making is guaranteed through the annual statement of accounts, particularly the Profit and Loss account, submitted to the general body (along with other financial statements). This is considered as one of the criteria for the use of the concept of accountability in public affairs including public enterprises.

The development of public enterprises both as a part of the system of mixed economy and also as a mechanism of democratic socialism has played an important role during the twentieth century. India (Nehru) along with several other countries particularly the so-called non-aligned socialist block used public enterprises to build their economies. What is deficient in the whole process seemed to be the absence of the application of democratic instruments of governance. The core of elections, voting, referendum, counter proposals, minority veto, plebiscite,

etc are totally missing in the instruments of public accountability introduced by business experts and their civil servant disciples.

Public accountability has been reduced to that of business accounting in the form of reports presented to the general body of the enterprise including the nominated and appointed directors of government. It is also obligatory on the part of the enterprise to present an annual report to the Parliament/Assembly and a proviso to raise questions and debates in the legislature. It is likely that details about the functioning of the enterprise are elicited and such procedure is construed as public accountability. There are several flaws in this method. In fact scholars have provided alternative concepts like external productivity, cost effectiveness, social cost benefit ratio, etc. that are used to substantiate the usefulness of a project to the society. Further, social responsibility and constitutional obligation seem to be more relevant and are within the concept of bounded rationality. Are the concepts really used to account for the activities of all the functionaries in government?

Most of the decisions in the government are either taken or vetted by officers. The accountability of a government servant is ensured through two sets of service rules known as conduct

rules and civil services classification, control and appeal rules. There are separate rules for All India Service officers like IAS and IPS and Code of Ethics is not yet prescribed. The rules ensure that the term of office of the incumbent is protected under Article 311 of the Constitution and at the same time the work is extracted as per norms and conditions of service. This is a requisite service condition for a clerk as well as a Cabinet Secretary. The method of assessing the work or making them accountable is done through vertical (outside the state apparatus) and horizontal (within the state). The vertical forms of accountability are of very recent origin, after the advent of RTI, media, citizen's committees and civil society activism and they are slowly picking up in India. The internal accountability is ensured through entries in the ACRs (1-10 grading) as well as Vigilance/CBI report, Performance Management System, disciplinary proceedings, comments of the judiciary and CAG, etc.

We should recognise that the most significant job of a civil servant is formulating and or assisting in the design of public policies. Therefore, in democratic countries like the UK, Civil Services' values are given importance. The civil servants are accountable to Ministers, who in turn are accountable to Parliament. Therefore, the values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality together with political neutrality and anonymity are said to be the hallmark of efficient civil service. But, the Sixth Pay Commission in India has remarked that the "the institutional structures of top down management and

isolated managerial efforts have proved inadequate for satisfying performance ie; delivery of results and outcomes. There is over-reliance on Command models of administrative efforts for service delivery. .. The importance of a systems' shift from top down monitoring to stakeholder-citizen participation and co-production with transparency and checks is critical for better public service delivery". The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (SARC) has recommended a Civil Services Code and Ethics in Governance for ensuing accountability. It is however alleged that most of the above are observed in its breach than in execution and the allegation seems to be supported by the increasing number of cases of disciplinary proceedings against officers by UPSC, CVC, etc. The legislators are accountable to people in theory, at the time of elections. Interestingly, the judiciary is not accountable to anyone except their conscience as of now till the pending Bills are cleared .Is it not ludicrous in a democratic country?

The Sixth Pay Commission and SARC have recommended for lateral entry of officers at the level of Joint-secretary and above to be recruited through UPSC. It seems the rules are framed to implement the recommendations soon. This is the time to reflect on an important set of functionaries in the government who are above any accountability; public or private. They are the policy makers and advisors in the form of adjuncts to the Ministers, PMO, Planning Commission (not officers) and other non-descript organisations. They

prescribe many things like Crude oil price, Coal price, privatisation, PPP, etc. They are not amenable to any of the instruments of accountability and disciplinary proceedings noted above. In fact the tyranny of some of the policy makers is so depraved that most of the controversies in recent times could be ascribed to some of their policy advice and execution. Some of them are not direct recruits and very few are from the mainstream civil service (post-retirement). They enjoy absolute freedom necessary in a democratic society but are not accountable directly to legislature or any democratic agency. The academics that earn and live in the West and advice on Indian affairs are also beyond the quagmire as they are the neo-dvijas (with two lives). This is typical of Indian system of governance evolved during the post-1991 period.

Most of the policy packages are deliberated and are supposed to be processed as per the Business Rules approved in accordance with Articles 77 and 78 of the Constitution. It is strange to note that most of the policy makers are not aware of the constitutional provisions and even if they know, have contempt for it. We don't find the kind of confession expressed by scholars like Samuelson (Nobel Economist) who said that, "masters of financial engineering had been created a lot of them at MIT, some of them by people like me - there is no CEO who understands at all, a derivative". On the other hand, we come across persuasive arguments and academic publications for instance, to further liberalise markets in India when the country is in deep crisis. What does it mean? Is it irresponsibility or unethical quiddity?

Army still dominates Pakistan

Kuldip Nayar

It is an open secret that the army in Pakistan is a peg or two higher than the civilian apparatus. But I saw chinks in its armoury when a commission report was leaked. That the Inter Intelligence Service (ISI) could be “a collaborator” in hiding Osama-bin Laden, the Taliban’s inspiration, was an insinuation which I thought the army would not pocket without demur. But that happened.

I was, however, reading too much into the leakage. Within a few days, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif went to the ISI headquarters, along with his Interior Minister, where Army Chief Parvez Kayani was present. It was officially stated that the discussion was on Afghanistan and the conditions obtaining in Pakistan.

This only confirms that there is nothing to substantiate that the army has confined itself to the defence of the country. In fact, the pre-eminence of the army chief was emphasized when his car and his entourage were allowed first and then Nawaz Sharif’s at the ceremony where he took the oath of office for prime ministership.

The case of treason against former military chief Parvez Musharraf to assess the reaction is crucial. That he has been given comfortable house arrest and not kept in jail itself shows the difference meted out to persons charged with a heinous crime. The police refused to register a case against him despite the court order. It sounds credible that Musharraf has

been assured that no harm would come to him and charges against him would be dropped if he were to leave Pakistan on the promise not to return. So far he has preferred to face the trial which is punishable with death penalty or life imprisonment.

My suspicion is that he must have sounded the army before coming to Pakistan and would have got an assurance that he would not be sent to jail or punished otherwise. Therefore, how the army takes the verdict, if there is even a verdict, if and when Musharraf is held guilty will tell how far democracy has taken roots in Pakistan.

I am no expert on Islamic affairs. But I am told by my Muslim friends that Islam does not entertain democracy. I would like to tell my friends that the arbiter is the ballot box. The Arab spring, which has startled the world, was popular resentment against the rulers. A stable, peaceful democratic polity takes long to emerge. The Arab spring, although dominated by the fundamentalists, has embers of revolt still burning.

Another undemocratic thing in the making is the assertion of identities. Not only Muslims but the Hindus in India and Christians in Europe are violating the democratic norms to pronounce their identity. I am aghast to find hijab-wearing women and men sporting beard at the Aligarh Muslim University and the liberal Jamia Millia in Delhi, to the delight of extremist Hindus. The BJP, the mouthpiece of the RSS, is

increasingly adopting Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi who is pushing the thesis of Hindutva. In his interview to a foreign agency, Modi had compared the victims of Gujarat riots in 2002 riots to puppies that came under the car driven by him or someone else.

Modi and the BJP are pushing into the background the tradition of togetherness. On the other hand, more and more Christians are flocking to churches where the poisonous lectures are often delivered from the pulpit. I am told by some Muslims friends that in the atmosphere of globalization, the identity factor comes to the fore to save a community. But it has little to do with the religion. I do not think that the defence is correct. The case for identity is born out of religious and parochial leanings.

Pakistan, no doubt a Muslim state, was secular in its initial years. The country’s founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah said in his first speech after the formation of Pakistan was that religion would not be mixed with the state or politics. But that is all forgotten. Today even Shias in Pakistan are sought to be declared non-Muslims. Not long ago, the Ahmediyas were officially pronounced as non-Muslims. Even their mosques have been attacked.

The only plus point Musharraf has is his belated assault on the extremists. The attack on Lal Masjid, although it proved to be his undoing, was meant to tell the extremists that he would not tolerate

fundamentalism within the state. The confrontation by the army with the Taliban in Waziristan was also Musharraf's doing. Alas, he trampled upon the democratic institutions, including the judiciary. He also attacked the Bugti tribe chief because of his personal vendetta. Still he initiated action against the Taliban who, despite his action, are today stronger than before and can strike at any place in Pakistan at any time.

This is a big challenge for Nawaz Sharif. He has extremists in his ranks and most of them are Taliban in their thinking. Otherwise it is difficult to understand why he has contributed Rs. 30 crore to the coffers of Jammat-e-Dawa? The biggest challenge in the region for him will be when the American and European forces withdraw from Afghanistan next year.

India faces a big danger. All its work like building hospitals and schools in Afghanistan will be destroyed by the Taliban. I wish Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai's armed forces had the strength to confront the Taliban. Strange, New Delhi has never considered Islamabad's proposal to fight the Taliban jointly or at least share the intelligence on them. India has not given even non-lethal weapons to Afghanistan for use in its fight against the Taliban.

Karzai is justified in his vehement attack on America which has begun talks with the Taliban. But then America has hardly ever been bothered beyond what it considered to be in its self-interest. New Delhi has to evolve a policy in consultation with Pakistan and Afghanistan. This should be the priority to fight against the Taliban. Unfortunately, the

Taliban have penetrated into the army and have a strong base. Too

bad that Islamabad's action will be decided by the army headquarters.

Abbottabad Commission

On the night of May 1, 2011, US special forces launched a raid deep into Pakistani territory to capture or kill al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden. On President Barack Obama's orders, US soldiers flew via helicopter to the Pakistani army garrison town of Abbottabad, where their intelligence indicated he was hiding out. In the process of raiding the compound, Bin Laden and four others were killed. Several people were wounded.

Following the operation, which was deliberately conducted without the knowledge of the Pakistani government or its military, a Commission was set up in Pakistan to examine "how the US was able to execute a hostile military mission, which lasted around three hours, deep inside Pakistan", and how Pakistan's "intelligence establishment apparently had no idea that an international fugitive of the renown or notoriety of [Osama bin Laden] was residing in [Abbottabad]".

For the first time, Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit is bringing the results of the investigation to the public.

The Abbottabad Commission was charged with establishing whether the failures of the Pakistani government and military were due to incompetence - or complicity. It was given overarching investigative powers, and, in the course of its inquiry, interviewed more than 201 witnesses - including members of Bin Laden's own family, the chief

of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, and other senior provincial, federal and military officials.

The Commission's 336-page report is scathing, holding both the government and the military responsible for "gross incompetence", leading to "collective failures" that allowed Bin Laden to escape detection, and the United States to perpetrate "an act of war".

It also notes that the government's intention in conducting the inquiry was likely aimed at "regime continuance, when the regime is desperate to distance itself from any responsibility for the national disaster that occurred on its watch". It says that the inquiry was likely "a reluctant response to an overwhelming public and parliamentary demand".

The Abbottabad Commission found that there had been a complete collapse of governance and law enforcement - a situation it termed "Government Implosion Syndrome", both in the lack of intelligence on Bin Laden's nine-year residence in Pakistan, and in the response to the US raid that killed him. It finds that "culpable negligence and incompetence at almost all levels of government can more or less be conclusively established". On the presence of a CIA network in Pakistan tracking down Bin Laden, without the Pakistani establishment's knowledge, the Commission finds

“this [was] a case of nothing less than a collective and sustained dereliction of duty by the political, military and intelligence leadership of the country”. It also states that the US violation of Pakistani sovereignty, in carrying out the raid unilaterally, had been allowed to happen due to inaccurate and outdated threat assessments within the country’s defence and strategic policy establishments. “It is official or unofficial defence policy not to attempt to defend the country if threatened, or even attacked by a military superpower like the US?” the Commission asks of several top military officers. “From a Pakistani strategic doctrine point of view,” the report notes, while issuing findings on how the military had wholly focused its “peacetime deployment” of defence capabilities on the border with India, “the world stood still for almost a decade.” Finally, through testimony from Bin Laden’s family and intelligence officials, it provides a fascinating, and richly detailed, account of Bin Laden’s time in Pakistan: his movements, his habits and his pattern of life. In concluding its report, the Commission finds that the country’s “political, military intelligence and bureaucratic leadership cannot be absolved of their responsibility for the state of governance, policy planning and policy implementation that eventually rendered this national failure almost inevitable”, and calls on the country’s leadership to formally apologise to the people of Pakistan for “their dereliction of duty”. Perhaps aware of the implications of its findings, the Commission notes that it had “apprehensions that the Commission’s report would be ignored, or even suppressed”, and urged the government to release it to the public. It did not do so. The

report was buried by the government and never made public. Until now. Al Jazeera has obtained a copy of the Commission’s report.

Page 197 of the report, which contains part of the testimony of Lt-Gen Ahmed Shuja Pasha, then director of the ISI, was missing from all copies of the report that Al

Jazeera obtained from multiple sources. It is unclear what was contained on that page, but the contextual implication is that, among other things, it contains a list of seven demands made by the United States of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

—Al Jazeera

Blood Telegram

“With the conviction that US policy related to recent developments in East Pakistan serves neither our moral interests broadly defined nor our national interests narrowly defined, numerous officers of AmConGen Dacca, USAID Dacca and USIS Dacca consider it their duty to register strong dissent with fundamental aspects of this policy.”

That’s from the first paragraph of the amazing diplomatic cable known as the Blood Telegram. Sent from Dhaka to Washington on April 6, 1971, by US consul general Archer Kent Blood, it expressed precisely what neither National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger nor President Richard Nixon wanted to hear. Signed by 20 US officials in Dhaka, it was a reaction to Operation Searchlight, the Pakistani military crackdown to suppress nationalist sentiment in the east, which had started with the “selective genocide” of progressive intellectuals and students in Dhaka. A fine example of independence in diplomacy, the cable denounced the “moral bankruptcy” of US foreign policy, which remained indifferent to atrocities that even the reliably atrocious USSR was volubly protesting. Washington’s silence was doubly ironical because Sheikh

Mujib, whose people bore the brunt of the violence, was a pro-West reformist.

In *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide* (Alfred A. Knopf), due out in September, Princeton teacher and former Economist reporter Gary J Bass revisits those strange days when, in the polarising shadow of Kissinger’s détente, the US Department of State became peculiarly blind to realities in South Asia, tactical, rational and moral. That vision disorder was to persist until terrorist attacks brought catastrophic violence home to the Western powers. For decades, it coloured politics in our region.

Bass writes that the genocide in East Pakistan signalled an unusual failure of US foreign policy, more vile than errors of omission like Roosevelt failing to limit the Holocaust during World War II, or Bill Clinton’s desultory approach to Rwanda. Here, “the US was allied with the killers. The White House was actively and knowingly supporting a murderous regime [Yahya’s government in Islamabad]... There was no question about whether the US should

(Continued on Page 10)

Sharmila Rege

(7-10-1964 – 13-7-2013)

Vibhuti Patel

I am indeed shocked to learn about the sad and untimely death of Sharmila due to cancer of colon at the young age of 49. She was not only a good scholar but also a refined human being and *ajatshatu* (individual without personal enemies). Prof. Sharmila Rege was an Indian sociologist, feminist scholar and widely discussed author. She was a leader of the Kranti Jyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre (KJSPWSC) at University of Pune who fought for her ideological commitment for the excluded and brutalized sections of society.

I was amazed when Prof. Sharmila Rege, Head of Department of Sociology, decided to join as Director and Reader, Centre for Women's Studies. In a hierarchical institution such as university, a scholar established in the mainstream discipline switching for 'lower' position without batting an eyelid showed her commitment towards women's studies in 2007. Under her leadership, KJSPWSC became an intellectually vibrant centre providing platform to academicians, retired scholars, free lance researchers, social activists and feminists. I had opportunity to meet Sharmila for 10 years continuously, from 1996 to 2006 when I was invited by her centre for four lectures in a day on gender budgeting, globalisation, sex selection and declining sex ratio and sexual harassment at workplace for Refreshers Courses/Certificate course in Women's studies. I was impressed by atmosphere of nurturance, voluntarism and

cooperation created by Sharmila even in the midst of tremendous financial crunch experienced by the centre in that period.

Sharmila as a social activist, feminist scholar and social analyst single-mindedly challenged the Brahminical patriarchy from 'Dalit Standpoint'. In 2008, her inspiring and insightful Savitribai Phule Oration on 'Education as Trutiya Ratna: Towards Phule-Ambedkarite Feminist Pedagogical Practice' sponsored by NCERT in a jam packed hall at SNDT Women's University, Mumbai was mind-blowing. The audience, whether agreed with her or not, listened to her with rapt attention and many of them gave her standing ovation.

She could convincingly explain women's predicament determined by complex interplay of class, caste, religion and sexuality with the help of historical evidences, contemporary concerns of dalit-tribal-minority women and queer community. Sharmila practiced what she preached within the academia and from the political platforms. She fought for the right of the Dalit students in her university. She legitimized crucial contribution of Babasaheb in examining Indian civilization from the point of view of the oppressed and exploited sections i.e. *shudra* and *ati-shudra*. She brought to the fore knowledge of the 'subjugated' and challenged the dominant Brahminical discourse.

She left a lasting impression on any one who met her. She had a huge

fan following among post-graduate, M. Phil. and Ph. D. students. How can anyone forget courteous, mild mannered and soft spoken Sharmila who was patient with her students, who gave quality time to her non-English speaking students, who with great perseverance brought out important works of women's studies in Marathi in collaboration with her colleagues - Prof. Vidyut Bhagwat, Dr. Anagha Tambe, Dr. Swati Dehadroy and Dr. Sneha Gole. Their commitment and strategic thinking for KJSPWSC put their centre on a national map. Every year we displayed their yellow poster announcing the MA and certificate course in women's studies. No one would remove the poster due to Savitribai's photograph on it. The KJSPWSC team played crucial role in Indian Association of Women's Studies and edited its newsletter during the millennium years.

Her concerns were encapsulated in the quotation from Dr Ambedkar that invariably accompanied her emails: "*My final words of advice to you are educate, agitate and organize; have faith in yourself. With justice on our side, I do not see how we can lose our battle.*"

Sharmila's book, *Writing Caste, Writing Gender: Reading Dalit Women's Testimonies* published by Zubaan, Delhi in 2006 had a massive ripple effect among sociologists, political scientists, women's studies and Dalit studies scholars. Sharmila received the Malcolm Adiseshiah award from Prof. Padmini Swaminathan, Director of Madras

Institute of Development Studies, Chennai on 21-11-2006 for “sharpening the perspective on caste and gender by examining the differences and the connections of power that existed between women while also recognising what connected them as women.”

Sharmila Rege’s articles, ‘More than Just Tacking Women on to the ‘Macropicture’, Review of Women’s Studies, EPW, Vol - XXXVIII No.

43, October 25, 2003; ‘Real Feminism’ and Dalit Women’, EPW, Vol - XXXV No. 06, February 05, 2000; ‘Dalit Women Talk Differently-A Critique of Difference and Towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint Position’, Special Issue, EPW, Vol. XXXIII No. 44, October 31, 1998 and ‘Writing Caste, Writing Gender: Reading Dalit Women’s Testimonies’ must be translated in all regional languages of India.

Sharmila, an extremely popular teacher and warm fellow traveler in the women’s studies movement will be there always with us through her writings on caste, gender and feminism and compassion she has shown for activists and researchers. Sharmila fighting the colon cancer passed away within a month of it being detected. Her brutal death has given a major blow to the women’s studies and dalit studies movements.

A death, ghastly and needless

The stench of death enveloped the heart of Lutyens Delhi on Sunday evening. Three manual scavengers died inside a sewer at the prestigious Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts. It was not just asphyxia from inhaling poisonous gases after entering a manhole that ended their lives. Their deaths were caused by the state. To be more precise, the utter, and contemptuous, failure of the state and central government to heed High Court (HC) and Supreme Court (SC) orders and its own laws outlawing the inhuman practice.

In July 2011, an SC bench directed governments to provide safety gear including gas masks to people who enter manholes. Before that, in November 2008, the Madras HC banned sewage manhole and septic-tank cleaning. The Delhi and Gujarat HCs too advocated the safety of sanitary workers. In 1993, Parliament passed the Employment of Manual Scavengers Act outlawing manual scavenging. But this toothless Act left out modern practices like entering manholes. In February 2013, the Delhi government banned manual scavenging.

How are people dying despite such bans and acts? Since February 2011, at least 25 men died in sewer lines in Tamil Nadu alone. Sunday’s deaths in Delhi would indicate that hundreds of manual scavengers, traditionally Valmiki dalits, have perished across India in the same period. Deaths from illnesses and infections do not even count but would probably be in the thousands. Laws divorced from contemporary reality are bound to fail. But this lesson continues unheeded in a new draft legislation the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment has now tabled.

Despite flaws, the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Bill is better than its 1993 avatar. Investment in science and technology to plug failures in urban sewage management, and thereby end manual scavenging, failed to attract the committee’s attention. But to improve it Parliament has to first meet, and then find time to discuss, lest we are burdened with another toothless law.

When non-degradable solid wastes from homes, offices and

roads find their way into a sewer and block them, it is to manual scavengers that cities turn to, again and again, to ensure that modern life can proceed without obstruction. We the people are thus equally at fault when a man has to descend into a sewer through a manhole. With the government let us all hold our heads down in shame. But let us also act and give them a break. A better life.

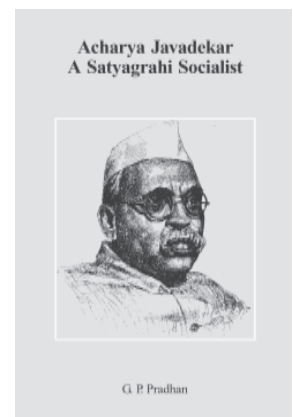
—dna

Acharya Javadekar

A Satyagrahi Socialist

by

G. P. Pradhan



Intelligence services are not above the law

Much has been said recently about national interest requiring turning a blind eye towards the extra-judicial killings of Indian citizens allegedly with the connivance of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and its uniformed police accomplices. To hear some commentators, all that stands between India and imminent destruction is the capacity of an unaccountable body to Parliament to execute whomever, wherever, and whenever they like. Stripped of the immunity to murder at whim, the IB would be allegedly forced to fight suspected terrorists with both hands tied behind its back. Or would it?

No nation can be expected to stand by while the lives of its citizens are threatened. The doctrine of self-defence permits the use of lethal force in such circumstances. But it is not an unequivocal doctrine. Self-defence is qualified by consideration of the imminence of the threat and the proportionality of the response.

In an era of unpredictable threats, what qualifies as imminent and proportional will inevitably be stretched. But must it be stretched to cover the extra-judicial execution of four suspects who were apparently in illegal custody and could not possibly pose a threat to security in their custodial condition?

In any civilized society, who does and does not have the power to kill is carefully regulated to protect its own citizens from arbitrariness and abuse. Such societies intentionally place a firewall between those organizations that are permitted to act clandestinely, and those

empowered to use lethal force on that society's citizens. The reason for this is self-evident. The permission to use lethal force is an extraordinary power which automatically infringes the most basic constitutional rights of all to their own life, except according to procedure established by law. Granting this extraordinary power to clandestine organizations in the form of blanket immunity from prosecution for crimes committed domestically destroys our most fundamental right and leaves us all less secure.

And for what? So the IB and its police cohorts reportedly can take four illegally held young people out and shoot them at point blank range? What good does this do?

We don't even know whether or not Ishrat Jehan really was allegedly a terrorist. In fact, we'll probably never know for sure. Why? Because the so called custodians of the law killed, rather than having arrested her got her to stand trial. This fact alone should raise deep suspicions about the usefulness of alleged extrajudicial killings by the IB and its police cohorts. Trials are one of the best means we have for ascertaining truth. Not shadowy or uniformed lynch gang killings which short-circuit the judicial process and leave us with nothing but corpses, questions, and the gnawing fear that our own freedoms are melting away.

Granting the IB blanket immunity against prosecution would also make them an anomaly among intelligence services in the democratic world. No other intelligence service claims an

uninhibited right to execute its country's citizens.

MI-6, Britain's secret intelligence service, is given immunity for crimes committed outside of Great Britain if authorized by the Secretary of State. They are not, however, immune from crimes committed within the United Kingdom and what immunity they do enjoy is conditional on the Secretary of State, one of Britain's mostly highly placed executive officials.

MI-5, Britain's domestic intelligence service, is also not immune from criminal investigation and prosecution. British Metropolitan Police investigated whether MI-5 was complicit in the torture of a British resident held in Guantanamo Bay.

In addition, both MI-5 and MI-6 are under the constant scrutiny of the Independent Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee which has the power to demand documents and initiate investigations.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States is currently engaged in targeted killings using drone strikes around the world which have included, in four instances, its own citizens. This has sparked a great deal of debate in the country and culminated in the current efforts of two US Senators to introduce legislation that makes it clear that the US Government may not kill a US citizen on US soil if that citizen does not pose an imminent threat of death or grievous bodily harm. In response to this, the US government is now

moving the drone program from the hand of the CIA to the department of defence.

However, even the director of the CIA never claimed an unqualified right to use lethal force. John Brennan, supported by the Department of Justice, specified that such killings are only permissible in circumstances where there is an imminent threat of violent attack and capture is impossible. This account very much differs from the circumstances which led to the summary execution of Ishrat Jehan.

Moreover, on the specific question of the CIA killing American citizens on American soil who posed no imminent threat, the Attorney General, Eric Holder, gave an unequivocal no. If the CIA was to engage in such actions, they would be subject to the full force of the law of the United States.

Even our own Supreme Court has come down extremely hard on the use of encounter killings by police. In the Court's decision to deny bail to police officers in Prakash Kadam vs. Ramprasad Vishwanath Gupta & Anr, it likened an officer's agreement to carry out a fake encounter to the Nazi complicity in war crimes. The court is unequivocal that encounter killings are murder. As they state, "The 'encounter' philosophy is a criminal philosophy... Trigger happy policemen who think they can kill people in the name of 'encounter' and get away with it should know that the gallows await them." If this is the case for police officers, ostensibly granted a monopoly on force in our country, how much more so should it be for an intelligence

agency with no legislative right to force at all?

Invoking the high principles of the constitution and the rules regarding intelligence services around the globe ought to compel most Indians to realize the follies of granting the IB blanket immunity. But there will still be a chorus crying out 'But what about the consequences?'

Well, what about them? We have a police force for carrying out arrests and a military for extraordinary circumstances. We have a legislature capable of changing the law to respond to emergencies and one of the finest judiciaries in the world. Why do we want to create a clandestine hit squad agency operating above and in contradiction to all our laws?

(Continued from Page 6)

intervene; it was already intervening on behalf of a military dictatorship decimating its own people. This stands as one of the worst moments

If we want to speak of consequences, consider the fact that of the IB's 26 directors, only 5 are reportedly dedicated to working on terrorism. Most focus on political intelligence. If the IB or any other police agency is given a blanket immunity to execute whomever they wish, how long will it be until they will be tempted to use it on political opponents?

At the end of the day we must ask ourselves, 'who should hold the power of life and death?' Should it be an unaccountable body of spooks in whom we blindly place our faith? Or as Juvenal put it in the first century AD, "*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*" "Who watches the watchmen?"

-Human Rights Features

of moral blindness in US foreign policy."

-Pratik Kanjilal, Indian Express

Egypt

In 2011, the military withdrew its support from Hosni Mubarak after having sustained him in power for three decades. In July 2013, the military staged a premeditated coup d'etat; in February 2011 it merely delivered a coup de grace. In 2011, the military was ending its own reign, which had lasted for nearly six decades; in 2013, it re-established it. The Mubarak government was never elected. It was effectively a military government. It inherited power from the unelected government of Anwar Sadat in 1981, which in turn inherited

power from the government of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970, which came to power in a military coup in 1952. Mubarak, Sadat, and Nasser were all military officers. They ruled by virtue of their control over the armed forces and the secret police, not authority gained at the ballot box. The military's cessation of support for Mubarak in February 2011 commenced the military's withdrawal from power, not its seizure of power. On July 3, 2013, the military took power back.

-M. Steven Fish

An appeal to remedy elitist lobbyism against the Rule of Law

Respected Rashtrapatiji,

I am a former DGP of Gujarat State and I retired from service on 28-02-2007. I have submitted a lot of evidence (9 Affidavits – 663 pages and other documents) to judicial bodies probing into 2002 anti-minority riots, on the genesis, course and aftermath of communal violence in Gujarat, subversion of Criminal Justice System (CJS) to deny, delay and derail justice delivery to riot victim survivors and fake encounters by Gujarat Police. Now I am engaged in assisting the riot affected and NGOs, as an Advocate, fighting for justice.

2/- Recent investigation by CBI into extra judicial killings of Ishrat Jahan and 3 others, had reportedly brought out substantial evidence on the culpable guilt of a few Central IB officials, in planning and execution of this fake encounter, by teaming up with Gujarat police.

The Sangh Parivar, Modi Government, self-appointed supporters and resource persons of IB have, of late, launched a vigorous campaign to get the accused IB officials immunized from arrest and prosecution. Media reported various grounds advanced by these saviors of IB to pressurize and cajole the Union Executive – The Prime Minister and MHA– for restraining CBI from performing its duty of investigating Ishrat Jahan case, as per the stipulations of the Criminal Procedure Code (CRPC), without fear or favor. Reports also indicate that MHA officials had summoned the CBI Director and asked him to take care of sensibilities of IB in this matter.

3/- A few former Directors of CBI, IB and Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Shri ESL Narasimhan (former IB Director) had argued that arrest of IB officials, irrespective of availability of sufficient evidence against them, could jeopardize IB operations for internal security, besides affecting morale of IB personnel. They emphatically asserted that “the Government should have filed an Affidavit in the Apex Court stating that IB should not have been dragged into the matter”. The thrust of this argument is against the foundational principals of the Constitution of India, the canons of the Rule of Law and inviolable universal human rights and does amount to insulate IB functionaries from the discipline of legality, even though IB functions without any legal empowerment through enacted law.

4/- In the legal perspective, if any functionary from political and administrative bureaucracy of the Union Executive – The Prime Minister to Union Home Secretary – being pressurized by protagonists of IB, does influence or instruct the CBI to take a particular direction in Ishrat Jahan case investigation, bypassing the truth and substantial evidence emerging in the investigation, they would be liable for an offence under section 186 IPC “Obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions”. The Central Government, being part of the Executive has only administrative authority over CBI and investigation of cases by CBI is done on behalf and under the direction of relevant judicial authorities. As per section 36 of CRPC, only hierarchically superior

police officers of the Investigating Officer (IO), viz. SHO has authority to supervise investigations.

5/- Let us hope that nobody from the Central Govt. will venture to do the misadventure of intervening and meddling with the CBI investigation in Ishrat Jahan encounter case. Moreover, on the basis of evidence or reasonable suspicion or reliable information, or on a petition u/s 319 CRPC, if Court brings IB officials under the clutches of law, the authorities who influenced CBI investigation would be put in an indefensible situation.

6/- The argument that arrest of IB officials would demoralize IB personnel and damage IB operations sounds like tail (IB) wagging the head (Government) and IB leadership indulging in soft blackmailing of its bosses. IB’s charter is for collection of information, through human and material resources, on threat to internal security of India and any operation with this objective is acceptable and laudatory. In the case of the premeditated murder of Ishrat Jahan and four others and Sadik Jamal, in a different encounter, a few IB officials, particularly a Joint Director, in-charge of Gujarat State (posted in Ahmedabad from 2001 – 2005) and his staff, had gone beyond their call of duty and became abettors and collaborators, with a mafia of Gujarat police officers, for carrying out the hidden agenda of Modi Govt. to eliminate Muslim youth for enhancing the image of the CM Narendra Modi.

7/- These extra judicial killings were carried out by a selected group

of Gujarat police officers (most of them are in jail since 2007 – four IPS officers – for their guilt in multiple fake encounters), who had direct extra hierarchical constant accessibility to the CM Narendra Modi and Minister Amit Shah, (arrested for the murder of Sohrabuddin Sheikh and released on bail). It is relevant to note that Joint Director IB, Ahmedabad who succeeded the controversial Joint Director, Rajendra Kumar, is not facing any allegation for involvement in any such crimes, though the “encounter specialists” of Gujarat police continued to eliminate the so called “Muslim militants, planning to assassinate Narendra Modi” till their arrest in February 2007. Strangely Jihadi groups DID NOT send anybody to attack Narendra Modi and other Hindu leaders after the imprisonment of policemen accused of fake encounters!!!

8/- Evidence before Justice Nanavati Commission (JNC) available in the public domain, revealed the professional lapses of IB unit of Ahmedabad in failing to provide real time actionable, specific, pin pointed preventive advance intelligence about 1) the timing of return of Gujarat contingent of Kar Sevaks from Ayodhya on 27-02-2002 (this would have facilitated Gujarat police to keep special bandobast in Godhra Railway station), 2) the actual causes and course of Godhra train fire incident killing 59 Hindus – though IB agents reportedly traveled with Gujarat Kar Sevaks on their onward and return journey from Ayodhya, 3) location of extensive planned attack on Muslim settlements after Godhra incident by armed Hindu mobs 4) subversion of CJS by Modi Govt. against the riot victims and

witnesses resulting in the Apex Court ordering a) constitution of Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe into 9 major carnage cases, b) transfer of trial of cases to Maharashtra, c) reinvestigation of 2000 odd riot cases closed by Gujarat police, d) forming a special task force under Justice Bedi to probe into 17 encounter cases, e) investigation of a major mass rape case and encounter cases by CBI, observing that Gujarat police acted like modern Neros during riots and so on. Besides, Joint Director Rajendra Kumar persuaded DGP K. Chakravarti on 27-02-2002 forenoon to investigate Godhra train fire incident as an outcome of international conspiracy, without any valid evidence (to mobilise Hindu ire against Muslim community for political advantage and electoral dividends for BJP). The conspirators have been acquitted by the Court in this case, invalidating the conspiracy theory. Further, this IB officer had also advised Gujarat State Intelligence branch to fabricate false reports against a political party.

9/- It is widely felt that a set of officers close to CM Narendra Modi in Gujarat police had carried out many fake encounters with the objective to 1) Enhance the image of Narendra Modi, the self-proclaimed Hindu Hridaya Samrat, as a person constantly targeted by the Jihadi groups, 2) Generate a sympathy wave among Hindus for Narendra Modi, 3) Silence critics of Modi in BJP and Sangh Parivar, 4) Project Gujarat police as an extra vigilant force successful in pre-empting any threat to VIP security and eliminating the cause of it in time, and 5) Generate a fear psychosis among the minorities.

10/- All these facts would establish that IB officials interrogated by CBI for Ishrat Jahan case had certainly not confined themselves to their ambit of duties and prescribed code of conduct. They had absolutely no authority under law to arrest or detain any person, on the pretext of interrogation also even if they were activists of Lashkar-e-Toiba. Even if the people killed in encounters were condemned prisoners by the court, Gujarat police and IB had no legal powers to eliminate them in cold blooded murders. After all, success of Maharashtra police to arrest and secure Ajmal Kasab of 9/11 attacks on Mumbai, only had helped India to conclusively prove Pakistan’s involvement in this devilish assault on our country.

11/- Everybody knows that only armed forces are exempted from arrest and prosecution for their operations in areas where special laws are enforced i.e. Jammu and Kashmir and North Eastern states. Therefore, the deviant acts of IB officials in joining Gujarat police in planning and execution of fake encounters should be viewed seriously and any laxity would be exploited by enemies of India, propagating that minorities are not getting proper justice. This would help internationally organized Islamic Jihadis to get recruits for anti-Indian nefarious activities. Should we create a favorable ambience for such elements, within and outside India, for the mirage of IB personnel’s morale? Is the morale of IB functionaries more meritorious and valuable than the lives of Indian citizens?

12/- The Governor of Andhra Pradesh, as a former Director of IB is an interested party in this matter

and so he should not have intervened with a letter to the Prime Minister, aiming at neutralization of any action by lawful authority of CBI against IB officials. The Governor had violated the constitutional constraints and legal framework within which he had to function and particularly the letter and spirit of Article 51(A) of the Constitution of India. In fact anybody including Director IB endeavoring to protect the accused IB officials, allegedly involved in extra judicial killings, should approach relevant judicial bodies instead of exerting pressure on Union Government – an Executive Authority having no powers over CBI under law, to guide and influence the course of any investigation. If CBI buckles down under such pressure tactics and de-professionalize the investigation for helping the accused, this agency would be committing an offence under section 217 IPC - “Public servant disobeying direction of law with intent to save person from punishment”.

13/- Repeated electoral victories had arrogated and energized BJP and Narendra Modi to continue with blatant violation of structured scheme of Law and its due process. The latest instance is the case of an IPS officer – ADGP Crime, P. P. Pandey, declared by the Court as a proclaimed offender, in Ishrat Jahan case, remaining untraced since 5th May, 2013, and not being suspended by Modi Government, as per the legal requirements of Gujarat Police Manual and All India Service Rules.

14/- The IB’s guilty role in fake encounters in Gujarat is, perhaps, the only instance, in 125 years long history of this organization, of its misuse by a State Government, presumably with the consent of

NDA Government in the years 2002 – 2004. This is a dangerous trend, injurious to federalism, unity and integrity of India. The role of IB headquarters and MHA in this unholy affair should be probed deeper and remedial measures ought to be streamlined.

15/- The President of India is the senior-most servant, soldier, protector and Dharma Yodha of the Constitution of India. Therefore, I, humbly appeal to you to initiate appropriate steps to prevent and neutralize any move from Government or non-governmental groups or persons, from impeding CBI investigation in Ishrat Jahan encounter case and other fake encounter cases in Gujarat. Any action to anoint IB officials, accused of collaboration in fake encounters,

With profound regards,

Yours faithfully

R. B. Sreekumar

with the oil of innocence, violating the procedure established by law and through illegal extraneous pressure, would result in IB degenerating into India’s Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

The pivotal scripture of Hinduism – The Bhagwat Gita - emphasizes the primacy of law (Shastras) in Chapter 16, Sloka 24:-

“Law alone determines what is to be done or not and so one should become aware of what is prescribed in law and perform duties accordingly.”

Tasmac chastram pramanam te
karyakarya-vyavasthitam |

Jnatva sastra-vidhanoktam karma
kartum iharhasi ||

Cost of absence in defamation cases

Judicial Magistrate at Saket Court, New Delhi, heard the applications in the defamation cases filed by Medha Patkar against V K Saxena of Gujarat and vice-versa. At the commencement of hearing Advocate V K Ohri filed an application on behalf of Patkar to reduce the cost for her absence last time when she was on indefinite fast in Golibar, Mumbai. The plea on her behalf was the context of brutal eviction and demolition of houses by the builders and the government in Golibar in the name of Slum Rehabilitation Project. While the fast was from 3rd to 14th i.e. for 9 days and ended with some concrete assurances, to stop eviction and

further the enquiry into fraudulent SRA projects, she could not attend the hearing in the defamation cases on 6th April in New Delhi. This was challenged by the advocate of the respondent accused in the last hearing and then Judicial magistrate clamped the cost of Rs. 15,000 for 3 cases for the same. Saxena’s lawyer had filed an application for contempt proceedings to be started against Patkar. But the Judicial Magistrate dismissed the application.

Advocate Ohri pleaded that since the fast was for a serious public cause and Patkar belongs to peoples’

(Continued on Page 15)

On clean chit to Narendra Modi

In an interview to the foreign news agency Reuters that was published on July 12 2013, Narendra Modi, Gujarat Chief minister has made a desperate attempt to create an impression that Supreme Court has given him a clean chit through the SIT which was appointed by it to investigate the criminal complaint of Zakia Jafri and Citizens for Justice & Peace (CJP) on 27.4.2009. A section of the media, without verifying the facts has allowed this impression to gain credibility. The facts in relation to Supreme Court and SIT are as follows:

The SIT was appointed by the Supreme Court on 26.3.2008 on a petition by Teesta Setalvad, D.N.Pathak, Cedric Prakash and others, first to look into the nine cases recommended by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to be investigated by the CBI. The same SIT was a year later also asked to look into the criminal complaint against Narendra Modi and 61 others filed first before the Gujarat Police on 8.6.2006.

The SIT submitted its report on the Zakia Jafri and CJP Complaint to the Supreme Court on 12.5.2010 itself recommending that further investigation was required. In the interim, the SC had to drop two officers from the SIT, Shivdand Jha (because he was an accused in the Zakia Jafri complaint) and Geeta Johri who had been found, in the Sohrabuddin case to have serious strictures passed against her by the Supreme Court itself. (April 6 2010)

The following features of the SIT report need special mention:

(a) It found the speeches of N.

Modi objectionable and that Modi had a communal mindset, travelling 300 kilometres to Godhra but not visiting any relief camps that housed the internally displaced Muslims, victims of reprisal killings post-Godhra until 6.3.2002.

(b) It found it questionable that bodies of the unfortunate Godhra victims were handed over to a non-government person, Jiadeep Patel of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) who is currently facing trial in the Naroda Gaam massacre case;

(c) It found that Sanjeev Bhatt an officer of the State Intelligence, Gujarat had opined that he attended the controversial meeting at the chief minister's residence indicating that illegal and objectionable instructions were given.

(d) It accepted that Police Officers like RB Sreekumar, Rahul Sharma, Himanshu Bhatt and Samiullah Ansari who had performed their tasks legally had been penalised and persecuted by the Modi regime and those who had buckled under the illegal and unconstitutional instructions had been favoured consistently; (e) It however still concluded that there is no prosecutable evidence against the chief minister

The SC was not satisfied with this conclusion and directed that the Amicus Curaie Raju Ramachandran, who had already been appointed to assist the Supreme Court in this critical case, visit Gujarat, independently assess the evidence garnered and meet with witnesses directly, bypassing SIT.

Amicus Curaie Raju Ramachandran submitted an interim report (January 2011) and final report (July 2011).

The Supreme Court gave the SIT an opportunity to further investigate in light of the Amicus Curaie's contrary findings and thereafter file a Final Report before a Magistrate on 12.9.2011. In the same order the SC gave the petitioners the inalienable right to file a Protest petition and access all documents related to the SIT

After its further investigation the SIT, ignoring the contents of the Amicus Curaie report, filed a final closure report on 8.2.2012 without issuing any notice to the complainant Zakia Jafri and CJP as is required under Section 173(2)(ii) of the CRPC. Worse, it fought a hard as nails battle to deny access to any of the documents related to the investigation to the petitioners. It took a whole year, from 8.2.2012 to 7.2.2013 for the complainant to access all the documents related to the Investigation including the SIT Reports filed before the Supreme Court. The complainant Zakia Jafri assisted by the CJP filed the Protest Petition on 15.4.2013.

The petitioners Zakia Jaffri and CJP are now arguing in support of the Protest Petition being allowed, showing through an arduous and rigorous process, how the SIT ignored its own evidence. Arguments that began on June 25 are still going on.

It is clear from the above that the SC has never given Modi a clean chit on the issue of 2002 pogrom. These facts could have been earlier verified by Reuters as well as the collusive media.

—SAHMAT
Citizens for Justice and Peace

Naxal menace just an excuse

The 1000 cr package now proposed by the Planning Commission will only flatten the purses of the Neta-Babu-Contractor trio leaving the tribals high and dry as it had happened in all these years. The rebellion in the Central India is not due to lack of development. Tribals have been putting up with our utter contempt and injustice since ages. Rather the unrest is due to the neo-liberal development model being pursued vigorously by the rulers of all hues since 1991. This development is socially divisive, economically exclusive, politically undemocratic, ecologically unsustainable and ethically immoral.

After the recent massacre in Sukma district, Ramachandra Guha (noted historian and one of the petitioners in the case against Salwa Judum in Supreme Court) in a well written article called the government's bluff thus: "The CG government had neither tackled the extremism nor sincerely implemented the constitutional provisions guaranteeing the land and tribal forest rights of the adivasis and improved the delivery of health and education services. Instead it granted a slew of leases to industrialists, over-riding the protests of gram panchayats and handing over large tracts of tribal land to mining companies. It promoted a vigilante army, distributing guns to near illiterate tribal youth. These goons then roamed the countryside, in search of Naxalites real or fictitious. In a series of shocking incidents, they burnt homes (sometimes entire villages), raped women, and looted granaries of those adivasis who

refused to join them. In the first decade of this century Maoists presence dramatically increased. The tortures, the renditions, the displacement of thousands upon thousands of civilians — in all these respects, Dantewada seemed to me to be a micro version of Iraq or Afghanistan. Placed between the Maoists and the vigilantes, the adivasis are being squeezed from both sides. Orissa, a state once completely free of Naxalites, has seen them acquiring considerable influence in several districts. A first step here would be for the top leadership of the present

(Continued from Page 13)

movements with financial crunch, the cost may be waived. The Judicial Magistrate reduced the cost from Rs.15000 to Rs.9000 i.e. Rs.3000 in each of the cases. He expressed his inability to waive the cost as it was passed by another magistrate. The Defamation case filed by Patkar is regarding the false allegations in a fake advertisement published in the Indian Express and other dailies in November, 2000 wherein Narmada Bachao Andolan and herself were accused of receiving funds through Hawala transaction. Patkar in defense had filed a defamation case then as the particular transaction involved fake cheque from a fake account and Saxena published a letter given by Lok Samiti, Malegaon, a supporter organization of Narmada Bachao Andolan.

The judge suggested compromise may be reached between the two parties. Saxena's contention was that another case filed by Patkar in 2002, now before the JFMC, Ahmedabad, should be withdrawn too. In 2002

government to reach out directly to the adivasis. The Prime Minister and the Chairperson of the UPA should together tour through the strife-torn areas of CG, Jharkhand and Orissa, promising the full implementation of the Forest Rights Act, a temporary ban on mining projects in Fifth Schedule Areas, and a revival of the powers of gram panchayats. That would be a far more effective strike against Naxalites than sending in fighter planes or massed battalions". Let us hope wiser counsel will prevail.

—Sankara Narayanan

case, Saxena is one of the accused along with three other eminent persons from BJP and Congress. The same was refused by Patkar on the grounds that the attack on her at a Sadbhavna meeting, post-2002 riots, in Sabarmati Ashram, was brutal and fatal and witnessed by not less than 40 eminent persons of Gujarat. The hearing continues in the matter.

—Madhuresh Kumar

D.M.Parekh

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(Not) A suitable boy

S. Viswam

Nobel Laureate Prof. Amartya Sen has done a signal service to the Indian electorate by declaring that as an Indian citizen he would not like to accept Narendra Modi as the country's prime minister. This is a useful, timely and well-considered assertion and directly addresses a question many Indians must be asking themselves these days. Coming as it does from a source so distinguished as Prof. Sen, his view deserves to be noted seriously. More so, because millions of concerned Indians are today both direct and indirect participants in a public debate on the suitability of Narendra Modi as prime minister.

Prof. Sen was responding to a question during a media interaction. Adducing reasons for his objection to Mr. Modi, he said that the Gujarat chief minister's secular credentials were suspect, that he had not made the minority community feel safe, and that his 2002 record was "terrible." Prof. Sen said that Modi's much-touted development model was flawed in that it had not done enough in the health and education sectors.

"I think," he said, "I would like a more secular person to be prime

minister. I would not like a prime minister who generates concern and fear on the part of minorities. That is the primary reason." He said he favoured someone who looks at social administration and not just business administration seriously. "That does not mean that I don't see what he has done and why people admire him. He could have been more secular and he could have made the minority community feel more secure. I don't think the record is very good. I don't have to be a member of the minority in order to feel insecure. We Indians do not want a situation where the minority feels insecure and could legitimately think that there was an organised violence against them in 2002. I think that is a terrible record. Modi could have made the majority community feel that they were not maltreating the minorities and going against long Indian tradition of being tolerant."

If we have quoted Prof. Sen at length, it is for the good reason that Prof. Sen echoes the sentiments of a large section of the Indian population and in both the majority and minority communities, among both educated and uneducated

Indians. Can anyone from the ranks of the growing pro-Modi “lobby” be intellectually honest and disagree with Prof. Sen? Can anyone who was a witness to the 2002 anti-Muslim carnage protest that Prof. Sen is incorrect or partisan or unfair or one-sided? The truth is that 2002 Gujarat massacre sent a chill down the spines of minorities everywhere in India and tarnished a well-cherished image of India as a practitioner of bipolar politics and tolerance among all religions and communities.

Why did it become necessary for the media to pose a question on Modi’s acceptability or suitability as PM to Prof. Sen? Is it not because Narendra Modi, who is now being projected by the RSS-BJP combine as a great national leader who is above all others in the field, as the saffron camp’s next prime ministerial candidate whose suitability for the high office is widely questioned? If Modi was an ordinary candidate, carrying no special baggage, would such a poser have been necessary? It is precisely for the reason Prof. Sen adduces, namely that Shriman Modi lacks the requisite secular credentials, that a question about his suitability arises.

Given India’s commitment to secularism and to a multi-religious, multi-cultural multipolar society, anyone holding a high constitutional office has to be demonstrably secular, treat all religions and communities on par, and uphold the constitution always. Modi has been found wanting in such a commitment. As chief minister, he was constitutionally bound to uphold the rule of law. He failed to do so. On the other hand, he gave a free hand to the anti-Muslim

frenzied mobs to butcher men, women and children. Modi’s record in this respect as Prof. Sen rightly reminds us, is “terrible”. There will

therefore be widespread endorsement of Prof. Sen’s view that India must choose a worthier candidate as prime minister.

Gujarat social indicators

In what could be a setback for chief minister Narendra Modi who has been projecting Gujarat model of development across the country, the UNICEF has claimed that social development indicators have not been able to keep pace with economic development in the state with a population of 60 million.

In an introduction of Gujarat on its official website the UNICEF India has said, “Almost every second child in Gujarat under the age of five years is undernourished and three out of four are anaemic. Infant and maternal mortality rates have reduced very slowly in the last decade. Also, the preliminary results of Census 2011 show that while there has been a slight improvement in the child sex ratio (0-6 years) from 883 in 2001 to 886 today, the overall sex ratio in the state has declined from 920 to 918 (during the same period).”

In critic of Gujarat’s poor social indicator the UN agency further stated, “From an ancient shipping power to modern-day industrial state, Gujarat is known for its vibrant economy. Located on India’s west coast, the state has a bustling economy that offers families a per capita income which is higher than the national average. However, social development indicators have not been able to keep pace with economic development in this state of over 60 million people.”

“Although Gujarat is recognised as one of the most prosperous states in India with very good infrastructure of highways and ports, and strong petrochemical and automobile industries and agro products, a lot needs to be done to improve socio-development indicators,” the UNICEF website further added.

The agency was also critical of the health conditions of women in Gujarat. “Just like the undernourished children, one mother in three in Gujarat struggles with acute undernutrition. About half of these women are also anaemic, putting them at risk of problems during pregnancy, childbirth and post natal period. Lack of awareness of proper nutrition is partially responsible for this situation; only about half the mothers currently choose to exclusively breastfeed their babies for the first six months of their life. This deprives children of the chance to acquire natural immunities passed on through breast milk and makes them more susceptible to common childhood diseases. Older babies are also not introduced to complementary feeding at the right age,” it stated describing the challenges before it.

Under the section “Key challenges and opportunities” UNICEF has praised effort of the state government in providing

(Continued from Page 16)

*Between the lines***The blurred lines****Kuldip Nayar**

The Congress has set a bad precedent. The party has combined two positions: one is that of party official spokesman and the other that of Minister's for Information and Broadcasting. Both have different roles. The official spokesman defends the stand the party talks, right or wrong. Minister for Information and Broadcasting is India's spokesman, not that of one party. The first is nominated while the other is elected by the people.

To mix the two is unfair to the occupant, who happens to be Manish Tiwari at present. He has been doing fairly a good job as the spokesman. Given a chance, he would have probably done even better. Broadcasting in India has not been able to shatter the fetters of officialdom for decades. Still worse is the telephone calls by a minister or a senior bureaucrat which change the news bulletin even at the last minute.

In the sixties, several activists agitated for autonomy of official media. Subsequently, the government relented and brought the Prashar Bharti Bill. It was diluted from the beginning. But when implemented, the Prashar Bharti became another department of the broadcasting ministry.

Once I asked one Information and Broadcasting Minister why the Prashar Bharti was not on the pattern of *BBC*, the original idea, to eschew subjectivity or slant, the minister was frank enough to say that the government has to have its

own set-up to disseminate its viewpoint when newspapers and television channels were privately owned. He did admit the criterion should be the objectivity, not where it comes from.

The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha channels, although run by public funds, appear to have less of government's propaganda. Yet both of them have no news bulletins and avoid such topic that may embarrass the government. The channels also see to it that as far as possible they do not have critics in the news and views programmes. The two channels do not spoil the mould which they have developed, not too critical and not too distant from the government's point of view.

In a democratic polity, perception is most important for credibility. The impression is that the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha channels do not go beyond the red line drawn for their guidance. It is no use rulers claiming that the government media is autonomous when they themselves do not allow it to be so.

Two recent examples show how the ministry was out of depth. The death of 23 school children in Bihar following the mid-day meals was a tragedy which the private channels reported from every possible angle. In comparison, Akashvani and Doordarshan registered the event only. The official media was handicapped because Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar may become the Congress ally in the 2014 elections.

Take another example. The Central Bureau of Investigation has exonerated Pawan Kumar Bansal, former Railway Minister. Some new incriminating information has come out since. Yet, Manish Tiwari says on behalf of the Congress that the court is open to those who level charges. Both Akashwani and Doordarshan do not tell what the new charges which people want to know.

If the Prashar Bharti had even a bit of autonomy, it would have done a better job. The government media tells only the Congress side and puts cold water on every other version. This was the reason why the activists started an agitation to purvey correct information in the country. Both the government controlled-radio and television reach far more population than all the other private channels put together.

In the recent past, corruption has penetrated the government media as well. Just as the privately-owned media has "paid news," both Akashvani and Doordarshan too carry motivated stories affecting its credibility. Yet it is beginning to be preferred by many because views and news are so mixed that it is difficult to separate fact from fiction.

In-depth reporting is very limited in government media because even if a news editor feels like probing further, the fear of going wrong from the official point of view deters him from doing so. Somehow, those who occupy high positions in the Government labour under the belief that they—and they alone—know

what the nation should be told and when. And they get annoyed if any news which they do not like appears in print. Their first attempt is to contradict it and dub it mischievous. Later, when it is realized that a mere denial will not convince even the most gullible, a lame explanation is offered that things have not been put "in proper perspective". Probably, at that time, the government gets away with its version of the story.

But what is not realized is that such methods only decrease the credibility of official assertions. Even honest claims of the government begin to be questioned. In a democracy, where faith stirs the people's response, the government cannot afford to have even an iota of doubt raised about what it says or does. Somehow, New Delhi is not conscious of this fact.

In a free society, the press has a duty to inform the public without fear or favour. At times it is an unpleasant job, but it has to be performed because a free society is founded on free information. If the press were to publish only government handouts or official statements, there would be nothing to pinpoint lapses, deficiencies or mistakes. In fact, the truth is that the press is already too niminy-piminy, too nice, altogether too refined and too ready to leave out. The government should not ask for more.

The combination of being the party's spokesman and the minister of Information and Broadcasting is beyond me. Government may believe that it has got away with it because the act is many weeks old. The government does not realize that its credibility has come down several pegs than before. I really feel sorry for poor Manish Tiwari.

Shooting down of four civilians in Ramban

PUCL strongly condemns the shooting down by BSF personnel of four unarmed civilians in Gool area of Ramban district of Kashmir on 18th July, 2013. More than 40 civilians are said to have been injured, some seriously, in the BSF firing and action.

The incident allegedly occurred due to the desecration of a Muslim place of worship as also manhandling of a Muslim cleric by BSF soldiers. This led to a protest by unarmed local civilians before the BSF camp who were agitated over the desecration of religious place and demanded action against the BSF soldiers responsible for the act. To the contrary, the BSF has issued a statement justifying the firing on the ground that the protestors were trying to storm the armoury and to seize arms and ammunition stored in the camp.

Amidst the claims and counter claims of locals and the BSF, there lies the reality that the protesting civilians were unarmed. The resort to firing by the BSF forces is therefore questionable and is indicative of total failure of counter-preventive measures to quell civilian, unarmed protests. It also raises the issue of the adequacy of training given to the BSF jawans to handle such incidents of collective, unarmed civilian protests. Such situations of confrontations should reasonably be anticipated considering the long history of civilian unrest and security

forces action in Kashmir valley.

The Ramban firing incident once again highlights the sordid reality of an extreme sense of alienation, disaffection and hostility of local population against the Central forces. The Central and State Governments have done little to reduce the sense of estrangement amongst the local people through concrete, meaningful measures recognising the political aspirations of the local people. To the contrary justifying such firings only increases the sense of hostility and resentment of local people.

PUCL demands that an impartial judicial enquiry be initiated into the Ramban firings so that the truth behind the incidents can be brought to light. Internal enquiry by the BSF Special Director General, Dilip Trivedi, will hardly be sufficient to generate confidence that a fair enquiry and justice will be ensured in the firing incident.

PUCL once again reiterates that the problem of Jammu and Kashmir is a political problem and that any lasting solution can be reached only by finding political solutions agreeable to all concerned. Treating the entire issue as a problem of law and order is not only perverse and also short sighted but will only prolong the conflict timelessly.

**Prabhakar Sinha Dr. V. Suresh
People's Union For Civil Liberties**

Now here is the reply I have got under the under the RTI Act about the MPs' pension. There are just 3857 MPs/family pensioners drawing pension. Their pension for December 2012, January 2013, February 2013 are Rs 3,86,48,441; 4,68,91,359; 4,35,54,552 respectively. Their rail expenses for 3 months from January to March 2013 was Rs 2,645 Cr!

That is the average pension is Rs 11,157/- per month and the average cost of rail travel per ex-MP per month is Rs 22,85,887 (almost 23 lakhs)!-

-P. M, Ravindran

Lessons from the tragedy in Chhapra

Harsh Mander

The bone-chilling tragedy of 22 children dying in Chhapra in rural Bihar after having their mid-day meal at a government school has rightly shaken the public conscience. But we should resist the temptation of simplistic knee-jerk conclusions, or from attributing blame to the local officials alone or to the state administration. The incident could have happened almost anywhere, and probably does but invisibly, on a smaller scale.

For many reasons, this was a tragedy waiting to happen. The calamity is the outcome of something much larger than mere local neglect by junior officials. It is the result of how poorly programmes for India's poor, even our children, are organized, resourced and monitored. The full details of the incident are yet to be ascertained. But this we know: that the primary school in question did not have a building, and was ran out of a local government office building. There was no store, therefore, rations for school meals could not be purchased in bulk and kept in a safe place. There were just two teachers for five classes of children, one was on leave, and the only one holding fort was a low-paid untrained para-teacher. She purchased the provisions required for each day's school meals daily from a local store. A container for the cooking oil was possibly one used earlier for insecticides. The specific details may be partly inaccurate, but they are not pertinent.

What is indeed relevant is that school meals across the country are grossly under-resourced. Allocations

for cooking costs have not been enhanced despite runaway food and fuel inflation in recent years. Many schools have not been invested with the basic infrastructure for cooking and storage, utensils, a clean eating space and potable drinking water. Cooking staff are poorly paid. For a programme as scattered as this, the most effective systems of monitoring are always those that are also decentralized. This needs social audit systems, hearing the voices of children, and effective systems of regular monitoring by parent committees, school management committees and local panchayats.

Much of this would entail additional public money, but also far greater political prioritization, administrative will and the willingness to be accountable. But we should clamour to muster both the resources and will required for this, because what can be a higher priority for public investment and attention than the health and futures of our children?

Let us not lose sight in this moment of tragedy about the many strengths of the school-meal programme, now a legal right of all children in government-funded schools after the passage of the food security ordinance. Studies reveal that for many poor children, this is the only substantial meal they eat in the day. It has positively affected school enrolments, and encourages parents to send to school children who were formerly engaged in work by setting off some of the opportunity cost of the child's lost earnings. But a third gain, often

forgotten, is that it also teaches important lessons in social equality because children of diverse backgrounds eat together, and often the food is cooked by women of disadvantaged castes. In a highly unequal society in which differences in caste, class and religion are expressed by the refusal to eat together, the importance of these social lessons in equality should not be forgotten.

Let us not draw the wrong lessons from this tragedy. Alarming suggestions are being forwarded for supply of packaged food instead of hot local meals, or the transfer of this responsibility to reputed non-governmental organizations. There is no better nutrition for children than hot, fresh, diverse, culturally appropriate meals, and no more effective system than of food prepared by local women's groups monitored by local institutions and social audits.

As a special commissioner of the Supreme Court mandated by it to monitor the performance of all governments in various food programmes, I have found that even with many shortcomings it is still the best implemented of all social programmes, comparing favourably to the public distribution system, the Integrated Child Development Services scheme and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. We need to further strengthen and resource this implementation and monitoring, and not consider its curtailment or dilution in any way.

Notions to improve gender budget strategy

Vibhuti Patel

Free, clean, safe, public urinals for women in Mumbai Metropolitan Region and 27 wards of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) is a long standing demand of working women. Profile of women in public domain reveals that Mumbai has a 4th generation of working women who have been performing valuable economic activities in manufacturing, service and industrial sector as wage workers, salaried employees and self-employed hawkers and vendors. In India, Mumbai has the largest number of working women making valuable contribution to economic growth. As per 2011 census and NSSO rounds in all sectors of economy work participation of women has increased. Number of girls and women going out for long hours and regularly travel long-distance, far from home, for education has increased exponentially. Working class Women in informal sector are away from home for more than 16 hours a day. All of them complain about no safe and clean place to pee.

Women have to use the toilets/restroom more frequently. Men have a larger bladder capacity.

Women also have to use the restroom for changing sanitary pads during menstruation. It takes women longer to use the toilets. Women have to sit down. Also, women have to make greater adjustments with their clothing. Although zippers conveniently facilitate a quick pee for boys/men, it's not that simple for women. Many women (still) have greater care-giving roles. There are

more kids in the women's toilets. Facility of separate urinals for women in the offices as well as public places is not available and it results in the saturation of urine, women do not drink water when they are out of their houses which lead to major health disorders. All the above mentioned causes put women at a greater risk for abdominal pain and reproductive tract infections. Women tend to get more bladder infection than men because women have shorter urethras. Cystitis is also most common in women.

Gender inequality in public toilets

In spite of galloping urbanisation, Mumbai, like all cities in India, has had less number of toilets for women in public places like railway station, bus stations/depots, highways, industrial estates, educational institutions, public parks, tourist spots, public hospitals, market places, community. Deplorable condition of 'ladies toilets' due to no deployment of cleaning staff has remained a perennial problem. We have noticed that most of the toilets for women are clogged, unusable, stinking and without running water. This lack of a basic facility to pee strips so many women of their basic dignity. Hence, the Right to Pee campaign, started in Mumbai 18 months back, demands "Potty Parity".

Right to Pee Campaign initiated by 40 community based organizations has begun a campaign against gender bias in "Pay and Use

toilets" as most of the urinals by private players are provided to males and are not available for women and girls. Moreover they are men and charge differential 'user fees' from men and women. Women commuters on Central and Western Railway allege that the 'pay-and-use' toilets on stations are gender biased. They complain that while attendants allow men to use the toilets for free, they are charged Rs 2 each for the same. As per the official admission, currently 'Pay and use toilets' stations are in Central Railway: CST, Masjid, Sandhurst Road, Currey Road, Parel, Ghatkopar, Kurla, Byculla, LTT, Bhandup, Karjat, Dombivli, Kalyan, Mumbra, Nahur, Sewri, Panvel, Wadala, Lonavla and in Western Railway: Churchgate, Marine Lines, Grant Road, Mumbai Central (main and local) Charni Road, Mahalaxmi, Elphinstone Road.

Disturbing reality

'Right to Pee Campaign' in Mumbai is a united front of 40 voluntary organisations which surveyed 129 toilet blocks, did signature campaigns on 16 railway stations, organized workshops, met experts to understand the issue in depth and submitted 50,000 signatures and analytical survey report to BMC. Information received through RTI by the Right to Pee Campaign revealed that 24 wards of Mumbai have 6568 urinals for men. As per 2011 census, population of women in Mumbai is 5741632 but there are hardly any public urinals for women.

The major demands of the Right to Pee Campaign are: 1. Separate free clean, safe public urinals for women. 2. While providing this facility women suffering from disabilities to be taken into consideration. 3. To place the information boards at the entrance clearly indicating facility of free clean urinals for the women in the toilets blocks. 4. Facilities in the toilets blocks meant for women's should be looked after by women's organizations and women employees only. 5. Dustbins, sanitary pads should be made available. 6. There should be urinals at every 2 km of distance. 7. The management and coordination of urinals and toilets block should be done by organizations working on women issues and finance should be provided by BMC.

8. To start such separate urinals for women on experimental basis and then to include the same in city planning of Mumbai.

Maharashtra Policy for Women, 2013 of Government of Maharashtra released on 8-3-2013 states that every 20 kilo meters there should public toilet Block for women. Right to Pee campaign demands toilet block at the distance of 1 Km. in Mumbai city. Gender Budget for Sanitation of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, 2013-14 has made financial allocation for toilets in communities. Gender Budgeting of MCGM 2013-14 promises in its Preface to construct toilets for women in crowded places. Current year's budgetary allocation for Sanitation in MCGM Budget Estimates, 2013-14 is Rs. 75 lakhs for construction of 25 toilets which is grossly inadequate. Even for this no work has begun.

Targeting of toilet blocks for

women only in the slums under "Toilets in toilet-deficient slums" and "Open-defecation free Mumbai" schemes is based on patriarchal myth that women in Mumbai are only home-bound. Promise of construction of toilets for women in crowded places has not been translated into budgetary allocation. Even after promise of construction of 25 toilet blocks for women and outlay of Rs. 75 lakhs by MCGM, there has been no outcome. Land suggested by Right to Pee campaigners turns out as belonging to 'private party', 'railways', 'developers', 'road dept' so on and so forth. MCGM is willing to construct toilets on the land acquisitioned by demolition of huts only. This is anti-poor, and must be opposed tooth and nail.

Need of the hour

MCGM must be clear in its gender commitments, then only financial commitments will bring gender responsive outcomes. Provision of toilets in public places is needed for all women and girls in Mumbai city as they travel long distance for work and education. Working women need functioning toilets at railway stations and Bus depots. Women Homemakers have to attend social functions, visit market places, take children to gardens and hospitals. Women from both, slums and non-slum background need public toilets. All tourist spots of Mumbai should also have toilet blocks for women managed by women.

Gender Budgeting for Women's Toilet Blocks requires total financial allocation of Rs. 89.1 crores. Plan Expenditure: 81 crores (Rs. 3 lakhs per toilet block) for 27 wards @ 100 toilet blocks = 2700 toilet blocks. The most challenging task in front of

BMC is Location Mapping-Land (most difficult challenge). BMC need to provide for construction cost of toilet blocks, electricity supply and water Supply. It is a question of gender sensitivity and political will to allocate recurring cost per annum Rs. 30000/- per toilet block and total amount of Rs. 8.1 crores for 2700 toilet blocks per annum to pay for salary, electricity bills, garbage bins, cleaning material and water bills. This is not asking for too much from total size of Budget, 2013-14 of BMC i.e. Rs. 27578.67 crores. BMC began gender budgeting from the financial year 2009-2010. In the current year, BMC Budget for sanitation is Rs. 514 crores. Right to Pee campaign asks for 0.0032 % of total budgetary allocation of BMC and 16.5 percent of Budget for sanitation for Gender Budgeting for Women's Toilet Blocks. As per the directive on Women Component Plan by Government of Maharashtra, 30 percent of all development funds should be targeted for women.

If Mumbai, in which women make crucial contribution to Mumbai's economy, claims to be gender friendly city, must respect Right to Pee of women.

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Primitive Communism of Buddha to take on Religious Fundamentalism

K. S. Chalam

The recent attack on the Buddha Gaya shrine has evoked little protest and exposed our wide spread ignorance about history. This is not the first time that an assault on the temple of Buddha is made. Buddha perhaps, is the only historical person who had received the largest and the most heinous attempts on his life when he was alive and on his memorials after the *parinirvana*. No individual in human history received so much of attention (with hatred) as did Buddha for the simple preaching of non-violence and compassion towards fellow human being. Therefore, we need to contextualise the so called religious fundamentalist attacks on Buddhism, not yet clear who was behind it, to highlight the re-emergence of its relevance in a troubled world of capitalist expansion.

The emergence of Buddhism needs to be looked at as a response to the religious bigotry and institutional exploitation of an order at an early stage of *gana-sanghas* in the Sakhya and Koliya region. The advent of Buddhist thought as a challenge to the decadence of Vedic Hinduism both in philosophy and more in practice is an grave question not considered here and can be dealt with in a different paper. It is instructive to notice that Ajatasatru who became a disciple of Buddha belonged to *naga* clan, a native Indian tribe as the name of his grandfather Nagaseena suggests (Romila Thapar). It was not an advanced republic and the relations among the groups seem to have

relied on ideological considerations. The conditions resemble primitive communism. This is very important to understand the so-called pre-capitalist modes of production including primitive communism, ancient society, etc to understand the context of Buddhist upsurge. Primitive communism as distinguished from primitive accumulation according to Hindess and Hrist (Pre-capitalist Modes of Production) is an articulation of a combination of economic and ideological relations between individuals. In fact the authors revealed how Marx and Engels have adopted an erroneous classification of first organisation of society in history from the writings of millionaire Railway Contractor-cum-missionary, Morgan. The scholars who have followed the method have failed to evaluate Buddhism in its proper context. We need not get into that debate to understand our situation now.

The enunciation and mission of Buddha during his lifetime appears to be an integration of the downtrodden and exploited under conditions of primitive communism. After conceiving the notion of dialectics, the first intellectual breakthrough in the history of ideas, Buddha collected his disciples. Lakshmi Narasu (apart from European scholars like Rhys Davids, Winternitz, Oldenberg et al) gives the list of the first batch of disciples of Buddha consisting of the wretched and rejected of the earth. The list includes Anathapindaka,

Alavaka, Upali, Ambapali, Jivaka, Sunita, Visakha, Angulimala (Mala, Mahar-Madiga claim their ancestry to him and the Mallas where Buddha breathed his last). Interestingly, all of them seem to have originated from the local indigenous groups waiting for a leader to champion their cause. (Visakha being a woman seems to be an exception). Earlier Buddha had dialogues with the Ajivikas like Poornakasyapa, Ajitakesakambal (most of them seem to have gone from our Dandaka) and later several of them joined his order. The local princess of Kosala, Magadh, etc. joined the order perhaps due to the expediency when majority of the lowly subjects got admitted. The social context and the rational analysis of the existing conditions during the time of Buddha seem to be relevant here to understand why there is a sustained attack on Buddhism in India and elsewhere. It is more appropriate now to study the background when the religious fundamentalism is cunningly promoted by neo-colonialism (for instance, American engagement in Afghanistan after Soviet retreat, double standards in India). The home grown religious fundamentalists in India are of the same cadre. Is Buddhism emerging as a countervailing force today?

One of the weaknesses in certain segments of Buddhist teachings and practice alleged to be the priority given to *Astangamarg* and *panchshila* as rituals without much study and reflection on the core of Buddhism. Some of the *Bikkhus* and

the laity who claimed to follow Buddha are not aware of the greatest intellectual contributions of Buddhism to humankind, lamented Dalai Lama in a seminar at Bodh Gaya in 2009. It could be due to the split of the order into 18 groups like every other belief system. But, the distinction of Buddhism is that it did not develop as a Religion (no god, no priest) but only as a way of life in the South Asian countries with common intellectual legacy. The contributions of the greatest Buddhist scholars like Dignaga and Dharmakirti apart from Vasubandhu and even Rahul Sankrutyan are accepted by every Buddhist. What seems to be missing in the Buddhist order today is some kind of a parochial approach to project limited version or interpretations without a universal appeal to the masses. Some people appear to think that it is not intellectually challenging and may be it has emerged as a blind faith without looking at the corpus of literature of Buddhism and on Buddhism. I must confess here that Sharad Patil wrote to me to find out the details of Dharamakirti, one of the greatest Buddhist scholars, a Telugu person. If Kumarila Bhatt was his nephew, he belongs to Kalingandhra and Dignaga was from coastal Andhra. I regret that I could not devote time to gather information on the studies and in fact his English translations are just now available (2004 Dunne). The commentary on Epistemology in *Pramanavartika* by Dharamakirti was presaged 12 hundred years before what Hume propounded his in the 18th century, was unfortunately out of the reach of Indians for historical reasons. Dharmakirti who confronted the unreality of caste through his secular philosophical discourse was thrown out of India and sheltered in Tibet.

We may now reflect on how the so-called Taliban (derivative of talib, in Arabic meaning students) alleged to be one of the fundamentalist groups along with several other religious formations creating social tensions. It is easy to trivialise and stereotype a community for political reasons. But, we may never get into the roots of therudiments without understanding the socio-economic and historical transformation of a community. In this context, the contribution of Afghanistan to the world of knowledge and culture particularly to Buddhist realm need to be recognised. How could anyone overlook the contribution of Gandhara Art (as blend of Greek and Indian) in the Bamiyan Buddhas and the greatest service done by Pathan brothers Asanga and Vasubandhu to Buddhist metaphysics. As a transit of the silk route, the people of the region had enriched and were in turn profited by the cross cultural interactions. They were dragged into the present situation due to the Arab problem. In this context, we must recognise the enlightened effort made by Prophet Mohammed in uniting and giving an identity to the anarchic groups in the Mediterranean region. He brought peace through Islam. Buddhism, scholars assert, had enriched Abrahamitic and Indian thought through its philosophy of logic and temple architecture as the first monastic order in history. The cross fertilisation of ideas have contributed to the development of science and technology. It seems the discovery of crude oil in the region and the accumulation of money through exports created problems due to Sharia. Interest on lending is forbidden for obvious reasons in the Middle East and that seems to have helped to craft a dubious

strategy by the Saudi billionaires with the support of American bankers. The region is once again torn into pieces and there seem to be no leader or Messiah like Mohammed to bring unity and peace in the region and the poor have become a prey to the wicked designs of the global powers. It is alleged that the internal and external enemies of Buddhism through Pushyamitra, Shankaracharya, Ghajani, Gori etc. are drawn from the same Aryan ideology of expansionism. It is reported that the poor among the Muslims in Saudi constitute 20 per cent and in Afghanistan 45 per cent and the same amount in Pakistan and India. They are frustrated.

The transition from feudalism to international capitalism through technology seems to have complicated several social issues in the non-Western society. The conditions in India today remind us of the days of Buddha. The leadership is in great confusion as to how to grapple with the contemporary crisis. They were constrained to look at the historical and intellectual directions like Buddhism to find solutions to the Talibanisation of a section of the population. The oil rich have no problems as all of their investments are safe in the west and therefore, the poor are made weird. This internal socio-economic discrepancy across Asia and Middle East are in muddles waiting for a competent leader and ideology to take on fundamentalism (Market and Religious). Do the three cornerstones of *Anitya*, *Anatma* and *Nirvana* of Buddhism with its original ideology of compassion and integration would help address the contemporary upheaval in Asia?

An open letter to the ‘Hindu Nationalist’, Narendra Damodardas Modi

Shamsul Islam

I hope you are fine. While talking to two Reuters journalists, Ross Colvin and Sruthi Gottipati, on July 12, 2013, you identified yourself as a ‘Hindu Nationalist’ and credited the RashtriyaSwayamsevakSangh (RSS) for instilling in you, spirit “(to be a) patriot. Whatever work you do, you think are you doing this for the good of the nation? That’s the basic training. The other basic training is discipline. Your life should be disciplined.”[1]

The news agency declared that it was a ‘rare interview’ of yours taken at your official Gandhinagar residence. It shocked me immensely as you were not talking as an ordinary Indian citizen but as the chief minister of Gujarat, a constitutional position under the democratic-secular constitution of India. I am taking the liberty of writing this letter to you in the hope that you, who claim to be believer in transparency, will respond to the issues I raise.

As a seasoned RSS pracharak or whole-timer you know about your roots better than me. Still I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the term ‘Hindu Nationalist’ originated in a specific historical context during India’s Freedom Struggle against the British colonial masters. This Freedom Struggle was mainly led by the Congress, which stood for an all-inclusive democratic-secular free India. The ‘Muslim Nationalists’, under the banner of the Muslim League, and the ‘Hindu Nationalists’, under the

banners of the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS, opposed it, claiming that Hindus and Muslims were two different nations. These Hindu and Muslim ‘Nationalists’ joined hands with the colonial masters in order to thwart the Freedom Struggle so that they could have theocratic states of their choice, ‘Hindusthan’ or Hindu Rashtra and Pakistan or Islamic state respectively.

The politics of the Muslim League and its role in dividing India are well known but I need to refresh your memory about the nefarious role that ‘Hindu Nationalists’ played in India before and after Independence.

I am relying exclusively on documents of the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha in order to put across reality.

Narendraji! I would like to draw your attention to the fact that both the originator of Hindutva, V.D. Savarkar and RSS, had unequivocal faith in the two-nation theory: that Hindus and Muslims are two different nations. While the Muslim League under the leadership of Mohammed Ali Jinnah resolved to have a separate homeland for Muslims of India in the form of Pakistan in 1940, Savarkar propagated as early as 1937 that Hindus and Muslims were two different nations. While delivering the presidential address to the 19th Hindu Mahasabha session at Ahmedabad, ‘Veer’ Savarkar declared:

As it is, there are two antagonistic nations living side by side in India, several infantile politicians commit the serious mistake in supposing that India is already welded into a harmonious nation, or that it could be welded thus for the mere wish to do so. These were well meaning but unthinking friends take their dreams for realities. That is why they are impatient of communal tangles and attribute them to communal organizations. But the solid fact is that the so-called communal questions are but a legacy handed down to us by centuries of cultural, religious and national antagonism between the Hindus and Moslems...Let us bravely face unpleasant facts as they are. India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian [sic] and homogenous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and the Moslems [sic], in India.[2]

Sir! The RSS, following in the foot-steps of ‘Veer’ Savarkar, always rejected the idea that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians together constituted a nation. Its English organ, *Organizer*, on the very eve of Independence (August 14, 1947), editorially (titled ‘Whither’) underlined its belief in the two-nation theory once again in the following words:

Let us no longer allow ourselves to be influenced by false notions of nationhood. Much of the mental confusion and the present and future troubles can be removed by the ready recognition of the simple fact that

in Hindusthan only the Hindus form the nation and the national structure must be built on that safe and sound foundation...the nation itself must be built up of Hindus, on Hindu traditions, culture, ideas and aspirations.

Your claim, 'My secularism is, India first' is problematic as you do not regard yourself as an Indian nationalist but as a 'Hindu nationalist.' If you are a Hindu nationalist then there will be, naturally, 'Muslim nationalists', 'Sikh nationalists', 'Christian nationalists', and so on. Thus you set the ball rolling for a divided India. This is surely a corollary of your organizational faith in the two-nation theory.

Modi Sir, as a senior and prominent whole-timer of the RSS you must know that on the eve of Independence the above mentioned RSS organ used the following language against the Tri-colour, the new National Flag of India:

The people who have come to power by the kick of fate may give in our hands the Tricolour but it never [sic] be respected and owned by Hindus. The word three is in itself an evil, and a flag having three colours will certainly produce a very bad psychological effect and is injurious to a country.[3]

1942 was a critical year in the history of India's Freedom Struggle. In a nation-wide call the British rulers were asked to 'Quit India'. The rulers responded by turning the country into a hell: armed squads killed common Indians completely disregarding the rule of law, millions were arrested and thousands suffered unparalleled repression. The Congress governments which were

ruling different Provinces of British India were dismissed. The only political organizations allowed to work were the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League. These two organizations united to serve the rulers and formed coalition governments. It was corroborated by the mentor of RSS, 'Veer' Savarkar in his presidential address to the 24th session of the Hindu Mahasabha at Kanpur in 1942 declared:

In practical politics also the Mahasabha knows that we must advance through reasonable compromises. Witness the fact that only recently in Sind, the Sind-Hindu-Sabha on invitation had taken the responsibility of joining hands with the League itself in running coalition Government. The case of Bengal is well known. Wild Leaguers whom even the Congress with all its submissiveness could not placate grew quite reasonably compromising and socialable as soon as they came in contact with the HM and the Coalition Government, under the premiership of Mr. FazlulHuq and the able lead of our esteemed Mahasabha leader Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji, functioned successfully for a year or so to the benefit of both the communities.[4]

Sir, you must be familiar with the name of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, who tried to liberate India militarily with the help of Germany and Japan. However, during this period 'Hindu Nationalists', instead of helping him, were hand in glove with the British masters in defeating Netaji's liberation struggle (in which former succeeded). Hindu Mahasabha under 'Veer' Savarkar's leadership organized recruitment camps for British armed forces. The Hindutva camp's surrender to the

colonial masters was total, as we see in the following utterances of 'Veer' Savarkar:

So far as India's defence is concerned, Hindudom must ally unhesitatingly, in a spirit of responsive co-operation with the war effort of the Indian government in so far as it is consistent with the Hindu interests, by joining the Army, Navy and the Aerial forces in as large a number as possible and by securing an entry into all ordnance, ammunition and war craft factories...Again it must be noted that Japan's entry into the war has exposed us directly and immediately to the attack by Britain's enemies. Consequently, whether we like it or not, we shall have to defend our own hearth and home against the ravages of the war and this can only be done by intensifying the government's war effort to defend India. Hindu Mahasabhaites must, therefore, rouse Hindus especially in the provinces of Bengal and Assam as effectively as possible to enter the military forces of all arms without losing a single minute.[5]

Sir, in your interview you claimed that RSS instills in cadres the spirit of patriotism, working for the good of the nation and discipline. Since RSS stands for Hindu Rashtra or nation, one can understand the fate of democratic-secular India in the hands of RSS cadres. You should have shared what the most prominent ideologue of the RSS, Golwalkar, expected from RSS members. While addressing a gathering of top ranking RSS on March 16, 1954, at Sindi, Wardha, he said:

If we say that we are part of the organization and accept its discipline then selectiveness has no

place in life. Do what is told. If told to play kabaddi, play kabaddi; told to hold meeting then meeting....For instance some of our friends were told to go and work for politics that does not mean that they have great interest or inspiration for it. They don't die for politics like fish without water. If they are told to withdraw from politics then also there is no objection. Their discretion is just not required.[6]

This second statement of 'Guru' Golwalkar is also significant:

We know this also that some of our Swayamsevaks work in politics. There they have to organize according to the needs of work public meetings, processions etc., have to raise slogans. All these things have no place in our work. However, like the character in a play whatever role has been assigned should be portrayed with best of capability. But sometimes Swayamsevaks go beyond the role assigned to a performer (nat) as they develop over-zealousness in their hearts, to the extent that they become useless for this work. This is not good.[7]

Modi Sir, we find here 'Guru' Golwalkar referring to the Swayamsevaks loaned to the political satellite as 'nat', performers, who are meant to dance to the tune of the RSS. It should be noted here that Golwalkar's above design of controlling the political arm was elaborated in March 1960, almost nine years after the establishment of the Jana Sangh (the forerunner of the BJP) in 1951. What I would like to know from you is whether you are serving the democratic-secular polity of India or are a mere 'nat', a tool in the hands of the RSS for turning India into a

theocratic state. Fact is that RSS makes its cadres spineless.

Sir, your claim that the RSS taught you patriotism is suspect, given the history of that organization as seen in its documents. I shall present some relevant documents for your kind perusal.

The Non-cooperation Movement and the Quit India Movement were two great milestones in the history of the Indian Freedom Movement, and here is the great thesis of the great Golwalkar on these two great happenings:

Definitely there are bound to be bad results of struggle. The boys became unruly after the 1920-21 movement. It is not an attempt to throw mud at the leaders. But these are inevitable products after the struggle. The matter is that we could not properly control these results. After 1942, people often started thinking that there was no need to think of the law.[8]

Thus 'Guru' Golwalkar wanted the Indians to respect the draconian and repressive laws of the inhuman British rulers! After the 1942 Movement he further admitted:

In 1942 also there was a strong sentiment in the hearts of many. At that time too the routine work of Sangh continued. Sangh vowed not to do anything directly. However, upheaval (uthal-puthal) in the minds of Sangh volunteers continued. Sangh is an organization of inactive persons, their talks are useless, not only outsiders but also many of our volunteers did talk like this. They were greatly disgusted too.[9]

Sir, we have been told that the RSS did nothing directly. However,

there is not a single publication or document of the RSS which throws light on what the RSS did indirectly for the Quit India Movement. During this period, in fact, its mentor, 'Veer' Savarkar, ran coalition governments with the Muslim League. I must conclude that because the RSS did nothing, directly or indirectly, for the Quit India Movement, and indeed acted against it, that titanic movement was, for you and your forebears, the opposite of patriotic.

Modi Sir, I would like to know your views on the statements of 'Guruji' decrying and denigrating martyrs like Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad, Ashfaqullah Khan. Here is a passage from the chapter, 'Martyr, Great But Not Ideal' from Bunch Of Thoughts, a veritable Geeta for RSS cadres such as yourself:

There is no doubt that such men who embrace martyrdom are great heroes and their philosophy too is pre-eminently manly. They are far above the average men who meekly submit to fate and remain in fear and inaction. All the same, such persons are not held up as ideals in our society. We have not looked upon their martyrdom as the highest point of greatness to which men should aspire. For, after all, they failed in achieving their ideal, and failure implies some fatal flaw in them.[10]

Sir, can there be a statement more insulting to the martyrs than this? The founder of the RSS, Dr. Hedgewar, went one step further:

Patriotism is not only going to prison. It is not correct to be carried away by such superficial patriotism.[11]

Don't you feel, Sir, that if martyrs like Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Ashfaqullah, Chandrashekhar Azad had come in contact with the then RSS leadership, they could have been saved from giving their lives for 'superficial patriotism'? This also must be the reason why RSS leaders or cadres did not face repression during British rule and the RSS did not produce any martyr during the Freedom Movement. Finally, Sir, are we to regard as noble patriotism the cringing letters that 'Veer' Savarkar wrote to the Angrez Sarkar?

Modiji, as Chief Minister of Gujarat and a prominent leader of the BJP, you are supposed to function within the Democratic-Secular polity of India. What is your take on the following decree ordained by 'Guru' Golwalkar while addressing a group of 1,350 top level cadres of the RSS in 1940?

RSS inspired by one flag, one leader and one ideology is lighting the flame of Hindutva in each and every corner of this great land.[12]

I would like to bring it to your notice that this decree of 'one flag, one leader and one ideology' was also the battle cry of Fascist and Nazi parties of Europe in the first half of 20th century. What they did to democracy is well-known to this world.

The RSS is also dead against the federal structure given in the Constitution, again a basic feature of the Indian polity. This is clear from the following communication of M.S. Golwalkar to the first session of the National Integration Council in 1961:

Today's federal form of government not only gives birth but also nourishes the feelings of separatism, in a way refuses to recognize the fact of one nation and destroys it. It must be completely uprooted, constitution purified and unitary form of government be established.[13]

Sir, if you peep into the archives of the RSS and its brother organizations who want the rule of Hindutva in India, it will be immediately clear that all of them hated the Constitution of India, which was drafted under the guidance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. When the Constituent Assembly of India had finalized the Constitution of India the RSS was not happy. Its organ, *Organizer*, in an editorial on November 30, 1949, complained:

But in our constitution there is no mention of the unique constitutional development in ancient Bharat. Manu's Laws were written long before Lycurgus of Sparta or Solon of Persia. To this day his laws as enunciated in the Manusmriti excite the admiration of the world and elicit spontaneous obedience and conformity. But to our constitutional pundits that means nothing.

In fact, RSS had been following the ideology laid down by 'Veer' Savarkar. It may not be a secret to you, Sir, that 'Veer' Savarkar remained a great proponent of Casteism and worshipper of Manusmriti throughout his life. According to this apostle of Hindu Nationalism:

Manusmriti is that scripture which is most worshipable [sic] after Vedas for our Hindu Nation and which from ancient times has become the basis of our culture-

customs, thought and practice. This book for centuries has codified the spiritual and divine march of our nation. Even today the rules which are followed by crores of Hindus in their lives and practice are based on Manusmriti. Today Manusmriti is Hindu Law.[14]

Sir, as a great flag-bearer of Hindutva politics you must know what kind of society 'Hindu Nationalists' like you want to usher in. Since you are very busy, I am reproducing from the Code of Manu his prescriptions for Dalits/Untouchables and women. These dehumanizing and degenerate laws, which are presented here, are self-explanatory.

Laws of Manu concerning Dalits/Untouchables:

- (1) *For the sake of the prosperity of the worlds (the divine one) caused the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thighs and his feet.*
- (2) *One occupation only the lord prescribed to the Sudras, to serve meekly even these (other) three castes.*
- (3) *Once-born man (a Sudra), who insults a twice-born man with gross invective, shall have his tongue cut out; for he is of low origin.*
- (4) *If he mentions the names and castes (gati) of the (twice-born) with contumely, an iron nail, ten fingers long, shall be thrust red-hot into his mouth.*
- (5) *If he arrogantly teaches Brahmanas their duty, the king*

shall cause hot oil to be poured into his mouth and into his ears.

- (6) *With whatever limb a man of a low caste does hurt to (a man of the three) highest (castes), even that limb shall be cut off; that is the teaching of Manu.*
- (7) *He who raises his hand or a stick, shall have his hand cut off; he who in anger kicks with his foot, shall have his foot cut off.*
- (8) *A low-caste man who tries to place himself on the same seat with a man of a high caste, shall be branded on his hip and be banished, or (the king) shall cause his buttock to be gashed.*
- (9) *Let him never slay a Brahmana, though he have committed all (possible) crimes; let him banish such an (offender), leaving all his property (to him) and (his body) unhurt.*

Laws of Manu concerning Women:

1. *Day and night woman must be kept in dependence by the males (of) their (families), and, if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments, they must be kept under one's control.*
2. *Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence.*
3. *Women must particularly be guarded against evil inclinations, however trifling (they may appear); for, if they are not guarded, they will bring sorrow on two families.*

4. *Considering that the highest duty of all castes, even weak husbands (must) strive to guard their wives.*

5. *No man can completely guard women by force; but they can be guarded by the employment of the (following) expedients:*

6. *Let the (husband) employ his (wife) in the collection and expenditure of his wealth, in keeping (everything) clean, in (the fulfillment of) religious duties, in the preparation of his food, and in looking after the household utensils.*

7. *Women, confined in the house under trustworthy and obedient servants, are not (well) guarded; but those who of their own accord keep guard over themselves, are well guarded.*

8. *Women do not care for beauty, nor is their attention fixed on age; (thinking), 'It is enough that he is a man,' they give themselves to the handsome and to the ugly.*

9. *Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they may be guarded in this (world).*

10. *(When creating them) Manu allotted to women (a love of their) bed, (of their) seat and (of) ornament, impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice, and bad conduct.*

11. *For women no (sacramental) rite (is performed) with sacred texts, thus the law is settled; women*

(who are) destitute of strength and destitute of (the knowledge of) Vedic texts, (are as impure as) falsehood (itself), that is a fixed rule.

I would like to remind you that a copy of Manusmriti was burnt as a protest in the presence of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during historic Mahad agitation in December, 1927.

Sir, as a loyal, disciplined and committed cadre of the RSS, you must be familiar with the fact that Casteism is the essence of Hindu Nationalism. 'Guru' Golwalkar went to the extent of declaring that Casteism was synonymous with the Hindu Nation. According to him, the Hindu people are none else but,

The Virat Purusha, the Almighty manifesting himself [...] [according to purushasukta] sun and moon are his eyes, the stars and the skies are created from his nabhi [navel] and Brahmin is the head, Kshatriya the hands, Vaishya the thighs and Shudra the feet. This means that the people who have this fourfold arrangement, i.e., the Hindu People, is [sic] our God. This supreme vision of Godhead is the very core of our concept of 'nation' and has permeated our thinking and given rise to various unique concepts of our cultural heritage.[15]

Sir, please tell me whether you stand with the RSS and 'Guruji' or with the Democratic-Secular Polity that has given you your power. This concerns common Hindus and specially women.

I am sorry that my letter is getting long. You will forgive me as I have no other choice as your Reuter interview and other utterances and actions cover a very large canvas.

You will appreciate that I am not raising the issue of the 2002 Gujarat Carnage as many other individuals and organizations have been doing. I strongly feel that I must raise those issues which generally are skipped: what is your agenda for the Hindus of this country and for the existing Democratic-Secular polity.

I will end by raising two more issues, Sir.

Nathuram Godse and others who conspired to kill M.K. Gandhi, claimed to be 'Hindu Nationalists'. They described killing as something ordained by God. RSS celebrated his killing by distributing sweets. Are they not revered by the Hindutva camp? Aren't you one of them? When you were in Goa in June 2013 for the BJP executive committee meeting, you sent a message to the 'All India Hindu Convention for Establishment of Hindu Nation' organised by the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS). Your message read:

"Even though every Hindu conducts himself with love, compassion and intimacy with god, giving precedence to non-violence, truth and "satvikta", repelling demoniacal tendencies is in our destiny. It is our tradition to remain alert and raise a voice against persecution... Only by protecting our culture, can the flag of "dharma" and unity be kept intact. Organisations inspired by nationalism, patriotism and devotion for the Nation are true manifestations of people's power."[16]

You must have sent this intimate fraternal message to the HJS knowing them well. Shockingly, from the same dais in this

convention from where your felicitation message was read, one of the prominent speakers, K.V. Sitaramiah, declared that Gandhi was '*terrible, wicked and most sinful*'. Rejoicing the killing of M.K. Gandhi, he went on to declare :

"As Bhagwan Shri Krishna said in the Gita, Paritranaya Sadhunam Vinashaya Cha Dushkritam/ Dharama s a n s t h a p n a y a Sambhavami Yuge-Yuge (For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age) On...30th January 1948 evening, Shriram came in the form of Nathuram Godse and ended the life of Gandhi."[17]

Let me add that K.V. Sitaramiah has also authored a book titled '*Gandhi was Dharma Drohi and Desa Drohi*' in which the back cover matter, quoting from the epic Mahabharat, demands:

'Dharma Drohis must be killed', 'Not killing the deserved to be killed is great sin' and 'where the members of Parliament seeing clearly allow to kill Dharma & truth as untruth, those members will be called dead'.

Sir, please say if this is not an open call to annihilate those members of Parliament who do not subscribe to author's definition of Dharma.

Neo-Nazi mass murderer of Norway, Breivik, glorified 'Hindu Nationalists' [18]

Last of all; kindly tell me how you respond to Norwegian mass killer Neo-Nazi, Anders Behring Breivik, who hailed India's 'Hindu

Nationalist' movement as a key ally in a global struggle to bring down democratic regimes across the world. Just before he went to massacre a large number of people in Norway he released a 'manifesto' of 1,518 pages, of which 102 pages dealt with the Hindutva movement of India. It declared support to 'Sanatana Dharma movements and Indian nationalists in general.' This manifesto also laid down a plan of co-operation between Neo-Nazi movements of Europe and 'Hindu Nationalist' organizations of India. It said that it was essential that these two 'learn from each other and cooperate as much as possible' as 'Our goals are more or less identical.' This manifesto specially mentioned the names of Hindutva organizations like RSS, BJP, ABVP & VHP in this regard. Importantly, the manifesto pledged military support 'to the nationalists in the Indian civil war and in the deportation of all Muslims from India' as part of a larger campaign to 'overthrow of all western European multiculturalist governments.' I am requesting your response on a matter which, in fact, should have been raised by the Reuter journalists.

I shall be eagerly looking forward to your response. I am sure that with the vast resources available to you, nationally and internationally, it will not cause much inconvenience to your Highness.

[1] <http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/narendra-modi-defends-himself-on-2002-...>

[2] V. D. Savarkar cited in V. D. Savarkar, Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan, vol. 6, Maharashtra Prantik Hindusabha, Poona, 1963, p. 296.

- [3] Organizer, August 14, 1947.
- [4] V. D. Savarkar cited in V. D. Savarkar, Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan, vol. 6, Maharashtra Prantik Hindusabha, Poona, 1963, pp. 479-80
- [5] V. D. Savarkar cited in V. D. Savarkar, Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan, vol. 6, Maharashtra Prantik Hindusabha, Poona, 1963, p. 460. V. D. Savarkar cited in V. D. Savarkar, Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan, vol. 6, Maharashtra Prantik Hindusabha, Poona, 1963, pp. 479-80.
- [6] SGSD, vol. iii, p. 32.
- [7] SGSD, vol. iv, pp. 4-5.
- [8] SGSD, volume IV, p. 41.
- [9] SGSD, Volume IV, p. 40.
- [10] MS Golwalkar, Bunch of Thoughts, Sahitya Sindhu, Bangalore, 1996, p. 283.
- [11] CP Bhishikar, Sanghavariksh Ke Beej: Dr. Keshavrao Hedgewar, Suruchi, 1994, p. 21.
- [12] Golwalkar, M. S., Shriguruji Samagar Darshan (Collected works of Golwalkar in Hindi), Vol. I (Nagpur: Bhartiya Vichar-Sadhna, nd), p. 11.
- [13] MS Golwalkar, Shri Guruji Samagar Darshan (collected works of Golwalkar in Hindi),
- Bhartiya Vichar Sadhna, Nagpur, nd., volume iii, p. 128. Hereafter referred as SGSD.
- [14] Savarkar, V. D., 'Women in Manusmriti' in Savarkar Samagar, Vol. 4 [Collection of Savarkar's Writings in Hindi] (New Delhi: Prabhat), 416.
- [15] Golwalkar, M. S., We or Our Nationhood Defined, (Nagpur: Bharat Publications, 1939), p.36.
- [16] <http://search.yahoo.com/search?p=http%3A%2F%2Fenmaktoob.news.yahoo.com%...>
- [17] http://www.hindujagruiti.org/news/16527_mohandas-gandhi-was-terrible-wick...
- [18] <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/norwegian-mass-killers-manifesto-h...&http://ibnlive.in.com/news/norwegian-killer-anders-brevik-s-manifesto-su...>

(Continued on Page 2)

piped water to rural population and said "Major efforts by the state have provided piped water for about two thirds of the rural population." However, the agency has raised concern over house hold sanitation terming it as "a major challenge which needs to be addressed" since many households do not have access to toilets, and risk of faecal contamination of water exists.

Unicef has lauded that efforts of government in field of access to primary education, while raising concerns over quality of education. "Most villages have a primary school nearby. More and more students are being enrolled every year in primary schools and the number of dropouts is declining dramatically. Recent studies, however, show that the quality of education needs to be improved, with less than half the students being able to read, write and understand mathematics at levels appropriate for their age," the agency website stated.

It further express concern that "girls (in Gujarat) are still less likely to complete their education than boys." According to Unicef "There is a large urban population with poor social sector systems and poor social indicators exist, particularly in the tribal areas".

The Unicef works with the government of India to ensure that each child born in the country "gets the best start in life, thrives and develops to his or her full potential". It uses its knowledge to develop innovative interventions "to ensure that women and children are able to access basic services such as clean water, health visitors and educational facilities, and that these services are of high quality". Unicef presently works in 13 states of India.

—Mazhar Rashidi
Convener, Aman

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More choices or status-quo?

S. Viswam

Though there are still ten months to go for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections the political class apparently thinks that we are already in the run-up to the polls. This is perhaps why some opinion poll and media organizations have deemed it appropriate to conduct surveys to assess polling trends and options. Every poll, whether for the assembly or parliament ushers in changes in the pre-poll set-up even as parties go in for fresh alignments, alliances and adjustments. We have had the results of a couple of surveys so far. We dare say that between now and May 2014, more such surveys will be conducted and trends indicated. Before the Lok Sabha polls, elections to at least five assemblies are due, the results of which may also have a bearing on the parliamentary round. Thus, whether we like it or not, we can be said to be in the election mode already!

An indication that the political class has begun to think of 2014 seriously from now onwards was available the other day when the Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav addressed his party workers in Bangalore. Earlier, during the month, many other leaders also commented on the political situation

in the country in the context of 2014. Some weeks ago, the CPM general secretary had discounted the idea of a Third Front, which he said was unlikely and which his party did not want. The Third Front idea comes and goes, and has not been found attractive by political parties so far.

Mulayam Singh has not kept his prime ministerial ambitions a secret. He has candidly admitted that he not only nurses such ambitions but also the belief that with his home state's backing, his chances of capturing the New Delhi gaddi are reasonably good. But in Bangalore he went a step further, and held out the distinct possibility of his heading a Third Front government! Which means that he is among the leaders who rate the chances of a third term for the UPA and a return to power by the NDA as impossible. Indeed, he said that since neither will get a majority a third front will do the trick and seize power. And since his party controls Uttar Pradesh which has 80 seats in the Lok Sabha, it and the state will play a key role in determining the outcome of the polls. His chances of becoming the prime minister were therefore quite bright. Good luck, Mulayam Singhji!

Between the lines

Let's go back to people

Kuldip Nayar

So, now we have at least three aspirants in the field, regardless of the status of their respective candidatures. Only the candidature of Mulayam Singh can be regarded as "official" since he has nominated himself as party chief and has already committed both his party and his own home state to his cause! While there are some semi-official candidates, like Mayawati for instance, there are others who have an eye on the job but are not getting the requisite organizational backing. Like L. K. Advani, for instance!

The recent surveys have helped to identify the prospects of the two main contenders, the UPA and the NDA. According to opinion trends, both will fail to get a majority on their own. So they may have to depend on, like in 2009, on external support. Here, surprise of surprises, we have the prospect, according to the surveys, of the emergence of not one, but two new fronts. The Third Front and the Fourth Front!

The Fourth Front: AIADMK, Trinamool, BSP, YSR Congress, TRS, DMDK, and MNS. Their present strength: 67. Their potential strength: 122. A possible increase of 55 seats.

The surveys are generally highly speculative. We do know that some parties would like to be in alliance with others while some would like to go it alone. Alliances are not easy to forge. New alliances more so. However, the surveys have done us the favour of indicating to us what can be in store in the future. We must prepare ourselves for surprises.

It was heartening to watch debates on poverty on national television channels, particularly the English ones. Elitist in approach, they seldom deliberate privations of the common man. Likewise, the English press is reluctant to carry news or write-ups on poverty because it has come to believe that its well-to-do readers do not want to know about the extent of poverty at the breakfast table. The Hindi and other language papers are more sensitive. This is probably the difference between India and Bharat.

Yet the nation cannot run away from the fact that roughly 65 per cent of Indians are poor, 35 per cent of them destitute. After projecting the Planning Commission's criteria for expenditure as Rs 24 in villages and Rs 33 per day in urban areas, the government has realized that the amount is too paltry to convince even the most gullible.

Now the average has been placed around Rs 50. This sum is also too meager. Yet some leading Congressmen have tried to trivialize poverty by proclaiming that one can have a full, hearty meal for Rs 5 at Delhi and Rs. 12 at Mumbai. According to the Planning Commission, seldom right, poverty has been reduced to 22 per cent. The Commission, being a creature of the ruling Congress, gives credit for this to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government.

Planning Commission's Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia

says that the reduction of poverty during the BJP-led coalition was 0.8 per cent while it is going down by 2.5 per cent annually since the Congress takeover. Assuming that the reduction to 22 per cent is correct, still one out of every five Indian is poor. This is a dismal record in the last six and a half decades after independence. If you were to add dimensions, other than food, you end up comparing India with backward countries in Africa.

The Congress has been ruling at least for 50 years and it is the most to blame for the mess in which the country is today. Poverty and education, both neglected by the British, should have been on top of the party's agenda. An undertaking given during the independence struggle on social justice remains on paper. So do the provisions on equal opportunities in the Constitution.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, an eminent economist, was expected to bring things in order but he has been a failure. The growth rate in the last two years is less than the proverbial Hindu growth rate of 3.5 to 4 per cent, although the overall average in the last decade is 5.5 per cent, reportedly next to China, the leader in the world, Manmohan Singh has turned out to be more of a politician than an economist. This is proved by the fact that he has managed to be the Prime Minister for nearly a decade.

India's poor performance is not due to the global factors, ascribed by pro-establishment economists, but because of poor governance. The fact is that we are spending more than we are earning. The government has doubled it in the last 10 years. Inflation has been galloping upward. Printing of currency notes, if at all a short-term relief, is not a solution. The paucity of funds is sought to be met with panicky measures.

Take the concessions offered to foreign investors, 49 per cent in insurance and oil and gas. The measures have been compared to opening the floodgates. Instead of self-sufficiency, the cardinal principle after independence, the foreign investment has become the mantra. Then foreign investment was welcome in technical or such fields in which we had no know-how. Now any field or method is good enough as long as it attracts foreign investors. Still they want more concessions.

Bureaucrats, more than politicians, must share the responsibility. They too like the Prime Minister have followed the World Bank advice to convert India into crony capitalist state. America has not helped a bit despite high-ranking people from the US visiting the country every other day.

Most members of parliament and state legislatures live in their make-believe world and continue to delude themselves. It is well known that they get subsidized food and many other things. The central hall of parliament where the MPs congregate to rub shoulders with the obliging journalists has a canteen which is run by the Railways and sells food at a ridiculously small price.

(Continued on Page 6)

Politicalisation of Criminals – the Preventive Remedy

Rajindar Sachar

A recent two Judge judgment of the Supreme Court holding that Section 8(4) of Representation of People Act, 1951 which exempts from vacating the seat by a sitting legislator convicted of offences under sub section (1) and (2) (3) of Section 8 (which prohibit a person from contesting elections to the legislators) till his appeal is decided is ultra vires. Surprisingly there is less panic and opposition to the judgment than one would have expected – evidently because the judgment exempts from its applicability the existing legislators – thus the present members of Parliament and state legislators in states going to polls this year are not really affected.

The two judge Bench sidestepped a five judge decision in Prashbhakar case which had categorically held that the two categories, one of persons who are not legislators and the other persons who are legislators “is based on well established nexus with public purpose”. The two situations are different – in the later course vacation of a seat affects the house. As it is, the courts on their own have developed a universal practice of permitting the convicted member only to mark his presence to prevent his disqualification but forbidding him to take part in the proceedings or vote till his appeal is decided. So for all practical purposes a convicted MLA plays no part in the deliberations of the legislature.

This interpretation by Supreme Court would have serious consequences for human right activists, trade unionists and opposition political activists, who are so indiscriminately and partisanly prosecuted under various security

legislations or even when holding Bandhs and demonstrations. In such a situation automatic vacation of the seat of a sitting legislator would empower the ruling party with an arbitrary uncanalized power. Consider the enormity of injustice to the elected legislator, who had no conviction at the time of getting elected, but getting convicted during his term would automatically have his seat vacated, notwithstanding that his conviction may be set aside in appeal shortly thereafter; but by then another person would have been elected, thus causing irreparable damage to the career of the political activist.

The court recognizes the anomaly but opines that legislator can ask for stay of conviction by the appellate court and if granted he can continue. With respect, is this not leaving to the uncertainty of different reactions by judges prompting the cynical comment in English law that what is justice is measured by the length of Chancellor's foot. I am afraid this process is so discretionary and would vary with the individual decision by different judges – hardly a satisfactory alternative to Sec. 8(4) of the Act, which had at least practical object to see that the electorate choice is not nullified by adverse decision of the trial court without giving an opportunity of it being corrected in appeal which is his statutory right. In order to avoid further delay (which is really the villain) it could be legislated that seat will stand vacated if first appeal fails – no further appeals or revision before the courts will prevent the seat being vacated. It could also be provided that appeal by sitting convicted legislator will be mandatorily decided within

three months. This alternative has the merit of removing criminality from elections and also prevention of irreparable harm and injustice to the elected legislator.

No, I am not underestimating the danger of criminalization of politics – personally I would call it politicalisation of criminals, because previously criminals helped candidates to win, but now criminals compete to themselves become legislators – a horrible undemocratic situation endangering clean democracy. A recent survey shows that at present 162 out of 545 Lok Sabha members and 1258 out of 4032 sitting MLA have themselves declared that criminal cases are pending against them. And this in spite of the warning given by Vice President Ansari as far back as 2004, namely,

“Exactly 23 per cent of MPs elected in 2004 had criminal cases registered against them – over half of these cases could lead to imprisonment of five years or more. The situation is worse in the case of MLAs....Are we not progressing?”

My opposition to the extreme interpretation by the Supreme Court resulting in validly elected legislator losing his seat should not be interpreted as in any way minimizing the danger of criminality in our legislatures. Rather the contrary. I feel that more satisfactory mechanism to halt politicalisation of criminals is to have a law, long advocated by P.U.C.L. that if six months before the polling date, a person has been charge-sheeted by a court, he /she would stand debarred from contesting the forthcoming election. This time frame would give the concerned person to have the charge sheet quashed by appellate court, thus negating the doubtful defence put forth by political parties of false cases being lodged against political rivals on the eve of nomination date.

I am more disturbed by the second judgment holding valid Sec. 62(5) of Representation of People Act, 1951 which prohibits any person from voting if he is confined to prison even on a petty offence or is in the lawful custody of the police (say being a slum dweller, poor rickshaw driver, and thus unable to give bail) while permitting a rich accused, like the Coal gate and Telecom scandals accused and even when being prosecuted and even a food hoarder if on bail, but denying the trade union workers like Maruti the right not only to contest election but even the right to vote because the anti-labour state is colluding to keep them in jail – would this not (against their better sense) provoke ordinary simpleton citizen to tend to agree with Charles Dickens character Bumble when he said: “if law supposes that – the law is an ass” – a idiot, echoing in the same strain what provoked George Chapman (1559–1634) to say “I am ashamed,

the law is such an ass.”

In U.K. right to vote is only denied if a person is convicted and sentenced for 12 months. In Israel even a convicted person in jail is allowed to vote.

United Nations as far back as 1955 have resolved “that unconvicted prisoners are presumed to be innocent and shall be treated as such”.

Also why is it that the political parties, which are so upset at the latest Supreme Court ruling are mysteriously silent and inactive at not amending election rules to give the voters the right of negative voting, by carrying out the unanimous recommendation of Election Commission to the Central Government so as to provide an extra button of negative voting in the electronic voting machine. Are they afraid of facing the searing answer of the electorate in the voting machine of “None of the Above”.

Section 8(4) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 may be a bad law but that does not make it unconstitutional. Here I may relate a story. Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), who was the Lord Chancellor of England, was once taking a walk in London with his daughter Margaret and son-in-law Roper. They saw a man running, and Margaret said to Sir Thomas "Father get that man arrested". When Sir Thomas asked why, she replied "Because he is a bad man". "But which law has he violated ?", asked Sir Thomas. "He has violated the law of God", replied Margaret. "Then let God arrest him", said Sir Thomas, "I get people arrested only if they break the law made by Parliament".

There is a difference between law and morality, as the British jurists Bentham and Austin pointed out. Section 8(4) may be a bad law but nevertheless it is still a law.

Many people say that since several members of Parliament or State Legislative Assemblies have criminal backgrounds, no law will ever be made or implemented to clean the system.

To this my reply is that India is passing through a historical transition period from feudal society to modern society, and to my mind will last about another 15-20 years. It will take this long a period to clean the system and bring about an honest, just and modern social order. It can only be by peoples' struggles that such a social order can be created, not just by judicial decisions or making laws. One wishes that this transition would take place immediately and without any pain or turbulence, but unfortunately that is not how history functions.

- Markandey Katju

Wealth Creation versus Poverty Alleviation

K. S. Chalam

The country is undergoing an economic turmoil. The international situation seems to be not comfortable to recover from the loss of stature and pride once India claimed to have enjoyed. The business economists and idealist scholars are quarrelling on petty issues in their display of loyalty to market. It is not easy to change the rules of the game once travelled too far under the beacon of macro-economic models. The manifestation of CAD, low industrial growth, increasing trends of inflation, etc. is a symptom of a particular type of economic policy and therefore, the consequences are within the comprehension of the experts. Consequently, they assure us of the possible restoration soon.

We must appreciate the recent Ordinance on the Right to Food, a very courageous and relevant act to provide relief to the poor who are adversely affected by some of the economic policies. The critiques might say that the policy is only to win the confidence of the poor, the real voters. It is amusing to note the comments of our political class accusing the other as gaining political mileage out of it. But, the politicians or party functionaries are not there just to watch and wink, they are supposed to execute their artifices at appropriate time. What we learn from academic discussions are broad contours of a game given the parameters. Nonetheless, they just don't happen like that. Every politician irrespective of the party plays the same to win the elections. No political party contests elections, except the left, to

educate or formulate policies for the welfare of the people. Elections in a capitalist democracy may perhaps be considered as a process to gain control over decision making to distribute resources among their clientele and may not necessarily for those whose support is bought. The transaction has a cost and benefit. In this context, the poor are justified in supporting those that dispense doles instantly and do not trust in a promise of delivery at a future date. This is how some crumbs flow into their quarters. People are pragmatic in their outlook unlike some ideologues like us.

The record of achievements of liberalisation, the protagonists claim is not a mean accomplishment given the amount of wealth created in the country in too short a period. Let us look at the meaning of wealth. Economists from the time of Adam Smith have been defining and measuring wealth consisting of 'the annual produce of the land and labour'. It is further enlarged to include all goods, resources, assets that have an exchange value. This is different from income that has a quality of providing a stream of benefits over a period of time. National income therefore is flow of goods and services in a country during a year.

Wealth creation needs conditions of scarcity and capability to exchange. As long as free goods and public goods exist, they do not add value to the wealth. They are to be made economic goods. Keeping the principles of economics in mind, the

policy makers who are conditioned by their job and the persuasive soft skills of international organisations have designed programmes and schemes in India to create wealth.

The first thing that they have done is to liberate trade to exchange our wares outside the country. It is said that the country has been administered so far by unwise nationalist patriots who did not allow this to happen and the country remained backward with the Hindu rate of growth. Some of our Hindu patriots have also agreed with this idea and promoted it as we were getting copious donations and gifts (including in places of worship) in dollars from expatriates who were working abroad. Our NRI experts developed ideas and theories to enrich the capitalist world through their publications marketed by international publishing houses. This has improved our competence. However, some accuse that they are responsible to a large extent for the current crisis.

At home, the country had scarce natural resources like minerals, rivers, talents and so on and many free goods like clean air, atmosphere, etc. that were languishing without proper use. The common property resources like forests - livelihood resources - that were freely accessible to poor got restricted. The NRIs changed our mind-set and liberated the caged economy. The tiger in the cage is released and the elephant started walking on its legs. The rate of growth of the economy almost reached double digit, dollars

poured in and our urban landscape brimmed with beautiful structures and as someone remarked, even dalits got (cleaning) jobs. The per capita income was raised and our investments and buyouts abroad by our Indian Inc. proliferated. The wealth of a few is accumulated in leaps and bounds. How did this happen. It is very simple and easy. Nothing is hidden from the market, everything including our traditions and the so-called family silver, our mines, our human resources were exported, our climate traded to get dollars. The economy is linked with trade one and half times its size. FDIs, FIIs including the Swiss Bank deposits rolled into real estate, new investment projects, etc. This has put pressure to import gold and trendy automobiles, etc. The wealth thus created is so easy and simple through what is called a change of mind set.

Interestingly, the absolute number of poor has increased during the same period. Per capita availability of cereals declined. Economists have tried to define and formulate innovative ideas to bring down the figure to satisfy the international agencies and their confidence. No doubt, the rates have declined, but at a rate at which it was falling before the economic reforms under the direct control of our own policies (if the rates are adjusted for the present criterion of calories). The governments at the centre and in states have been formulating umpteen numbers of policies to reduce poverty with welfare schemes like Food Security to keep the poor alive. The proportion of poor has remained at 40 according to one definition and hover around 50 per cent in another method of measurement. Therefore, the criterion of per capita income of Rs 27 in rural areas and Rs 33 in urban

areas (reduced nutritional standards to 1700 calories from 2100), the magic figure of 22 per cent (below nutrition poverty) is obtained. The figures are worked out with transfer of income through MNAREGA. A wonderful statistical exercise. Yet, the rate of decline of poverty is 2 per cent while GDP growth is around 5

(Continued from Page 3)

The welfare schemes, started with good intention, are starving for funds. The Congress-run government has an eye on the next elections. For unpredictable gains, the Congress has put the entire economic system at stake. The opposition parties may be shrill in their criticism, but they are right in stating that Manmohan Singh's rule has been fraught with mismanagement, corruption and a few belated steps to stem the rot. The economic situation has been going from bad to worse.

India is a non-sympathetic society. Over the years, it has deteriorated in values. There is not a semblance of idealism, much less movement, to lift the lower half to lead a viable living. Poverty, unemployment and malnutrition, all signs of a decaying society, are visible on an increasing scale. The bureaucracy has been reduced to an authority merely affixing seal, from of being the steel frame that it was till the beginning of seventies.

Once in a while a courageous official like Durga Shakti Nagpal appears on the scene to evoke optimism. Her attack on the sand mining mafia in UP was applauded. But then state chief minister, Akhilesh Yadav, was influenced by politicians and she was suspended. Some of these politicians are the owners of trucks she impounded while carrying sand illegally from

per cent per year. It seems the drop in poverty is not due to the fast rate of growth as the best performers are Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjabe that showed moderate growth, Bihar and Odisha with a low base. Damn it, is poverty such a difficult object to elude our crafty policy makers for so long?

Yamuna and Hindon river banks. Had the two main political parties, the Congress and the BJP, been together in backing measures against corruption in administration, the situation would have been different.

Probably a mid-term poll could have given a fresh start to the country. The new government would have had at least five-year tenure to formulate policies for that period. It would have renewed trust which is badly needed for investment from within and from abroad. Even now Manmohan Singh should go back to people. His remaining 10 months in office are a lame duck rule.

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Consequences of Racial Stereotyping

Uday Dandavate

The killing of a black teenager, Trayvon Martin, in Florida has brought into focus the racial tensions in American society. Chris Serino, lead investigator in the case, told FBI agents that he believed Zimmerman's action in shooting down a young boy were not based on Trayvon Martin's race, but instead on his attire. Serino implied that the fear of being attacked by a hoodie-borne thug prompted Zimmerman to shoot and kill Trayvon Martin.

Justifying George Zimmerman's use of brutal force by citing perceptions tied to the hoodie Trayvon was wearing calls for a serious consideration to subconscious racial profiling and stereotyping. This case has brought the issue of racial profiling into the public domain – especially in the background of the “Stand your Ground” law in Florida that allows an individual the right to use reasonable force (meaning the right to shoot another person) to defend himself/herself without any requirement to evade or retreat from a dangerous situation.

President Barack Obama delivered a very poignant speech after the Zimmerman verdict. In expressing the reality of an average African-American child born to an African-American family, Obama lamented: “Trayvon Martin could have been me 35 years ago.”

“There are very few African-American men in this country who haven't had the experience of being followed when they were shopping in a department store. That includes me. There are very few African-American men who haven't had the experience of walking across the street and hearing the locks click on the doors of cars. That

happens to me – at least before I was a senator. There are very few African-Americans who haven't had the experience of getting on an elevator and a woman clutching her purse nervously and holding her breath until she had a chance to get off. That happens often.” Obama further explained,

He added: “Now, this isn't to say that the African-American community is naïve about the fact that African-American young men are disproportionately involved in the criminal justice system; that they're disproportionately both victims and perpetrators of violence. There are a lot of kids out there who need help who are getting a lot of negative reinforcement. Is there more that we can do to give them the sense that their country cares about them and values them and is willing to invest in them? It's not to make excuses for that fact – although black folks do interpret the reasons for that in a historical context. They understand that some of the violence that takes place in poor black neighborhoods around the country is born out of a very violent past in this country, and that the poverty and dysfunction that we see in those communities can be traced to a very difficult history.” (Extracts from the President's comments.)

The Zimmerman verdict has opened fresh wounds for those who face discrimination on a daily basis. It has also challenged the idea that by electing a black President for two terms, the American society has managed a fundamental shift in race relations. Mass protests are already taking place against Florida's Stand your Ground law that allows a citizen to kill in self-defense. On the other hand, the Zimmerman verdict

provides a perfect opportunity to understand the plight of the youth trapped in perceptions. It is important to understand that the American judicial process gives rights to a panel of jury members drawn from the local community to address the evidence and determine if the accused is guilty or not. In Zimmerman's case, though, his lawyers did not evoke the Stand your Ground law in his defense; the influence of this law on the jury's decision-making process was hard to deny. In fact, in an interview on CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 Monday night, an anonymous juror said the panel that found George Zimmerman not guilty considered Florida's Stand Your Ground law in its deliberations.

“Stand your Ground” governs U.S. federal case law in which the right of self-defense is asserted against a charge of criminal homicide. The Supreme Court of the United States ruled in *Beard v. U.S.* (158 U.S. 550 [1895]) that a man who was “on his premises” when he came under attack and “. . . did not provoke the assault, and had at the time reasonable grounds to believe, and in good faith believed, that the deceased intended to take his life or do him great bodily harm . . . was not obliged to retreat nor to consider whether he could safely retreat, but was entitled to stand his ground.”

In a country where the right to bear arms has become a matter of passionate national debate, the Florida verdict has posed a challenge to the supporters of the right to bear arms by exposing the fact that stereotypes are indeed working against the African-American community. Regardless of whether George Zimmerman's impulse in

shooting Martin was driven by racist motivation, it is clear that racial profiling of impending danger was a trigger for his actions and grounds on which the jury acquitted Zimmerman.

The racial divisions in American society have become clear from the reactions to the jury verdict. A Washington Post/ABC News survey found 41 percent of respondents in favor and 41 percent against the jury's ruling, with a sharp difference between African-Americans and whites. The poll showed 86 percent of African-Americans opposed the verdict, while 51 percent of whites agreed with the verdict. A Pew Research Center survey showed 86 percent of African-Americans disagreed with the verdict while 49 percent of whites were in favor.

The verdict in Florida and its aftermath will have a long-term impact on the future of the movement for social justice. It calls for re-examining the stereotypes we harbor in our subconscious and for realizing possible consequences of letting those stereotypes guide our impulses. Both the supporters and opponents of the jury verdict agree on one point – the unfortunate consequences for Martin were not of his asking. His family suffered consequences of racial profiling. In a world torn apart by violence, racial profiling is a mind's natural instinct for safety. Regardless of whether it is racial profiling of a Sikh man in Phoenix after 9/11, or of travellers with Muslim names at airports worldwide, there is a need to develop sophisticated approaches to sensing danger beyond common stereotypes. Progress will not be achieved by only gaining professional education. Productivity and efficiency – measures of a modern society – will not serve us well if we do not acquire empathy and responsibility for overcoming racial stereotypes.

Robbing the Workers to Enrich the Capitalists

Piyush Pant

It seems that Manmohan Singh government refuses to see the writing on the wall or is it that it has deliberately blindfolded itself to avoid seeing the reality? Or can we say that it has conveniently assigned for itself the role of the agent of Multinational corporates bent upon marauding the Indian economy? Otherwise why the Indian government should keep opening mercilessly the door of Indian economy for the foreign capital when the role of unbridled capital in devastating the US and European economy has amply been proved. In order to wriggle itself out from the mounting criticism of policy paralysis and to prove that it has not lost the track of economic reforms, the Manmohah Singh government has now set itself upon the road to further economic reforms knowing it well that these reforms are not the panacea for the falling economic growth and the mounting fiscal deficit.

It is well known that these types of reforms played havoc with the economies of Latin American and later East Asian countries. It is to be mentioned that many Latin American countries imitated the Chile and reformed their pension systems in 1990s, turning them into a fully or partially funded system of mandatory individual accounts. But the privatization of pension has not lived up to the promises of its proponents and supporters. It was supposed to improve the coverage and benefits to the workers and the generation of savings was supposed

to stimulate the market. But it failed on both the counts. Even the World Bank, once the ideological and financial supporter of countries willing to follow the privatization path in 1990s, revised its position, indicating the outward signs of the unsuccessful choice.

Instead of handing over the pension and savings of the workers to the vagaries of the financial market, the Manmohan Singh government should pay heed to the fact that in the new social and economic scenario, countries that had made reforms are now working on “reforming the reforms”. Chile itself, which is often quoted as the ideal case of pension reforms by the proponents, has recently created a basic pension for low-income earning over 65 years old citizens who couldn't retire in the private system. This failure was due to insufficient accumulated funds or simply because individuals could never contribute as many had to survive on low incomes in the informal economy. Similarly in Argentina, President Christina Kirchner has announced the government's intention of nationalizing nearly 30 billion USD of private pension funds to protect retirees from falling stocks and bonds as a result of the current international financial crisis. In fact the experience of Latin American countries has been that basing itself on the ‘advantages’ of private investment over a state-run system, the new social security system has been a complete failure. Says, international organization, Social

Watch: "Far from guaranteeing workers a dignified pension, privatization has established a system in which the saver has less control over his or her destiny. The new prevailing reality has failed to achieve the reform's objectives of greater coverage, more transparency and the promised increase in retirement income."

Take the case of Bolivia. A report published by Social Watch says that in Bolivia pension system reform was presented as a social necessity, an argument that was supported by the clearly dysfunctional state of the existing pension system in force for several decades - but was in fact designed as a potential source of profit for private investment. According to one of the main promoters of the reform (Pena Rueda, 1996), the replacement of the 'pay as you go' (PAYG) social security system was justified by data suggesting its virtually bankrupt state as:

The proportion of active workers to pensioners was three to one, which is insufficient to financially support the system and much less than what is considered to be the ideal proportion (ten to one).

The coverage of the system was very limited with only 314,437 regular contributors in an economically active population of 2.6 million.

The system was discriminatory in its lack of coverage for the substantial number of non-salaried workers.

The system was vulnerable to inflation and employment fluctuations and mobility.

Hence a new system was implemented that would allow the state to reduce, and ultimately eliminate its financial burden from the old bankrupt system and would provide adequate benefits to guarantee the population a dignified retirement from active working life. The intention was for this new system to have the following characteristics: a broadened reach including segments of the population not previously covered, in particular non-salaried workers; capacity for self-financing; investment management transparency; potential for strengthening the stock market; capacity for continuity in times of economic crisis; capacity to create mechanisms for maintaining the value of pensions; capacity to increase the incomes of Bolivians over the age of retirement.

More than five years after the implementation of pension system reforms, it was found that a comparison of both social security systems' coverage, taking into account their relative size as a proportion of the economically active population, reveals that the situation has not changed significantly since the reform. According to the National Employment Survey, in 1996 the economically active population figures were higher than in the 2001. Even worse, if we take the data used by government officials in charge of implementing the reform (an economically active population of 2.6 million in 1996), the previous system would have a much greater coverage than the current one, with the number of contributing workers amounting to 12 percent of the active population. To the discomfort of the reform's designers and implementers, disaggregated data on the number of affiliates per type of worker also fail to indicate

any clear superiority of the new system in extending coverage to non-salaried or independent worker categories. According to Pension Fund Association information, by June 2003 the number of independent workers affiliated to the pension funds was only 4.3 percent of the total number of affiliates.

This is to be remembered that the promoters of social security reform in Bolivia had made promise of dignified pensions that would improve on the social results of the previous PAYG system. This became the main justification put forward by reformers. However, an evaluation of results indicates a worse situation and reinforces the hypothesis that the true objectives of the reform bore little relation to the endeavour to create better living conditions for the working population. In the first place, transforming the system has not generated a significant increase in the number of beneficiaries, so it cannot be said that it has contributed to a reduction in the wide spread phenomenon of large social groups being excluded from social security benefits. Secondly, the promise of increased incomes has met with similar disappointment. The new scheme was designed in such a way that access to a pension is linked to a substantially longer working life and in addition it does not guarantee access to a dignified pension for all workers. There is a special category provision in the Law of Pensions called 'minimum retirement' that is applicable to a worker who has not paid enough contributions to finance a pension equivalent to at least 70 percent of the minimum national salary but who has reached 65 years of age. He or she will receive a pension or annual income equivalent to this percentage "until the accumulated

funds are exhausted," irrespective of whether or not this pension covers all the remaining years of life after retirement. In short, there will be workers who only have access to a very small pension - the current minimum salary is no more than USD 58 a month - for a time that will not necessarily coincide with their remaining life span.

Thus the Bolivian example makes it clear that the two systems are guided by different perspectives: while the previous PAYG system regarded the provision of security to workers after their active working life as an inescapable obligation of the state, the new system abandons this state responsibility, delegating the provision of security for the economically inactive population to the 'efficient' workings of the market. Now the question is: Why the Indian government is so desperate to hand over the pension sector to the private players? It should be remembered that when Pranab Mukherjee as Finance Minister had paid a visit to Washington, he had assured the American secretary for treasury that the Indian government would hurry up reforms like privatization of pension, banking industry and more FDI in insurance sector. However, the, oft-repeated and familiar government plea is that the national exchequer no longer has funds to serve the burgeoning sector. Moreover, banking on the Old Age Social and Income Security report of 2000, the government says that the ranks of the elderly in India are growing at a higher rate (3.8 per cent per annum) than overall population (1.8 per cent). By 2030 the number of people over age 60 is expected to soar from the current 80 million to nearly 200 million. This will sharply increase the number of people per family depending on the working

member for sustenance. The current pension system in no way provides for this shift. But the real objective is to privatise the sector. Through the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority Bill, the capitalists want to use the big pool of savings of the Indian working class, which has so far been under State control. It is said that the Bill is aimed at expanding the coverage of pension funds and converting them into source of finance for monopolist capitalist ventures. The Bill wants to provide cheap source of finance for the capitalist class, at the cost of guaranteed income to the workers once they are retired and old. It is being said in praise of the new pension scheme that it is meant to include crores of people who presently are not covered by any pension schemes. But the real intention is to make the capitalist employers free of their obligation to contribute to the retirement fund of those they employ. It is set to apply for both regular as well as contractual employees. It means that under this scheme, whatever the pensioner will get in the future will come out from his own contribution alone. There will be no contribution from any other source, not even by the central or state government. Thus the new scheme has all the potential to be doomed from the very start as the workers will prefer to keep their savings in long-term fixed deposits, or gold or in any other form they choose than joining a scheme fully financed by them and which puts their savings at the disposal of speculative world of stock markets.

Anti-employee tenor of the Pension Bill becomes clearer if we look at the provisions of the proposed Act. The important features of the Bill are:

Pension will be based on the amount of contributions made by the worker during his working life and the value of contribution at the time of retirement, which would be subject to fluctuations in the stock market. In other words, the value of workers' savings would not be protected and there will be no pre-defined amount or ratio of salary that is guaranteed on retirement.

The government will give up its role of protecting the value of workers' savings; it will instead hand over charge to various institutions of finance capital, both state owned and private, Indian and foreign.

A part of workers' contributions will be invested in the stock market, and each contributing member will be given a choice about the composition in which his or her savings will be allocated, between government debt, shares of private companies and other financial instruments.

Thus a subscriber to the new pension scheme is said to be exposed to the following risks after retirement:

As per the scheme, a subscriber is to make the choice of investment portfolio. As bureaucrats are mostly uninformed in finance and investment related matters, one might end up in making wrong choices, which would eventually rob her or him of the old age pension.

If there is a major market shock, he/she may end with no ability to purchase an annuity and the entire money contributed by her or him may be lost.

Since annuity cannot be cost indexed, its real worth may fall,

depending upon the inflationary pressures in the economy.

A subscriber is to perforce contribute towards the charges of investment managers, whose priority often is as to how much profit they could make through investment of the astronomical corpus of pension fund in the volatile share market.

Thus these provisions amply make it clear that on the pretext of increasing the reach of pension to all the working people, the government is trying to convert the right of workers to pension into a scheme of robbing the workers for the benefit of the capitalists. It is not that this Right of the workers is self-assumed. It has been recognized by the Supreme Court as well in its various judgments. In one of the judgments the Supreme Court said that pension was "not a bounty payable on the sweet-will and pleasure of the government and ... pension is a valuable right vesting in a government servant." Even the Fourth Pay Commission Report categorically declares "pension is not by way of charity of an ex-gratia payment, or purely social welfare measure, but may fairly be said to be in the nature of a 'right' which is enforceable by law."

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Cancellation of Two Steel Projects has Lessons for Other Projects

In quick succession two steel projects worth 18b \$ have been cancelled after they failed to acquire land and other clearances. Many in government are saying it's bad for investment, and environmental, labour and other guidelines need to be relaxed to attract foreign investment in manufacturing. As people's movements opposing many of these big infrastructure projects, we feel that these projects are nothing but resource grab and transfer to private corporations for nothing and in violation of constitutional provisions. We need stricter implementation of the existing guidelines to stop such loot of natural resources and stern actions against those responsible.

The POSCO Steel project in Odisha is infamous for several illegalities to date: tree-felling; grabbing forest-dwellers' land; incomplete assessment and deliberate concealment of facts, seizing natural resources without requisite MoU and environment clearance; criminally beating, arresting and killing those resisting the project; and flagrantly violating fundamental rights to life and liberty of local citizens. Now the Central and State governments have connived with POSCO by modifying rules to continually extend its in-principle approval as multi-product SEZ and violating the requirement that there will be no forcible acquisition of land for SEZs.

On January 18, 2013 in the 56th Board of Approval meeting POSCO was given the 5th in-principle approval extension! A June 15, 2007 letter issued by the SEZ

BoA to all state governments clearly states that no forcible acquisition should be carried out for SEZs. This was backed up by Instruction 29 guidelines on land acquisition for SEZs on August 18, 2009 to all state Chief Secretaries reiterating:

The State Governments would not undertake any compulsory acquisition of land for setting up of the SEZs. BoA will not approve any SEZs where the State Governments have carried out or propose to carry out compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs after 5th April 2007.

While acquisition under Land Acquisition Act 1894 has been halted by the Odisha High Court for process violations, the illegal forcible acquisition of forest land continues in violation of FRA 2006 and despite intense local opposition. The villagers have taken several resolutions in their gram sabha not to divert their forest land for non-forest purposes in the years 2008, 2010 and 2012. In the gram sabha resolution of October 18, 2012 the Dhinkia panchayat gram sabha noted:

The Gram Sabha endorse [sic] decision taken by the Palli Sabhas to not give consent to the diversion of forest lands under its customary use and boundary for the purpose of the POSCO steel plant project, or for any other purpose, and directs the District Level Committee and the State government to ensure strict compliance with the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, the guideline issued by Ministry of Environment & Forests on 30.07.2009 and the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs on 12th July 2012 in

this regard. Diversion of forest land without compliance to the Forest Rights Act and the above mentioned guidelines is a violation of the Forest Rights Act and a criminal offence.

The POSCO area in Jagatsinghpur, Odisha is the site of intense local resistance. The repression and violence that villagers in the area have been facing since the inception of the project are widely documented in the media, by state bodies and by independent NGOs (<http://www.forestrightsact.com/corporate-projects/item/12-the-posco-project>).

The 1620.496 hectare POSCO-India Pvt. Ltd. multi-product SEZ was given its first in-principle approval on September 28, 2006 in the 5th SEZ Board of Approval (BoA) meeting. On December 15, 2009 in the 37th SEZ BoA meeting 11 SEZs whose 2nd in-principle approval term had lapsed, including POSCO SEZ, were given special de novo approvals to allow the developers to complete their land acquisition! At the time, the rules of extension of in-principle approvals did not allow for more than 2 extensions and the Board noted:

...keeping in view the various difficulties expressed by the developers and also keeping in view that under the existing SEZ Rules, there is no provision for grant of third extension in respect of in-principle approvals, though there is a proposal for amending the rules which may take some time. After deliberations, the BoA decided to grant de novo approval... and will process them at par with the first and the second in-principle approval extension cases...

It is clear the in-principle approval extension rules were modified to aid

SEZ developers like POSCO! When the BoA is itself acknowledging difficulties in land acquisition, which are primarily because locals have rejected the project, why is it continuously extending the approval for POSCO SEZ?

The Centre is hiding behind false assurances by the state government of Odisha that no compulsory acquisition of land is being undertaken for POSCO SEZ! There are daily media reports and documentation of the struggles of the locals and the POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti against the forcible and coercive land acquisition being undertaken by the state government. The MoEF/ MOTA committee constituted by the MoEF made explicit note of the copies of all panchayat resolutions against the POSCO project in Gobindpur and Dhinkia undertaken by the panchayats. It was on the basis of this report that the MoEF withdrew clearance to POSCO but then renewed it on the state government's false assurances!

In the October 2010 report of the MoEF committee investigating the implementation of FRA 2006 a majority of three committee members expressly took note of local opposition to the POSCO project and the violations and lapses in due process including suppression of facts; violations of the Forest Rights Act 2006; inadequate R&R provisions; violations in obtaining the environmental clearance; and compliance of CRZ regulations. The members recommended revoking the MoEF environmental clearance.

The National Green Tribunal has recently taken note of the series of lapses and violations in obtaining environmental clearance for the POSCO project and suspended the

clearance of 2011. Based on the NGT judgment of 31.3.2012 the K Roy Paul committee was constituted and its recommendations are being considered again by the MoEF. Consequently, and given the 2007 clearances for the project have lapsed, the NGT has once again halted illegal land acquisition and tree-felling in the area.

The Centre and the State are colluding to violate laws and guidelines and the decision-making powers of the Panchayats to favour POSCO. With clear and documented evidence of opposition, how can the SEZ BOA claim that the land acquisition for POSCO is not forced? What is the reason for giving POSCO 5th in-principle approval extension in seven years?

There is no justification for giving POSCO land and tax concessions against the people's will. Not only are the state and central governments violating laws, they are creating additional losses to the exchequer at huge cost to the local people!

The recent arrests of PPSS activists by the state are clear indication of the coercion and violence that the state is resorting to have its way with the rightful lands and resources of the local people. We demand:

Revoke the in-principle approval to POSCO SEZ and denotify it immediately!

Release all local villagers arrested for peacefully opposing POSCO SEZ immediately!

Withdraw all police force from the area and refrain from using force and intimidating people to push forceful land acquisition!

Conduct independent fact-finding and document the violence, repression and coercion that the villagers in the POSCO area have been facing since the inception of the project!

Provide clear compensation for the damages and losses of life and livelihood to the locals!

and forest related grounds due to the gross undermining of regulatory processes!

No further approvals should be granted to the project on environment

Endorsed by:

–Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey, Shankar Singh, Bhanwar Meghwanshi, MKSS; Medha Patkar, Narmada Bachao Andolan - National Alliance of People's Movements; Prafulla Samantara, NAPM; Prashant Bhushan, Supreme Court Advocate; EAS Sarma, Former Union Power Secretary; Sandeep Pandey, Lok Rajniti Manch; Vidya Dinker, Citizens Forum for Mangalore Development; Ulka Mahajan, Sarvahara Jan Andolan; Mukta Srivastava, Anna Adhikar Abhiyan – NAPM, Preeti Sampat; Subhash Gatade, New Socialist Initiative; Gabriele Dietrich, NAPM; Arundhati Dhuru, NAPM; Vimal bhai, NAPMKanchi Kohli; Mahtab Alam; Usha Seethalakshmi; Simpreet Singh; Sanjeev Kumar; Mamata Dash; Asit Das, POSCO Pratirodh Solidarity, Delhi; Madhuresh Kumar, NAPM; Seela Mahapatra, NAPM; Madhumita Dutta, Researcher; Sandeep Kumar Pattnaik, National Center for Advocacy Studies

Kindly intervene to stop another planned Uttarakhand

We are writing to you amidst a situation of extreme urgency. The two lakh population of adivasis, farmers, fish workers, potters etc. in the Narmada valley – in the three states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat in the 245 villages require your immediate support to save their lives and livelihoods.

Reportedly, the state governments have submitted reports of 'complete rehabilitation' to the R&R Sub Group of the Narmada Control Authority (NCA) and the NCA is to take a final decision on the 2nd of

July at Indore, regarding permission to raise the height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam from the present 122 mts to final height of 138 mts.

Thousands are yet to get land, thousands more alternative livelihood, fishing rights, house plots at R&R sites and other amenities and entitlements. Corruption worth, 1,000 crores is under judicial investigation. Major environmental non-compliance has been exposed by MoEF's expert committees'. In such a situation, drowning the 2 lakh population in the living village communities would be a human

massacre, worse than the painful Uttarakhand disaster.

Please intervene to stop the political conspiracy to complete the dam by violating all laws and judicial dicta, when only 10% of its claimed benefits have been realized and the financial, social and environmental costs have increased ten-fold. Please do immediately write to the PM, Water Resources and Social Justice Minister and others to act by law.

–*Medha Patkar,
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Right-Shift in Japan Elections

D. K. Giri

The elections to the Upper house in Japan were held on 21 July 2013, the day an international delegation arrived to confer on the nuclear phase out and energy security. I was a part of that delegation. Out of a total of 242 seats in the Upper house of Japanese Diet, elections were held for 142 seats. The share of seats of major parties was: Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), now the ruling party got 65; New Komeito, the coalition partner of LDP, 20; the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), 17; and the Social Democratic Party (SDPJ), 1. In December 2012, elections were held for the Lower house when LDP had secured the majority. After the 21st July elections, the LDP got majority in both houses for the first time in the last two decades

The main opposition party, DPJ had a shattering defeat, the party's worst since its inception in 1998. Four years ago the Democrats won in a landmark election that had seemed to herald a two-party system. But the Democrats failed to deliver on their promised reforms and many in Japan thought three and half years of DPJ rule was a waste of precious time. Japan, according to observers, is back to one-and-half party system.

Many, both in Japan and outside, observe that the recent Japanese elections have been a bit complicated. It is not easy to discern the trend and the nature of current politics there. For instance, there was this nuclear disaster in Fukushima in March 2011 causing heavy damage to lives and habitats, yet the LDP

won the seat in Fukushima itself on a re-nuclearisation platform. The other contradiction is that when Japanese economy is falling and the society sinking, there is growing disillusionment in politics. The voter turn-out on 21st July was 51%, the third lowest in the post-war elections. In December 2012, in the elections to the Lower house, the turn-out was 59 percent but on 21st July, half of the voting population did not bother to vote.

It is widely believed that Japanese politics will take a substantial shift to the Right. The Prime Minister Shizo Abe will be free to pursue his radical policies without resistance for the coming three years. Japan has been historically a strong power in world politics, hence radical changes in Japanese politics will surely impact politics and economy in the world, not only in Asia.

A Professor of Political Science in Hosei University in Tokyo said, "Abe is pragmatic and has a strongly nationalistic side, this election could free him up to do more of the latter, which is what he really wants". Abe has clearly three sides to his politics – an economic reformer, a pragmatic politician, and a nationalistic leader. However, Abe seems more careful with his politics, more focused on economic reform which is popularly known as "Abenomics", relating to overcoming economic stagnation. Abe has made no secret of his political intentions too, like changing the Constitution, mainly, Article 9. Abe's LDP and his coalition partner do not have the two-thirds

majority they had hoped for that would have enabled them to revise the Constitution drafted by the Americans after World War II. So it is not clear how far Abe might succeed. However, at the moment he is on a political high with a comfortable majority in both the houses.

Abe wants to be an 'agent of change'. He is daring and different from the colourless leaders in the recent past. He is the first Prime Minister to visit a group of islets that are at the heart of dispute with China. He can get into a fighter plane on a rekki at the drop of a hat. He has toured the neighbouring countries to solicit support for Japan's neighbourhood policy. He wants to regain the lost glory of Japan in the fields of economy and technology. Some observers suggest that Abe, having learnt his lessons from his short stint as Prime Minister six years ago, may not push his nationalistic agenda neglecting the economic recovery.

The major political issue is the revision of the Constitution. Although the Constitution can be revised only by a referendum, the Parliament can initiate it. Given the border tensions with China and military build-up in the neighbourhood, Abe might be able to whip up nationalistic feelings on the Constitution. Article 9 barred Japanese Army to engage outside Japan. The Article, which came into effect on 3 May 1947 reads, "aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people

forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation to the threat of use of force as a means of settling international disputes”. and “To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces as well as other war potential will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the State will not be recognized”. Article 9 has, of late, been differently interpreted as Japan has been considerably spending on its defense called national self-defense forces. According to some interpretation, Article 9 has, as such, been irrelevant. Abe is keen on revising or deleting it. Abe may be able to cash on the average Japanese anxiety about China’s aggressive postures. According to the latest reports, majority of the lawmakers is in favour of the amendment of the Constitution.

After Chernobyl, Fukushima had a major nuclear disaster. About 160,000 people lost their houses; families were torn apart by evacuation; 50,000 people are yet to be evacuated. There are 48 nuclear reactors in Japan and there is considerable unease with the nuclear installations in Japan. But, to the surprise of many, the accident in Fukushima did not affect the pro-nuclear LDP in the elections. The political economy of nuclear policy went in favour of LDP. Prime Minister Abe said in Turkey, “now that we have had an accident, we can export safe nuclear power”. Japan, in order to boost its economy is planning to export nuclear technology to countries like India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Turkey.

The local communities in Japan have more power on energy sector. The central government pays more money to those local communities

who agree to restart and run the nuclear reactors. Government supports the nuclear industry with different incentives. The opponents argue that Japan has become a nuclear empire. With one-tenth of world’s earthquakes occurring in Japan, nuclear industries pose a grave risk. Moreover, Japan does not have the facility to dispose of the nuclear waste. It negotiated with Mongolia to take the waste but was refused. In Japan, the nuclear industry is like ‘a mansion apartment without a toilet’. There is no risk accountability. Insurance companies are not ready to cover the risks. In Germany, the State was responsible. It is another matter, Germany has decided, on a political consensus, to phase out nuclear energy by 2022. Japan seems to be a hostage to a nuclear village. This was the view expressed in the conference held in Japan.

In the elections, the LDP, having secured the majority in the Lower house in December 2012, and been in the government set the campaign agenda for 21st July elections. The issues included, a stable government by avoiding a ‘twisted’ parliament, revising the post-war Constitution, joining the US-led 11-nation free trade initiative, the Trans-Pacific-Partnership, promoting nuclear technology exports, strengthening security alliance with US, and above all reviving Japanese economy through a policy package called Abenomics.

What did Abe mean by a ‘twisted’ parliament? Both the houses in the Diet were controlled by opposing parties; the Lower house by LDP and the Upper house by the Opposition. This led to policy paralysis and volatile governments. In the recent past, since the long-lived government

of Junichiro Koizumi (2001-06), Japan’s Prime Ministers have been frequently changing; there were six Prime Ministers in the last 5 years.

Prime Minister Abe emphasizes on the economic recovery as China has gone ahead of Japan. Abe came out strongly with his economic programmes. The Abenomics consists of dealing with macro-economic problems through a combination of fiscal stimulus, deregulation, and increasing the money supply. Abe, in his victory speech said, “We would like to do our best to generate a positive cycle - in which job conditions improve and wages rise, boosting personal consumption and promoting companies to invest more - as soon as possible”. Abe plans to set up special economic zones in which deregulation will be encouraged to attract overseas business and human resources to Japan. Many wonder if Abe would cool down on economic reforms and pursue his nationalistic agenda.

The Social Democratic Party, formerly the Socialist Party of Japan has been the main opposition party, and as a coalition partner had two small stints in power, in 1994-96 and then 2009-12. But its support has been fast dwindling. In the July election to the Upper house, SDP won just one seat as its number fell from 4 to 3. In December 2012 Lower house elections the number of SDP seats dropped from 5 to 2. The SDP got 5.6 million votes in the proportional representation portion of the Lower house elections in 2003, whereas in the last December election, the corresponding figure was 1.42 million votes. Mizuho Fukushima, who has been the party leader for a decade since 2003, a vice-president of Socialist International, resigned

on 25th July from the party leadership position, owning responsibility for the defeats of December 2012 and July 2013. During her leadership, the party's strength in the Japanese Diet fell from 12 to 5.

The SDP needs to introspect on how it rebuilds itself. Observers feel that the SDP cannot grow as a viable opposition due to its internal divisions and inappropriate policies. The current policies of the party are: defending Article 9 of the Constitution, advocating substantial increase in social welfare, complete disarmament of Japan, cancellation of US-Japan military alliance, transition from mass-production/consumption society to a sustainable society, opposing nuclear power, and switching to wind energy as the nation's base energy source. These policies are all in contrast to those of LDP, the victorious ruling party of Japan. SDP's policies are, without doubt, progressive, in line with Social Democratic principles, but how they were communicated is the question. Social Democratic Parties, including the one in Japan, have perception and communication issues. One wonders if SDP looked credible and effective in integrating its policies with Japan's economic revival, Japan's role in east Asia and the world, dealing with territorial tensions with China, regaining Japan's old glory of being a technological power. The strategy for Social Democrats should be not just state what they believe but how to reconcile people's aspirations and country's needs with their beliefs. In politics, an approach of principled pragmatism is more appealing than perceived dogmatism.

Welcome to Telangana with a word of caution

The Socialist Party welcomes the formation of Telangana state and congratulates its people. The party believes that there has been a geographical, cultural, political, economic and administrative justification behind the demand for separate Telangana state. It has been a demand based on peoples' genuine will. The people of Telangana region made a long struggle for around 60 years to achieve the goal. Several people lost their lives in police firings and self-immolations during the agitation. Had the central and the state leadership taken timely decision on the issue, these lives would have been saved. Socialist Party appeals to the supporters of undivided Andhra Pradesh to accept the decision in good spirit and to help the new state in its development. Leaders from coastal Andhra and Raylaseema regions should exercise restraint in the best interest of people who have been living together for years.

The Socialist Party had passed a resolution in favour of Telangana

–**Dr. Prem Singh**, General Secretary; Socialist Party (India)

state at its formation convention held at Hyderabad in May 2011. Since then the national and Andhra Pradesh state leaders of the party have played an important role in the creation of Telangana state. Prof. Keshav Rao Jadhav, national vice president, and Nurul Ameen, general secretary, continuously participated in the agitation at state level. Justice Rajindar Sachar, senior leader of the party, and Bhai Vaidya, national president, expressed solidarity with the supporters of Telangana and raised their demand at various forums.

The Socialist Party would, nevertheless, like to caution the prospective leadership and political parties of the resource-rich Telangana that the valuable natural resources should not be open to loot by corporate houses. Rather the resources should be used for the upliftment of the hard working masses. The political leadership should ensure that all citizens get education, health, employment and good governance in the new state.

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Unfinished business

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The government bit the bullet and finally announced the decision to divide Andhra Pradesh, carve out a new state of Telengana from it, and leave it to the new state to decide about the future status of the two districts of Rayalaseema, namely Kurnool and Anantapur. The announcement naturally was greeted with elation in the Telengana region but predictably has thrown Rayalaseema, the coastal region and the residual state, now being called Seemandhra, into turmoil. The entire exercise was handled maladroitly, and has raised fresh problems that need to be addressed expeditiously.

The two reasons for delaying a decision on Telengana despite the prolonged agitation in support of its creation were twofold: how to tackle the fall-out of the creation of Telengana in the rest of Andhra, and two, how to tackle the eruption of fresh agitations for creation of new states in the regions where there have already been agitations, often accompanied by violence. In the event, the Centre has chosen to ignore both these factors and decided to address only the Telengana problem, leaving the other contentious issues unattended to. The failure to take those decisions is likely to be fraught with serious consequences, a glimpse into which has been provided by the

violent and militant reactions in the regions where the demand for new states has been loud and clear for a number of years.

It is not as if the Centre was not or is not seized of the problems posed by the continuing demand for new states. Nearly a dozen such demands have been hitting the headlines for several years now. Union Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde has taken the stand that there is no need to set up another states reorganization commission to sort out the demands for statehood. Apparently, he would prefer to have the problems sorted out by his ministry. That the Home Ministry is the last agency which should be entrusted with this problem has been exposed by the manner in which the Telengana demand was allowed to fester and grow and by the inability of the government to take a decision on it. The first SRC set up in 1954, paved the way for linguistic states. But its report left many issues unaddressed, particularly those relating to the advisability of setting up smaller states on the linguistic basis. An opportunity to set up a second SRC was lost by the NDA government when it brought into being three new states. Uttaranchal (now Uttarakhand), Jharkhand and Chhatisgarh were carved out of existing larger states. The pending

Between the lines

The partition story

Kuldip Nayar

demands for statehood, especially in the north-eastern region, could have been addressed to and a decision taken at that time whether to concede or reject the demand. But the NDA left the issue by the wayside in its haste to register political gains by creating three new states. Now, the UPA has committed the same mistake.

There is admittedly a strong case for small states. The viability of such states however has to be gone into methodically and rationally, without the influence of linguistic passions and emotions. The advocacy for smaller states has grown in the recent years, after the performance of large states has left much to be desired. Vested interests have developed over the both the demands for smaller states as well as the retention of the larger states in their current size. These vested interests have to be demolished and an objective analysis made for or against further organizational break-up of the country. But a closure has to be applied once and for all to the whole issue of linguistic division of the country. It is a pity that Mayawati's suggestion for dividing Uttar Pradesh into four smaller states has been ignored. Her proposal is worth reconsideration, if only because larger states like UP do not permit efficient administration. Smaller states are easier to govern but their economic viability has to be ensured before they are created. In any case, a good case exists for a second SRC. The Centre should not defer the announcement of a second SRC indefinitely. Instead, it should save itself and the country a lot of trouble by initiating the process for a final linguistic cum administrative division of the country. Problems do not get solved by running away from them. They get solved only by addressing them seriously, earnestly, and forthwith.

Partition of the Indian subcontinent is 66 years' old. On August 14, 1947, the states of India and Pakistan came into being in the wake of division. Even today they have not settled down as neighbours, much less as friends. Borders are bristling with troops and clashes are inevitable. A few days ago, five men from the Indian army were killed. The Pakistan army may not be directly involved. But it helps the jihadis and even the Taliban in their plan to destabilise India. It looks the Pakistan army is not interested in conciliation between Islamabad and New Delhi. One incident or the other always takes place before the talks between the countries begin.

What surprises me is that no front-rank politician, historian or any other person of eminence has given me a cogent reason, much less a convincing one, to explain why the two communities, Hindus and Muslims, separated after having lived together for more than a thousand years.

The radicals may claim that they maintained peace because they were the rulers. Yet the fact is that Hindus and Muslims had developed a composite culture which recognized the mingling of two civilizations and which had overcome the pulls of polarization. Social contacts were regular and festivals of the two communities were celebrated jointly. Still it did not take the articulators of religious identity to tear the fabric apart from the thirties. Was pluralism only a cover to hide differences? And

in reality, the two communities had never occupied the common ground and had remained distant from each other.

Had this been the case, why the exchange of population was ruled out when the separation was contemplated? Even Muslims on their own did not raise any objection that those left behind in India would number more than the ones in the Muslim homeland, Pakistan. Hindus left Pakistan and Muslims from Punjab and a few other cities in the north. It was a forced eviction.

The shadowy demand for vivisection was in the background for a long time. But it never swept Muslims off their feet until the thirties when the idea of a two-nation theory was propounded. The Muslim League in which Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah infused life won hands down.

While in the 1937 elections, the League won 57 out of the 48 Muslim seats in 11 provinces. A decade later in 1946, it won all over India: 116 seats out of 119 in Bengal, 43 out of 50 in Bihar, 54 out of 61 in UP, 34 out of 34 in Sind and so on. The League failed to get a majority only in the mountainous North West Frontier Province where the Congress party (Red Shirts) won.

It is useless to debate the birth of Pakistan which is getting more and more radical and Talibanized. But there are liberal Hindu and Muslim leaders in the two countries and

other parts of the world to question the people of the two communities parting company from one another after having shared a common way of living and following the same tradition for centuries.

A top Congress leader Maulana Abul Kalam Azad warned that the Muslims in UP, Bihar and Madras would “awake and discover overnight that they have become aliens and foreigners. Backward industrially, educationally and economically, they will be left to the mercies of what would then become an unadulterated Hindu Raj.”

Jawaharlal Nehru said that the splitting up of India did not solve the problem of “two nation” for there were Hindus and Muslims all over the place. Humayun Kabir, Azad’s private secretary, told me that Azad thought the Congress leaders (Nehru was then 58 years old and Sardar Patel 72) accepted partition because they had grown too tired; too old to continue the agitation against the British and wanted to devote the rest of their lives to build an India of their dreams. The Muslims community dubbed Azad as “Hindus’ show boy.”

It was an avalanche of migration. Humanity was on the move on both sides. None expected it, none wanted it but none could help it. The two countries blamed each other as they tried to grapple with this and other chaotic problems of partition after the first few heady days. The refugees carried with them to the country they went not only bitterness and vengeful thoughts but also stories of atrocities in the villages where they had lived peacefully with other communities for centuries. If partition was on the basis of religion, these instances only furrowed it deep.

(Continued on Page 6)

Telangana- the land locked state

K. S. Chalam

The long cherished dream of the people of Telangana is going to be a reality soon. The region will be demerged from the combined state after 56 years of cohabitation under the feeling of great pain and sentiment of separation. But, this is how states or nations do emerge and develop. This is not the time to reflect on our common Telugu culture and heritage as no one is physically isolated or rehabilitated elsewhere as in the time of partition. We continue to live and sail together enriching our common culture, language and future sharing our experiences and resources.

We may briefly reflect here on the economic status of the region. The economic history of the region narrated by Adapa Satyanarayana, Ramakrishna Reddy, Thirumali, Vasant Bawa and others clearly show that it had a distinct character different from others. It is really a puzzle to know how the Nizam accumulated so much of wealth in a land locked region. It is revealed that the economic activity in the form of industrialisation was initiated by the state, getting its resources through primitive accumulation. One should not forget that it was Nizam who had invited outsiders (through advertisement) to cultivate 40 lakh acres of barren land during 1920s that helped to create agricultural surplus for public investment. Thus, Nizam had developed a model to overcome the handicap of being an isolated province and not to solely rely on international trade. The authors have also explained how the “quartet of thugs” (four dominant castes) bribed the revenue officials to get their names entered in revenue

records to transform themselves as landowners. Later, the Telangana armed struggle and the distribution of lands in the region along with other political developments made some of the scheduled castes, tribes and OBCs as landholders with an average holding higher than Coastal Andhra. This character needs to be kept in mind while formulating economic programmes in the future state. The proportion of their population would also rise after readjustment of data.

There are several states in the country that are land locked and under developed. The so-called BIMARU states are land locked (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh). Even Punjab, Haryana and the Himalayan states have not benefitted from trade liberalisation. In fact, the regional disparities have grown during the post-reform period as the investments like FDIs are concentrated only on the coast and a few urban agglomerates. Delhi is an exception being the national capital city and politically a buffer between North and West. That is the reason why the government is now developing a Delhi-Mumbai corridor for industrial growth. Telangana, being a land locked state needs to learn from the experiences of the states noted above and from its distinct historical and social milieu.

The city of Hyderabad was developed due to several land related and socio-economic factors. The city has become bone of contention among different interest groups spread in different geographical regions that are close by and not the

backward North Andhra, 1000 Kms away. There is a tendency among some leaders to envision that the city can be developed as a growth centre to take care of the development of the entire region. We may draw their attention to the recent happenings in America and Europe where cities like Detroit have crumbled. There is no doubt that the city and its resources can be utilised for the development of the rural Telangana. But, the city cannot be overextended beyond an optimum point that becomes counterproductive. (What is the situation of Mumbai?) Further, the city has emerged as a centre of service sector - R and D -, that does not produce any tangible commodities but only weightless goods and software products. They do not need vessels or ships to export them from our borders to other countries. Satellites and internet facilities are enough. Another important factor that needs to be kept in mind is that the whole software business is based on certain soft skills and advanced education and training. We are of the view that the proportion of Telangana boys and girls in this sector is limited as they had inherited a weak and underdeveloped higher education sector in the districts. As someone has remarked recently, most of the engineering and professional colleges in the city are either under the control of minorities or 'others'. Therefore, as late Jayashankar (Telangana ideologue) used to insist that educational institutions are to be given priority to prepare Telangana youth to take up greater responsibilities in future.

Some critiques allege that the city of Hyderabad did not allow people to reason out the conditions in the rural Telangana. The city and its extended region of Ranga Reddy, Medak, parts of Nalgonda have limited influence on the structure of development

elsewhere. Interestingly, adjoining Mahaboob Nagar has remained one of the most backward area. The per capita SDP of Nizamabad, Adilabad, Mahaboobnagar and even Warangal is less than the combined state SDP and Hyderabad (some districts in Seemandhra too have per capita SDP less than state average). If we turn our attention to the prospects of agriculture, the size of average holdings, water and other complimentary factors are important. It is noted that the average holdings of Telangana are higher (2.4 Ha) than in coastal Andhra (0.7) and top 5 per cent of the land holders possess 33 percent of land. It is much higher in South Andhra. The issue is that the landlords or big farmers in Telangana seem to have not used their surplus for the industrialisation of the region. Perhaps they are lured by the glamour of Hyderabad and we may hope that they will now turn their attention to industrialisation and manufacturing in the districts. The newly formed state like that of Nizam has a responsibility to sponsor not only industrialisation but also dispersal of industries to cater to the needs of backward districts in Telangana to realise the dreams of the disadvantaged. The so-called Bahujans in the region in the name of SamajikaTelangana (social Telangana) have been insisting on just distribution of resources and fruits of development.

There are plenty of opportunities in the state in terms of mineral and natural resources including water that need to be imaginatively augmented for its development. Interestingly, Telangana has slowly shifted to cotton by devoting around 30 per cent of its fertile land it. The state had sufficient skill base in handlooms and textiles but, they were never effectively utilised as raw cotton is exported to Tamil Nadu and yarn is imported. This is

very expensive for the survival of handlooms and power looms that led to distress migration and suicide of weavers. Further, the region has to develop its roads and corridors to connect with the emerging International Air Cargo corridor in Nagpur (nearby) and to sea port in the neighbouring Prakasam/Guntur of Coastal Andhra. This would provide sufficient scope to share its surplus resources in exchange of Coastal Andhra space and funds to come out of the handicap of land lock to grow together. This is a win-win situation for both the regions to continue their legacy of brotherhood and inseparability in the years to come to demonstrate their combined prowess of Telugu culture.

Indian Socialists In dialogue with Gandhi and Ambedkar

by
Bapu Heddurshetti

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Dilution of Parliament

P. Rajeev

Parliament is the custodian of the Constitution of India. The Preamble to the Constitution proclaims the supremacy of the people of the country. They exercise their supremacy through their elected representatives who are the Members of Parliament. Nowadays, the non-functioning of Parliament is making headlines. And rightly so. The 15th Lok Sabha could be termed the least productive in the annals of Indian Parliament. As per the statistics prepared by the Lok Sabha secretariat, only 1,157 hours of sittings took place until the 12th session of the 15th Lok Sabha. This is far behind the record of the 14th Lok Sabha, which had 1,736 hours and 55 minutes of sittings. In fact, the first Lok Sabha held 677 sittings of about 3,784 hours during its 14 sessions. The story is no different in the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of Parliament. For the first time in its history, the Upper House returned the budget without any discussion.

However this is not the only thing corroding the functioning of democracy. The executive has taken most policy decisions without the concurrence of the supreme legislative body of our country. A classic example of this is the Aadhar, a much hyped programme of the UPA government. The Aadhar card is regarded as a pre-requisite for getting all government benefits. Without the Aadhar number, a student would not get any benefit from the Central and State governments. Direct Benefit Transfer is based on Aadhar numbers. Bank accounts are to be linked to it. But what is the legislative backing for Aadhar?

The UID bill is supposed to be the law for the implementation of Aadhar. But the Parliamentary Standing Committee had submitted its reports with serious objections to most provisions of the bill. The government has kept it in cold storage and is not ready to move the bill in Parliament in any form for consideration and passing.

But Aadhar has already become a reality and an unavoidable part of the life of an Indian citizen. This covert approach of the government was also visible when it introduced the contributory pension scheme for Central and State government employees. All the State governments in our country are collecting the contribution from crores of their employees for the Pension Fund. But we find that the bill relating to it is still pending in Parliament. What is the legality of collecting hundreds of crores of rupees during all these years? These are only a few instances of the government bypassing Parliament for implementing major policy decisions.

The Constitution clearly defines and demarcates the powers of different organs of the democratic system. When Parliament passes a law, it becomes the law of the land. All citizens of the country are bound to adhere to it. But this constitutional mandate is observed more in its violation.

While presenting the Union Budget 2012-13, the then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee had introduced retrospective taxation.

Both Houses passed the Finance Bill unanimously with these provisions. But when P. Chidambaram became the Finance Minister, the scene dramatically changed. He constituted a one-man committee to review this new tax reform. Within a week of submission of the report by Parthasarathi Shome, the tax expert, the government decided to defer the retrospective taxation for three years. Can the unanimous decision of the supreme legislative body of this country be overruled by an expert?

Parliamentary committees are considered a miniature of Parliament. Usually, the committees consist of Members of Parliament representing most political parties. In developed democracies, only Parliament can overrule the decision of the parliamentary committees. But in India, the executive has the right to adopt or reject the recommendations of a parliamentary committee. If the government incorporates a new clause in a bill, which was not there in the original bill, it should again send it to the committee for its consideration. But contrary to this constitutional convention practised hitherto, for the first time in the history of the Indian republic, the government constituted an expert committee to evaluate the recommendations of a Parliamentary Standing Committee. To our surprise, when the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance submitted its report on Direct Tax Code, we found the Finance Ministry immediately constituting a committee on this report. Though the ministry gave some explanations

when the controversy erupted, can it be considered fair or just? Was it not usurpation of parliamentary authority and a way of curbing the voice of the people?

All these are nothing but clear indications of a plan to undermine the legislative powers of Parliament. This is further highlighted in other policy issues too. Before the 1990s, the common man in India would eagerly wait before his TV set or radio for the announcement of budget proposals in order to learn about the changes in tax rates, changes in prices of different commodities, rail fares, etc. But nowadays, no one is serious about the budget. Of late, we find that not only Parliament but also the executive has no power in the pricing of petroleum products. The government has handed over the power to oil companies. According to the last Railway Budget, the train fares would be decided by a regulatory authority.

The government is now preparing to pass the Constitution Amendment Bill for Implementing Goods and Services Tax. As per the draft bill, Parliament has no power to decide the tax rates. The GST Council has the powers to decide the tax rate for the Centre and the States. With Parliament and the Legislative Assemblies having no say in these processes, would the budget become a time pass exercise? Are people's representatives being robbed of their constitutionally conferred responsibilities? After serious protests from different sections of society, the government made a change to this clause in the bill, rendering the powers of the GST Council recommendatory. But there is little doubt that these recommendations will tie the hands of forthcoming Finance Ministers

and thus lead to further dilution of the financial powers of Parliament.

Another serious threat to the parliamentary system in India is the steep decline in the representative nature of Indian society in this fundamental institution. As per Election Watch statistics, as many as 306 MPs in the 15th Lok Sabha are crorepatitis. This is more than a 100 per cent increase over the 14th Lok Sabha. The average asset of an MP is nearly Rs 5.8 crore. Is it not a farce that they are the representatives of a society where the daily consumption of more than 77 per cent of people is below Rs. 20? Another statistic is that 32 per cent of the candidates who have assets of more than Rs 5 crore won in last Lok Sabha elections. The winning chance of the candidates with assets between Rs 50 lakh and Rs 5 crore is 18.5

per cent; for those with assets below Rs 10 lakh, it is only 2.6 per cent. This clearly indicates that money power is one of the major factors in the election system of a liberalised economy.

The Indian democratic system has a progressive nature up to a certain extent. But it has been attacked by the same class that runs the state. Defending the representative nature of Parliament and protecting its legislative supremacy are responsibilities to which we are constitutionally wedded. Parliament is the vehicle through which people's aspirations and needs can be met. It is the mechanism to establish the rule of law and distributive justice. Denying and depriving it of its powers and responsibilities can only lead to the erosion of the legitimate aspirations of the people themselves.

—*The Hindu*

(Continued on Page 3)

I personally felt the privations of partition only when I crossed the border penniless. I was not alone. This happened to most Hindus and Muslims who were confident to return to their own homes once things settled down. But it did not happen that way.

How come that the same people from UP and Bihar, a bastion of the Muslim League, looked with disdain the ideology of secularism till the formation of Pakistan? Today, they swear by secularism. How do they justify the two contrary stands before their children or grandchildren? Secularism is the anti-thesis of separation. If it is not the conviction of the community, it is for it to introspect. Many Hindus are becoming prey to the same anti-national approach.

I thought that the religious phobia was over after the British left and Pakistan was constituted. But I did not reckon with the separatists working within the Hindu community. The BJP is the Muslim League of pre-partition days. Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi has become the biggest exponent of Hindutva.

Religious approach divided the subcontinent. The same thesis, articulated by the BJP, is destroying national unity. Imagine Modi, who blessed the killing of Muslims as Gujarat chief minister, becoming India's Prime Minister. It means the battle for a secular polity has to be fought all over again. There is no alternative to it because the aggressiveness of the majority can turn into fascism. People thinking in terms of democracy and pluralism cannot sit idle at this juncture.

For a GM-Free India

Letter to Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister, Government of India. on Supreme Court Technical Expert Committee's final report in the PIL regarding GMOs:

The Technical Expert Committee (TEC) set up by the Supreme Court in the Public Interest Litigation related to GMOs has in their final report submitted on 30/06/2013, reiterated and further substantiated the recommendations made in their Interim Report submitted to the Court in October 2012. The report is a strong indictment of the state of regulatory affairs with regard to modern biotechnology in the country.

The Committee notes that issues related to (biosafety) tests can be meaningfully considered only after major gaps in the biotechnology regulatory system are addressed first and foremost; this is a point worth noting and acting upon. Until this is done, it is obvious that public confidence in regulation is going to be lacking.

We urge that the Government of India takes these sagacious recommendations of the Committee seriously and acts on them in the interests of food safety, security, and sovereignty as well as protection of environment and farm livelihoods.

We would like to bring to your attention the major recommendations of the Committee:

1. "It would not be advisable to conduct more field trials till such time that major gaps in the regulatory system are addressed (these gaps need to be addressed before issues related to tests can be meaningfully considered)" (Page 77, Recommendations, first para).

2. The TEC's comments with regard to biosafety dossiers that were approved by the current biotechnology regulator is a scathing indictment of the failings of the existing regulatory regime. The TEC found that "in several cases, the reporting of data as well as methods and analysis has been incomplete and cursory; there are also deficiencies in selection of samples, methods of analysis, and statistical tests, making it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions.... the number of such cases that have come to the notice of the TEC also reflect on the manner in which the toxicology data has been examined and the Regulatory Body for having accepted the reports".

The TEC also stated "there are serious deficiencies in reporting of the data in the dossiers and more importantly in the way in which these have been examined and conclusions accepted by the regulatory body". The TEC rightly points out that "unless the purpose of the tests is kept in mind, the risk assessment is likely to fail to meet its Objectives".

The TEC has recommended that a secretariat comprising of dedicated scientists with area expertise as well as expertise in biosafety needs to be established. They have also emphasised the importance of considering the socio-economic issues in the Indian context. The TEC also recommends that the regulatory body should have area-wise sub-committees/expert groups such as human and animal health; environment and ecology; agro

economics and socio-economics; molecular biology; entomology; agricultural and aqua-cultural systems; public health; soil science and microbiology; plant biology; regulatory toxicology; plant and animal breeding and genetics etc. "A single Committee such as the GEAC or RCGM doing all the evaluation is not sufficient", according to the TEC.

3. "Conflict of interest in terms of the location of the regulatory body needs to be addressed", notes the TEC yet again. The TEC has said that regulatory bodies should be located in the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) and the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW). Further, members of the regulatory bodies should also be free of conflict of interest. Clearly, this recommendation is applicable in the context of the BRAI Bill also.

4. The TEC has said that "stakeholder participation, need, socioeconomic considerations, societal impact, and sustainability should be some of the dimensions that need to be incorporated in the risk assessment and it should be done at an early stage in the risk assessment process".

5. The TEC could not find any compelling reason for India to be the first country where Bt transgenics are widely consumed in large amounts for any major food crop that is directly used for human consumption. The TEC has therefore reiterated its recommendation made in the Interim Report that there should be a moratorium on field trials for Bt in food crops, until there

is more definitive information from sufficient number of studies as to the long term safety of Bt in food crops. (page 81, recommendation 5).

6. The conclusion of the TEC with regard to herbicide tolerant (HT) GM crops is that these would most likely exert a seriously adverse impact over time on sustainable agriculture, rural livelihoods and the environment. The TEC finds HT GM crops completely unsuitable in the Indian context and recommends that field trials and release of HT crops not be allowed in India. (Page 81, Point 6, along with Corrigendum Point 6).

7. “The release of a GM crop into an area or region which is the centre of origin or diversity of that crop has far greater ramifications and potential for negative impact than for other species. There needs to be extraordinarily compelling reasons and only when other choices are not available, can introduction of a GM crop in its centre of origin or diversity be justified. GM crops that offer incremental advantages or solutions to specific and limited problems are not sufficient reasons to justify such release. The TEC did not find any such compelling reasons under the present conditions”. According to the TEC, unlike the situation in 1960s, there is no desperate shortage of food and India is in a reasonably food secure position. The TEC therefore recommends that release of GM crops for which India is a centre of origin or diversity should not be allowed.

8. With regard to the sequence of testing of GM crops, tests “should be carried out in order of increasing environmental exposure required to perform the test, and tests should be done under the minimum conditions of exposure required for the test”, recommends the TEC.

9. The TEC has reiterated that there is a need to include chronic and trans-generational toxicity testing.

The following points are also noteworthy from the TEC’s final report:

- the TEC notes the value of chronic toxicity testing which is missing as of now;
- the TEC talks about the need to capture unintended effects which is discounted as of now;
- the TEC has raised concerns about the numerous GM crops being experimented in India;
- post release monitoring is sorely missing right now, and is important;
- segregation is next to impossible in India. Incidentally, this is something that the Government submissions to the TEC have stated unequivocally too. This obviously presents a huge challenge in terms of upholding choices of consumers and farmers.

While the sixth member inducted into the TEC in November 2012 (Dr R S Paroda) did not sign off on the final report, this is not surprising given the fact that his very inclusion in the Committee was controversial and objectionable – his organization receives funding from biotech majors like Monsanto and Mahyco and this constitutes a clear conflict of interest. It is ironical that even this SC-appointed Committee has had to face such conflict of interest situation, given that this has been the case with almost all GM-related issues in India so far.

The TEC also pointed out, rightly so, quoting from the Ministry of Agriculture’s submission to the Committee, that there is really no locus standi or rationale for the MoA to challenge the TEC’s interim

report – for one thing, they are a conflicted party; for another, and by their own admission, they have no mandate in biosafety assessment and are only carrying out the role of promotion with regard to transgenic technology. The TEC’s final report (with its corrigendum) has cogently and meticulously responded to the MoA’s rejoinder in the Court on the interim report of the TEC.

These recommendations are science-based and well-reasoned. Therefore, we urge the Government of India to accept the well-reasoned, reasonable and sound recommendations of the TEC and to start overhauling the process of modern biotechnology regulation in India. Vested interests should not be allowed to prevail and prevent the acceptance of this report which is based on sound science, justice and the principle of sustainability. We look forward to the Union of India accepting these recommendations in the Supreme Court and ensuring the delivery of justice.

We would like to point out that the recommendations of the TEC report also has ramifications for the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) Bill which is with the Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests. When read together with the TEC final report and the existing critiques of the Bill, it is evident that the BRAI Bill that your government has introduced in the parliament should be withdrawn as it is designed to be a single window mechanism for easy approval of GMOs without regard for independent, rigorous scientific assessments and pertinent issues beyond science.

–Sridhar Radhakrishnan,
Pankaj Bhushan,
Rajesh Krishnan

Total sell-out to global multi-brand retail

By axing the laid down norms carved out to protect the interests of the retail traders, the UPA government has thrown open the Indian retail sector to the loot for the global multi-brand retail companies. The Socialist Party strongly opposes the decision and appeals the opposition parties, including the prime opposition party BJP, to protest against this decision with the demand that the decision of allowing FDI in the retail sector must be scrapped for ever.

With this new decision on FDI in retail the Congress leaders have shed away all Constitutional obligations and have come out in open against the retailers and farmers of India. They do not honour their own words/decisions made in the Parliament. The 'goddess of renunciation' Sonia Gandhi, 'demigod of honesty' Manmohan Singh, his 'best neo-liberal boy' P. Chidambaram and likes have come out in their true colours. They all are bent upon to sell the country to the multinationals.

As per the decision now global retail companies are allowed to open their stores in cities with population less than 10 lakh; the condition that 30 percent procurement must be from Indian small industries with total investment of less than \$1 million has been relaxed in favour of medium scale industries with a total investment not exceeding \$2 million; the condition that global companies must spend 50 percent of their investment on infrastructure has also been relaxed to first \$100 million invested by them.

The Socialist Party, at this crucial juncture, would like to remind people of the country that the UPA

government was forced to withhold the decision of the Cabinet allowing 51 percent FDI in the retail sector in November 2011, following united and stiff protest by the non-Congress political parties and trade union bodies. But the UPA government, wedded to the ill-conceived notion of growth rate, implemented the decision to appease and benefit the foreign and Indian corporate lobbies. It can be remembered that in early May last year, the US Foreign Secretary Hillary Clinton visited India with this agenda at top priority. Mrs. Clinton has served on Wal-Mart board as its director for six years. West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee had expressed utmost resentment against the decision. That is why Mrs. Clinton went to Calcutta first to meet, praise and appease Mrs. Banerjee. The Indian MD of the French retail giant Carrefour called on Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma and forced him to implement the withheld decision at the earliest.

In view of this descending danger, the Socialist Party held a day-long dharna at Jantar Mantar on 28 May 2012 against the government's decision and submitted a memorandum to the President requesting her to advise the government to scrap the decision conclusively. The Socialist Party also sent a letter to all non-Congress office bearers and chief ministers requesting them not to implement this anti-people and anti-national decision in their states. Further, the Socialist Party observed Quit India day as 'No to FDI day' in Delhi and other cities of the country. The party also participated in the Bharat Bandh of 20 September 2012 and

organised a protest march in Delhi and other cities.

The Socialist Party, time and again, has emphatically emphasised that the 'loss-benefit' discussion that went on in the mainstream media and the ruling circles on this issue has no meaning. The FDI in the retail sector is for the benefit of the multinationals such as Wall Mart, Carrefour, Tesco, big Indian corporate houses and, of course, the ruling elite of India. The four crore retailers with their 20-25 crore family members will be the losers from the beginning to the end. Country's farmers will also bear the brunt of the decision. The already critical state of unemployment would be worsened further.

It is unfortunate that those who claim to be the champions of socialism and social justice, such as Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Lok Janshakti Party, Dravid Munetra Kazhgam, etc., have been playing the game of hide and seek from the very beginning on this contentious issue. They do this at the cost of the vulnerable sections of the society who trusted them and made them powerful. It was the most unfortunate act on their part that they happily attended the dinner party offered by the PM in November 2012 to garner their support to implement the withheld decision. The Socialist Party had termed PM's dinner diplomacy as *mrityu bhoj* of the hard working poor people whose lives have perished or are destined to perish by such neo-liberal decisions.

The Socialist Party appeals to the political parties who truly favour

(Continued on Page 15)

‘Re-invite Amina Wadud to speak at the University of Madras’

As residents of Chennai, we are shocked and outraged at the last-minute cancellation of Islamic scholar Dr. Amina Wadud’s lecture at the University of Madras on July 29, 2013, organised by the JBAS Centre for Islamic Studies on the topic “Islam, Gender and Reform”.

The decision to cancel her lecture was taken by the University Vice-Chancellor Mr. Thandavan in response to a text message sent by a police-officer stating: “Police cannot allow this (the lecture) considering law and order. Please take action to suspend/cancel the programme .” This morning’s newspaper reported that police had “cautioned” the VC about “possible violence by protest groups”. Ostensibly “Muslim groups” had threatened to protest Dr. Wadud’s programs in the city, claiming that she was a puppet in the hands of the U.S. government and “anti-Islam”.

It is indeed baffling that instead of taking action against the people/groups threatening violence, police “directed” the VC to cancel the event. If the current police administration cannot uphold the Constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech anymore it should consider a change of profession.

What is more shocking is the spineless capitulation by Mr.

Thandavan.

All the efforts by the Centre for Islamic Studies, the organisers of the program, to persuade the University establishment including the Vice-Chancellor to defend the University’s rights to encourage debate and dialogue proved to be of no avail.

A Vice-Chancellor ought to have outstanding qualities — of vision, intellectual honesty, courage, openness to different points of view and an unwavering commitment to academic freedom and the freedom of expression.

Anyone even superficially familiar with Dr. Amina Wadud’s work will recognise the baseless nature of these allegations, and register the utter cynicism and ignorance with which they have been made. An African-American convert to Islam, Dr. Wadud, along with Asma Barlas and Riffat Hassan and many others, has been associated with the world-wide group, Women Living Under Muslim Laws.

At a time when Muslim women across India — as elsewhere in the world — are mobilising and organising as Muslims and staking claims to equality and justice, which they insist are guaranteed to them as believers and by the traditions

of Islamic piety and jurisprudence, it is tragic that fringe groups that purport to represent Muslim opinion in Tamil Nadu seek to overlook their existence. Worse, they seem to not want such views to be broadcast or heard.

This sorry turn of events is worrisome for other reasons: whether it is the Muslim Women’s Jamaat in Tamil Nadu, the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, headquartered in Mumbai, Awaz-e-Niswan, also in Mumbai, the All India Muslim Women Personal Law Board in Lucknow or scores of groups in smaller towns across India, there exist today forums which confront patriarchal reasoning in matters to do with faith and law.

In that sense, Dr. Amina Wadud’s presence and talk would have added to the lively debates that exist in this country.

It seems to us that while those who think differently from Dr. Wadud are welcome to challenge her, this cannot be done by denying her the right to speak, and by tarring her with the all-too familiar “American agent” brush.

We demand that the University of Madras restore the freedom, honour and dignity of the academic and re-invite Dr. Wadud to give a series of lectures on its premises.

July 30, 2013, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Statement endorsed by:

V Geetha, Writer; Nityanand Jayaraman, Journalist; Karen Coelho, Academic; Satya Sivaraman, Journalist; Madhumita Dutta, Researcher; T. Venkat, Researcher; Archanaa Seker; Vijay Baskar, Academic; Ajith Menon, Associate Professor, MIDS; Chandrika R.; Kavin Malar, Writer; Revathi Radhakrishnan, filmmaker; Anandhi S, Associate Professor, MIDS; K Kalpana, Academic; Ponni Arasu, Researcher; RR.Srinivasan, filmmaker; Sadanand Menon, Columnist; Prof A. Marx, academic/writer; Neerja Dasani, Writer; Karuna D W, Researcher; Nirupama Sarathy, Development Professional

Supergoats

Few days back, as a billion plus India slept, a handful of tribal girls proudly held aloft a trophy they won in their maiden entry in a football tournament in far-flung Spain.

It was the night of July 13. Hundreds of fire crackers lit the skies as the girls screamed Vande Mataram – their battle cry – for being placed third in the Gasteiz Cup, the world’s best testing ground for teenager football in Victoria Gastiez, also popular as Europe’s Green Capital.

They were the same girls who were slapped, kicked and made to sweep floors by arrogant bureaucrats in Jharkhand when the girls asked for birth certificates, a necessity to apply for passports.

But they eventually managed their passports, thanks to a strapping American, Franz Gastler, who pushed the cases of the girls with mandarins of the Ministry of External Affairs in the Indian Capital. He was a lone ranger in his efforts.

The girls were lovingly titled the Supergoats by the organizers in Spain the moment they saw the girls playing barefoot in practice matches on arrival.

Why?

The girls had limited football gear and could not take the risk of tampering it before the tournament. They were overawed by international teams in the first tournament, the Donosti Cup, but came in to their own in the second tournament.

Offering a consolation prize for the third team – winner of a match between losing semi-finalists – was a mere formality for the organizers.

But for the girls, it was a giant leap into global soccer from their impoverished Rukka village near Ranchi, considered one of the world’s epicenters of child marriage and human trafficking.

As soon as the announcement was made for the prize distribution ceremony, the girls rushed into their dressing room and returned, some barefoot, wearing red-bordered white saris, their traditional festive dress. Many had their plastic flowers in their hairs.

And when they huddled together after the mandatory photo session, some wept inconsolably because they had almost given up their hopes to participate in this tournament. “They were over the moon. It was their night,” said Gastler of the girls, who subsist on less than a dollar a day.

For a country low on soccer, this was - arguably - good news for the mandarins of the game. But no one cared. All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel was not aware of the girls’ superlative achievement, nor was the country’s new sports minister Jitendra Singh.

“We could not sleep that night (July 13),” says Rinky Kumari, 13, captain, Supergoats. Once she bunked her school helped her mother do household chores. Today, thanks to football, everyone knows her name in the village.

She says she remembered the days she was slapped and made to sweep floors when she went to the Panchayat Office to get birth certificates for her passport.

“That is the pain of being a tribal girl in India. I do not remember the slap, I remember the Cup,” says Rinky.

For her, and her teammates, it means a lot.

Should not Tata Trusts and your Steel Mills in that area adopt this team with other girls and boys providing them infrastructure and other facilities. It will give Tata Group huge publicity at low cost, too.

–Dewan Satish

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Nepal follows China's "advise"

Kalpiti Parajuli

Nepal has initiated a program of control and surveillance of Tibetan activists and refugees present in the country. The government in Kathmandu has installed security cameras at Boudhanath Stupa and Jorpati, high-density Tibetan areas in the capital. The goal, say the authorities, is to monitor the activities of refugees, human rights activists and supporters of the Tibetan cause, to avoid any kind of anti-Chinese plan or campaign. According to Asia News sources, anonymous for security reasons, "the control program is the result of pressure by the Chinese government. Beijing has promised economic aid in exchange for this security service."

The program has cost the government 2.5 million Nepali

rupees (about 19,800 Euros). As explained by the police, 19 CCTV cameras will monitor the activities in the Tibetan-majority areas, while 16 more cameras will be concentrated in one area of the Boudhanath Stupa, a sacred place of Buddhism located in Kathmandu. According to the authorities in fact, Boudhanath and Jorpati are "the hot zone of the Free Tibet movement and anti-Chinese activities".

The Nepalese security agencies will record everything: from road and pedestrian traffic, to religious activities, even going on in the temples. Many Tibetan monks and activists have criticized the move. According to Ananda, a Buddhist religious leader, "recording prayer activities within the Boudhanath Stupa violates democratic rights."

Nepal has 1,414 kilometer long common border with Tibet and from 1990-2006 the parliamentary monarchy, on the advice of India, allowed the free movement of Tibetan exiles in the country. The Dalai Lama and members of the Tibetan government in exile in Dharamsala (India) visited the country several times, which is home to more than 20 thousand refugees. After the abolition of the monarchy in 2006 and the rise to power of communist and Maoist formations Nepal has changed course, abandoning its historic ally India and tying closer relations with China. In exchange for economic aid, Beijing has called for the closure of the borders with Tibet and the repression of any anti-Chinese demonstration.

- *Asia News*

Hearing on nuclear project

We congratulate the people of Chutka (Mandla district, Madhya Pradesh) for their vigilant and massive protest which has forced the government to cancel the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) public hearing for the second time. An earlier attempt to organise a farcical public hearing was thwarted by people's resistance in May.

EIA hearings on nuclear projects have been reduced to a complete farce. Done by unaccredited agencies, the EIA reports do not look into radiation hazards at all and deliberately avoid crucial details and fudge data. Even such farcical reports are not shared with the people in their local language and

EIA hearings are declared a success by the district administration despite massive popular protests at their venue. From Jaitapur to Gorakhpur and Rawatbhata, we have witnessed the same unacceptable pattern.

The People's Charter on Nuclear Energy released recently in Ahmedabad at a national gathering of grassroots anti-nuclear movements has also brought the issue of farcical EIA hearings into focus.

We demand that the government revise and tighten the EIA hearing process substantially, While incorporating suggestions from independent environmental experts and social activists regarding both technical issues and transparency

and democracy. Pending such revision, all EIA hearings should be put on hold.

- **Praful Bidwai, Achin Vanaik, Lalita Ramdas, Abey George, Kumar Sundaram Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace**

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Intergenerational Issues Ethnic Minority Communities in the UK

Suhas Khale

Generally a generation gap exists in all the societies and all the countries

“Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after”.

In the United Kingdom, people from the former colonies have migrated for furthering the skills, employment and joining relations refugees, asylum seekers, etc. This has meant entry of people of different cultures, values, traditions, religions. With the advent and expansion of EU a number of migrants have come into the UK from Eastern European countries. Cohesion of such diverse communities with each having its own way of living is an important social issue. Whilst the intergenerational gap is not confined to just ethnic minority families but is a worldwide phenomenon, the big difference is that the migrant parents from ethnic minority communities have much stronger ties and feelings to their countries of origin whereas their children have an interest but in most cases are less knowledgeable about their own cultures. Any two generations can have differences, however in the context of migrant communities the differences are wider as younger generations have been born and brought up here. Ideas and beliefs of older generations are increasingly being questioned by young individuals growing up in the UK with different value system

and social education process. Thus there is a growing divide between the younger generation and the older which needs to be bridged by understanding and improving relationships across generations. Young people feel that they are capable enough to learn on their own rather than being constantly preached by the older generation. The second and third generations of those people who came to UK are growing up. As the migrated people have come from a diverse set of countries with different traditions, cultures and values there is no single set of common ethnic minority values, however there are some beliefs and ideas which the first generation migrant came with which are common to them. Experiences of racial and gender discrimination and prejudices encountered by ethnic minority communities particularly in employment and housing have further accentuated the differences between the younger and older generations.

How far are people in the UK, from different backgrounds, traditions and cultures, willing to understand their own culture and their own values and how they relate to what is happening here? There is a lot of orthodoxy in the minds of people who have come here who say this is what I was told by my grandfather and great grandfather and this is the way the world is going to be. But the world has now changed so what is important in terms of culture

and tradition is that if we try and achieve an analytical mind in terms of what culture is and why certain traditions are there. Maybe some of those traditions were right at the time they were created and they were necessary but as the world changes, these traditions may be outdated and may need to be altered. So until such time, it doesn't matter where people come from, all these civilizations have their own way of living. I think that is the key point, so if we take that kind of attitude, particularly the older generation, then we have a greater chance of taking a step forward, not only understanding the younger people but also being able to communicate with other communities from other parts of the world and to create better community cohesion.

Globalisation and development of internet and other technological changes have brought about extraordinary social changes all over the world and UK is at the forefront of this. The Facebook and Twitter generation and technological advancement highlight fundamental differences between the older and younger generations. Priorities have taken a dramatic turn with regard to the importance given to the family, the role of women, maintaining a balance between work and family life, respect for the authority and other traditional values. The current climate of economic and financial downturn and its impact on employment and living standards have brought into

focus the divide between the older and younger generation.

Hence, there is a strong need to improve intergenerational understandings as lack of it risks undermining family peace and social cohesion. Effort is required to develop and improve relationships across generations and create a dialogue between the elders and the young ones for better understanding of differences between generations in order to improve relationships between various members of the community. This requires analytical thinking.

Culture is a set of customs and social values prevalent at a particular time, which are not static. It is a lifestyle which is changing through the generations and this can be confusing. It should be seen as a rich and good thing, but of course this depends on people's own point of view. Children and grandchildren of the older generation may now actually have a richer culture than what they themselves had as children because it is changing and being enriched by other influences. Whilst traditions are a set of rules followed by people which are handed down the generations – maybe something that family does in a particular way. We don't necessarily know why we are doing it, but it is not usually questioned or we were not allowed to even question it. People are now changing traditions and moving along with time. The older generation feels that the younger generation does not always respect their culture and/or appreciate the traditions, so do not include these in their own lifestyle or follow them which may eventually cause them to die out. Clashes are not normally with culture but with tradition. The

younger generation are finding it difficult because they are told how things are done, but they are not given the reasons why and therefore clashes between the two generations can occur. The older generation can sometimes be stuck in their old thought processes and may feel that the younger generation are not being obedient, like in their day, when they just followed their parents without questioning, maybe because they were not allowed to question it. However, the younger generation of today needs justification about traditional values so the older generation should give clear explanations so that it makes sense and makes them want to listen and understand.

There is a lack of this communication and understanding. Young people should understand that it is possible to communicate with older people and vice-versa. Each generation should accept each other's views and reach an understanding even if they don't agree. Older people have more experience but they should not try to change the views of a child, instead they should share their own experiences and explain what they did or would do in a particular situation and just offer advice and different options. Younger people think they will be judged and misunderstood by older people because of their lifestyle and interests and that they may be horrified about things they get up to. Though, often this may not be the case as society is ever-changing. Each generation feels that it knows better than the other so they do not even wait to hear what the other has to say. One has to have a positive attitude. There will always remain certain people who will be adamant about not wanting to change but

first of all communities have to ensure that that is the minority. Nothing changes unless some sort of dialogue or communication comes in. By staying where we are, nothing will change. This is relevant not only to the ethnic minorities people who come here, but the mainstream ethnic majority people have certain attitudes and ways of looking at things. We must not allow that minority to impede any progress which we want to make.

Expectations and pressures, especially with regard to career choice, e.g. a youngster may feel the pressure to go to University and become a doctor, lawyer, accountant. However, the child may be more creative and want to pursue a career in something like sport, art or music. We should advise and guide them, but allow them to make their own choice that they will be happy with so they do not apportion blame in the future. The younger generation may feel pressured into making choices or behaving in such ways just to please the older generation and make them proud. Parents need to allow children to make their own mistakes. They should not be a hindrance to a child's advancement, hopes or dreams. They should give advice and options, but should not be forceful.

The younger generations who are now parents themselves do not have the same values that their parents had and are less strict about how they are bringing up their children as they themselves were never properly told to about why people generally think that the "older generation" means that you are wiser and more mature, but this is not necessarily so. The lessons learnt from the experiences that we

go through in life, is what makes us mature. Sometimes there are certain prejudices that are out there just by the way we speak and how we carry ourselves. Emphasis placed on parents and the importance of parents nurturing children in a healthy environment that allows them to become responsible young people. We should all respect the ideas and values of different generations from different countries.

More awareness about different traditions and cultures is needed. Places should be available where different generations can get together and do fun activities. Older generations should share their experiences and admit to their mistakes and not believe that they always know best – this will improve relationships with the younger generation. This may help bring them closer and the younger people may use their own examples for expressing their point of view and reasons. Avoid having pre-conceived ideas. Hold more events together for intergenerational activities. Visits should be made to schools to raise awareness about this issue. Find ways to shape culture into our lives to avoid the gap between the generations widening. It is up to parents and the older generation to explain and lead by example. Both generations should not only have an open attitude but also try to understand and listen to each other whether we like it or not and whether we agree or not and respect each other's views, that's the most important thing. There is need to address the difficult issue of perception of what one generation thinks of the other in a practical way to get a better understanding of each other. There may be little

discussion in schools, but it needs to be continuous and somehow the family, the infrastructure society has got to reinforce that. Learn about the backgrounds of others and study their use of language. There are young people out there who are actually experiencing other things that the older generations have no clue about, so they will be mature in that respect, having an open mind without those prejudices and barriers that sometimes people find ourselves putting up.

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the retailers to come together and force the government to scrap FDI in retail for ever. The party also appeals to the various trader bodies, trade unions, social organisations and concerned citizens who believe in the Constitutional sovereignty and socialism to come forward unitedly and decisively against this neo-liberal onslaught.

**–Dr. Prem Singh,
General Secretary, Socialist Party (India)**



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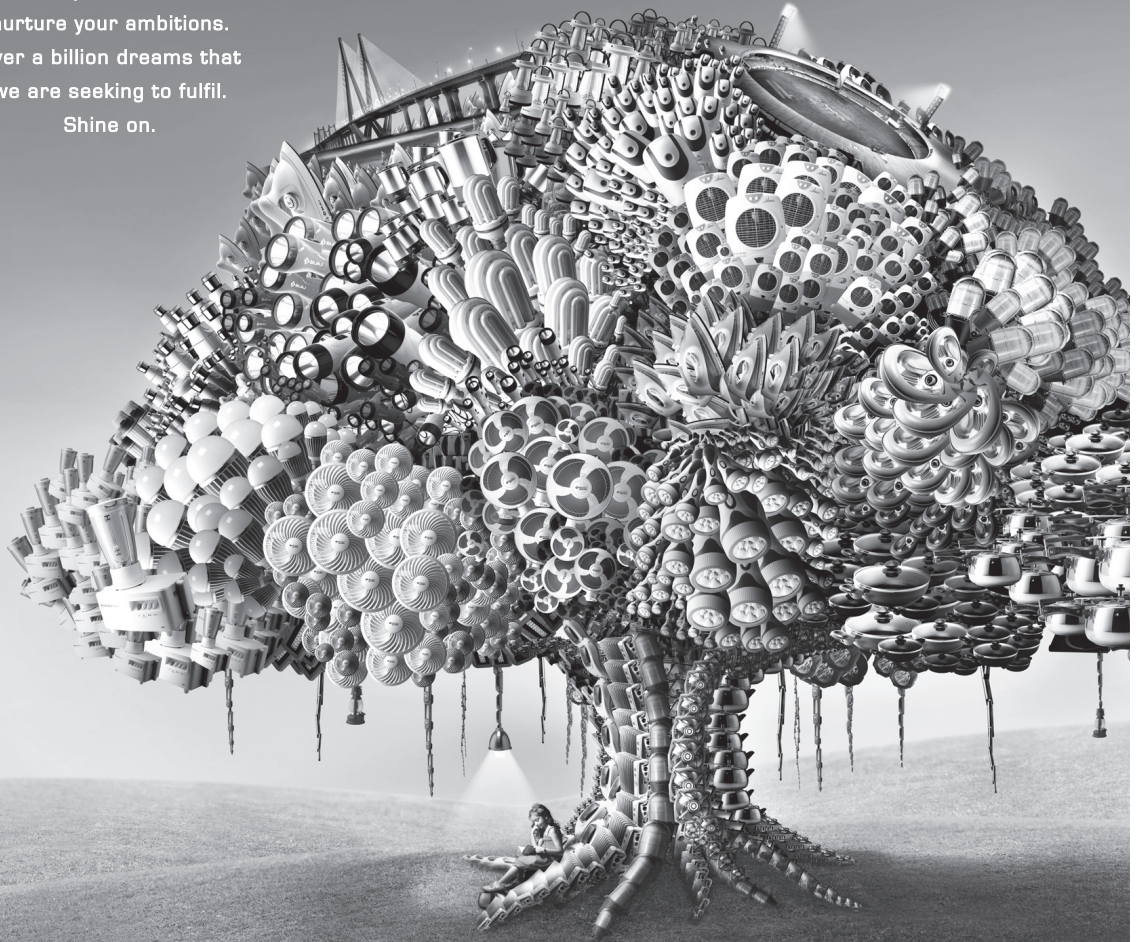
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Failure on many fronts

S. Viswam

The communal flare-up in Jammu and Kashmir state's Kishtwar town has been attributed to administrative and intelligence failures on the state government's part. Indeed, it would seem that the district administration mishandled the situation after the riots. It was caught napping by the sudden eruption of violence which resulted in loss of precious lives. This showed failure of intelligence. The district administration did not inform the state capital soon enough when riots broke out, and in turn, the state government delayed sending a message to the Centre to deploy the army by as many as seven hours. Meanwhile, the situation went out of control. This is cited as an instance of administrative failure. Now, after the unfortunate event, the Centre and the state are engaged in the usual blame game. And predictably, the Kishtwar turmoil has become a football being kicked this way and that by politicians fishing in troubled waters. A familiar Indian story.

Curfew has had to be enforced in Jammu and many other smaller towns adjacent to Kishtwar, including in Udhampur and Doda. Srinagar itself experienced tension since separatist groups called for a protest bandh. The Kishtwar peace was broken when on the eve of Id-ul-Fitr posters appeared at a local mosque demanding the return of the remains of Afzal Guru and Maqbool Butt. Since these were no more topical issues of discontent, the motive of those who put up the posters was to stir trouble and appeal to communal passions. Unsurprisingly, trouble broke out after the Id prayers on Friday, and both the Jammu and Valley areas were in the grip of fear and panic.

The development came within five days of the killing of five Indian soldiers in Poonch. There was palpable tension in all parts of the country after this outrage, but tension was more evident in the Jammu region in which Poonch is located. The authorities did not realize that the event was provocative enough and apt to lead to trouble. The time-bound judicial probe ordered by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah ought to bring out the caused which led to sudden violence.

Was the communal explosion preplanned? Were any outsiders involved? Were anti-national slogans shouted in Kishtwar two days before Id? Were shops of the minority community set on fire? Was there a Pakistani hand in the Kishtwar riots? These questions need to be answered satisfactorily.

What has been really unfortunate vis-à-vis the Kishtwar eruption is that it has taken place at a time when India-Pakistan bilateral relations are under review and a proposal is on for the prime ministers of the two countries to meet at New York when the UN General Assembly convenes in September. High hopes had been raised by the prospects of this interaction. Indeed, on its success depended the decision of the prime minister to visit Pakistan. Now, it seems doubtful if the New York meeting will take place at all. The opposition parties have raised the question whether the Prime Minister should meet his Pakistani counterpart against the background of a series of incidents of late in which the Pakistani army has indulged in high-handed wantonness across the LoC. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that ever since the beheading of the five Indian soldiers along the LoC a few days ago, the trust deficit between India and Pakistan has deepened. The goodwill generated by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharief and his overtures for normalization has evaporated.

The bilateral relationship has touched nadir.

This has happened despite the consistent goodwill being displayed by the Indian Prime Minister who is even accused by the opposition of being needlessly soft towards Pakistan. The recent events have provoked a strong debate within India on the theme whether or not New Delhi should persist with its policy of conciliation and cooperation or adopt a more aggressive stance. The future of the bilateral ties hangs in the balance. The ball is in Islamabad's court and unless India is convinced that Pakistan is serious about peace and friendship, the bilateral environment will remain strained. This will be in the long-term interest of neither countries.



Between the lines

Convicted MPs should quit

Kuldip Nayar

Parliament is a temple of democracy. Members are its pujaris (priests). Their purity affects the temple's purity. If members defile it, the reputation of temple goes down in the eyes of the people. They begin to doubt the belief it projects. Something similar is happening in Indian Parliament, which has lost its luster and does not evoke the confidence it once did. All types of ills are attributed to it. The same temple, citadel of faith, has become a laughing stock.

Still the fact remains that power resides in Parliament. It is because the two houses, the Lok Sabha elected directly by the people, and the Rajya Sabha indirectly, legislate for the country. Both have lessened in esteem due to the lowering of integrity of many MPs. A rough estimate is that 30 per cent of them are involved in one or the other court cases. The nation's happy experience is that the Supreme Court has intervened when the cases have got aggravated or when MPs have been found wanting.

In recent days, the Supreme Court has once again come to the rescue of the nation to set things right. In a landmark judgment, the court has said that the representatives in parliament and state legislatures will stand disqualified as soon as they are convicted by a trial court. One hopes this applies to heinous crimes only.

The provision in the Representative People's Act has been declared ultra virus because it allowed a convicted member to stay till his final appeal has been dealt with up to a period of three months. This has been misused and enabled a delinquent member to continue for years by approaching different courts. The fodder scandal case against former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav is at the trial court stage even after 17 years. Shibu Soren has become chief minister of Jharkhand even after having been convicted and sentenced in a murder case.

Therefore all that matters to a member of parliament or the state legislature is to remain in the House regardless of their conviction in a court of law. Power

in politics being such a driving force, morality or ethics do not matter. Likewise, the British Upper House of parliament, the House of Lords, is thinking in terms of penalizing convicted members by debarring them from the House. Among those affected is one NRI who falsely claimed 50,000 pounds in expenses and was punished with three-month suspension.

Even after the Indian Supreme Court's judgment, the conscience of convicted MPs and MLAs has not irked them. Instead, all political parties, whatever their affiliation, have come together to undo the Supreme Court's verdict. A constitutional amendment is sought to be passed to lay down that a member cannot be disqualified until there is a court of appeal open to him. This attitude should have touched at least the thinking MPs, but they are quiet lest they embarrass the party they belong to, or the convicted members with whom they sit.

The protest against the proposed constitutional amendment is wide and strange. People are naturally appalled because parliament goes down further in their eyes. Already, the daily adjournments and the squabbles have raised the question: Why Parliament? Each day costs Rs. 2.8 lakhs. Urgent bills are pending because they have become a point of political controversy. Parties do not seem to realize that the people's disillusionment in some neighbouring countries has killed democratic governance.

One is not sure whether the constitutional amendment would be upheld by the Supreme Court. Article 14 guarantees equality before law. MPs cannot gang up to thwart the equality which the Supreme Court has enunciated. The constitution debars any person from contesting elections if he has been convicted. How is a convicted MP or MLA different? It's but natural that they should also be disqualified.

Article 14 also forms a part of the basic structure of the constitution. It has already been accepted, following a Supreme Court judgment that the basic

(Contd. on Page 6)

What do we learn from Detroit?

K. S. Chalam

The Detroit city, the birth place of American car industry is in the news, driving towards bankruptcy. The Governor of Michigan, Snyder has appointed a black expert Kevin Carr as Emergency Manager to find out ways and means of overcoming the current crisis. The city is not able to provide street lighting, no benches in the pathways and parks, sixty-year old trams not replaced, old buses ply on the roads, defaulted to pay pensions and so on. Further, the city has lost around two thirds of its population between 1960 and 2013 : from 20 lakhs to around 7 lakhs by now. This has impacted the real estate. It is said that a house now costs around \$7500 and some old flats could be acquired for hundred bucks while many buildings are left in dilapidated conditions. This is really a terrible state and a sight to abhor for emigrants. The Indian migrants had reinforced the colour of the city that was already noted as Black. But the city had flourished and several innovations including Fordism developed here to give a unique character to American capitalism. Now the collapse of the system conveys a message for infrastructure development in urban India, including cities like Hyderabad. How did this happen?

The provision of public utilities in Europe and America were based on their climatic conditions and the bounty they received from the colonies. Unfortunately, as I narrated in my 'common sense of urban planning' a year ago, Indians have tried to copy them without an external colony. Perhaps, the policy makers had instinctively realised the existence of internal colonies (social and marginalised groups) and planned our infrastructure accordingly after liberalisation. We are happy with the quadratic national highways crossing across different regions and cultures by marginalising the local needs. They were aimed to link the four corners of the country for the free flow of goods without any hurdles to reach the ports passing through several special and export processing zones. They are considered as comparable to any other infrastructure of America or Europe in style and structure. They contained lot of foreign exchange component with very good margins for the contractors who became legislators in course of time.

This is a very good model of development where we could provide facilities to people and at the same time give leadership to the nation.

It seems the models used here are the ones that were used during the time of Eisenhower and Roosevelt. Some American commentators tell us that Eisenhower spent money from the defence budget to create facilities to move troops across different states as a General during the second world war. He was a visionary (as the future President) to create the interstate roads and infrastructure to connect the 50 states to become a strong United States of America. But the problem according to the President of the American Society of Civil Engineers, B.D Leonard, is that "we are still driving on Eisenhower's roads and sending our kids to Roosevelt's schools". It means that the country has not invested on the maintenance or repairs or simply no provision was made for depreciation on the capital. It is estimated that there is a backlog of \$ 2.2 trillion infrastructure in the country.

Infrastructure is basic framework of a system or organisation and stands fundamental for the development of a nation. It consisted of not only roads, buildings, power grids, communication systems, etc but also the necessary manpower to be generated through educational institutions. It is not only in the US but in several European nations that the huge infrastructures were magnificently built when they were riding on high growth, to showcase their vanity (beyond their need). They have now started crumbling not only due to the downturn of the economies but even the declining size of the population made the capacity underutilized. We all know that on August 1, 2007 the 1-35W Mississippi River Bridge collapsed killing 13 people and around that time the San Francisco-Oakland Bridge repairs became grave. It is reported that during the period of recession the per cent of expenditure on public construction as proportion of GDP in America has declined. The Global Competitiveness Report 2011-2013 estimated that the infrastructure score has come down from 6.1 to 5.8 placing the US at 25th rank.

India, being the third largest economy in the world in terms of size of GDP is ranked at 87th with a score of 3.8 in infrastructure capacity (in the same report). Perhaps, keeping this score and the need for world class infrastructure to facilitate free movement of wares, our Prime Minister wanted more investments in to this sector. It has also the capacity to absorb more investment and create new jobs. FDIs, therefore, are invited. But, we may reflect here on the kind of experiences the advanced countries have suffered in the era of free trade and the wealth so created and the consequences. Detroit can be taken as a case to project the kind of complications awaiting us. Detroit is not in distress due to a natural calamity, but a man-made disaster and due to faith in a model. It is easy to develop a model of growth based on free trade to benefit from comparative advantage or factor abundance of a nation. It is also noted in the theories of the economists that factors move in search of efficiency and productivity to yield higher rates of return in a no holds bar situation. This is fine and data must have supported some of the theories or been manipulated to suit the positive conclusions like our poverty estimates. But, the issue is that when comparative advantage has driven the car manufacturers from Detroit under NAFTA, people abandoned the city leaving the infrastructure, buildings, pension funds, differed payments, etc that became a drain on the next generation. Perhaps, the economists must have thought that infrastructure, buildings, etc. would also physically move to destinations in search of fodder. This is impossible and unimaginative even if we take the monetary value of the transactions. Who is responsible for the present conditions of Detroit or situations of that nature?

The kind of huge infrastructure projects including the unwieldy irrigation, road, transport, flyover, arty underpass of contractor based projects, need to be reviewed and only the relevant and cost effective projects are to be selected to unburden the future generations. We need not replicate what others are doing if they do not suit our capacity and conditions. This is common sense and do not need sophisticated models or advice of paid consultants. We have now a situation where Hyderabad city would be likely to become a metropolitan centre sucking the resources from the underdeveloped hinterland and the experience of the city of Detroit is a clear message.

(Contd. from Page 4)

structure cannot be changed by Parliament. If the proposed amendment is passed, it might be thrown out by the Supreme Court on the grounds that Article 14 forms part of the basic structure.

In reality, the judiciary and parliament are on a war path. Fortunately, the government has deferred the Bill on the appointment of judges. The government wants to have a leeway. The court has gone through the phase when the judiciary and the government openly fought over the appointment of judges. Now a collegiums' system has come to be followed. The four senior judges of a High Court constitute the collegiums and decide who will be elevated to the Bench. The same procedure is for the Supreme Court judges. This arrangement has never been to the liking of the government because it gives little room for any patronage which the executive has in mind. If the Bill which the government contemplates is thrown out by the judiciary, then what happens?

The Supreme Court may again come to the rescue. The government is to amend the Right to Information (RTI) Act to exempt political parties from transparency. The proposed bill insulates political parties from an order by the Central Information Commission which declared them as public bodies and accountable for financial benefits.

True, the elected representatives of the people are the final authority. But what is the remedy when every segment of democratic apparatus has been politicized? Power politics has come to dictate the various steps. Because of this, parliament ceases to be the temple of democracy in the real term. On paper, it will continue to remain so. Maybe, this fact will urge parliamentarians to rise to the standards expected from them. They are the ones who can retrieve democracy from the lack of confidence in which it is stuck. The convicted members should take the initiative and voluntarily resign the moment they are convicted by a trial court. It is their moral responsibility.

There is a mistake in my article, "The partition story", published in Janata of August 11. The paragraph 6 on page 2 has a wrong number in the first line. It should be "482 Muslims seats" instead of 48.

- Kuldip Nayar

“Let poor people also sing”

G. V. Sunder

Immediately after being sworn in as the Chief Minister of Karnataka during May-2013, Shri Siddaramaiah announced certain schemes. The most important of the schemes announced that day was the scheme (“*Anna Bhagya Yojane*”) to distribute 30 kilograms of rice at Re. 1/- per Kg to the Below Poverty Line card holders. The stated object of the scheme was that no poor family should starve. But immediately after the announcement the scheme is being subjected to criticism from many quarters.

Some critics said that when the BPL card holders were already getting enough subsidized food grains, where was the necessity for a new scheme? This is a scheme for giving ‘alms’ to the poor people instead of giving jobs. The scheme will make the people more and more dependent on the State instead of making them self-reliant. The scheme will make people look more towards political leaders and thereby keeping them under their control and was hence a political conspiracy. These were some such criticisms.

But the most serious criticism was that when poor people can buy the rice requirement of the whole month for Rs. 30/- they can earn enough money required for the whole month by working for a day or two under the rural employment guarantee scheme and hence the workers in the rural areas will become lazy and the agricultural land will have to be left fallow resulting in the fall in the agricultural production.

Some critics expressed their apprehension that when already it is difficult to get agricultural laborers and even when they are available they have to be paid fat wages and hence the agricultural sector is facing a crisis, this kind of schemes will create further problems for the agricultural sector resulting in the fall in the production of food grains.

Some critics went still further and said if the food grains required for the whole month can be so easily procured, the men in the rural areas will become not only lazy but will also become slaves of tobacco smoking, drinking liquor, etc., and will thus destroy the very rural milieu and thus drew a very barbaric picture of our rural future. Even some members of Siddaramaiah’s cabinet have expressed such concerns.

The underlying presumption of all such criticisms is that being lazy is the innate nature of a human being instead of being active.

The criticisms also presume that the poor people and the agricultural workers do not have any other ambition than just filling their bellies. Is the ambition to earn more, to acquire goods that give more comfortable life, earning more wealth and working more hard to so earn, reserved only for the middle classes or for persons like Birlas and Ambanis and Mittals?

When such questions were agitating my mind, I came across the writings of the famous American psychologist Abraham Masslow. He had concerned himself several decades ago about the motives that make a man work more and work more efficiently. He had written a dissertation in 1943 itself entitled “Hierarchy of Needs” and had concluded that the needs of man were the motivating forces behind his labour.

He had listed out all the needs and necessities, catagorised them, arranged them into a hierarchy like a pyramid. In this hierarchy, at the bottom of the pyramid, the lowest place was occupied by the needs required for keeping the body intact, like food and clothing. After a person acquires these things he confronts other needs at the next higher level and starts working to satisfy those needs and it goes on. This in short was what Abraham Masslow said.

This, in the context of our society, might mean nutritious food, motor cycle, T.V., gold ornaments, etc. After satisfying such needs, one may start working for the satisfying the needs at a still higher level, i.e., a house, better schooling for one’s children, traveling, cars, etc. Even after satisfying these needs, he may still work for getting security, protections, friendship, love, honour, power and so on.

At the highest level, so argues Abraham, a person will work for what he calls ‘self-actualisation’. He gives Albert Einstein, Franklin Roosevelt and the like as examples of persons working for their ‘self-actualisation’.

(Contd. on Page 10)

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What Food Security?

Sandeep Pandey

The Central Government has come up with a Food Security Ordinance whereas a National Food Security Bill is pending before the parliament. What was the urgency is unclear. Upcoming elections are an obvious answer. The Congress party thinks that like during the last elections it benefitted from NREGA and loan waiver for farmers it could benefit from the Food Security scheme in the forthcoming elections.

However, the ordinance doesn't come across as something which gives the feeling of any kind of security. A major problem with the Public Distribution System is the categorization of population according to levels of poverty. A common story in all villages is that the Below Poverty Line and Antyodaya, a category for further poor, ration cards are not in the hands of deserving poor. Undeserving people are siphoning off the benefits. A wise suggestion was to universalize the PDS so that everybody gets food grains at a very subsidized rate except for a small segment of people like government employees, income tax payees, etc. who could be excluded. States like Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh are already giving a significant majority of their population food grains at the rates proposed under ordinance, Rs. 1, 2 or 3 per kilogram. However, the central government continues with two categories which implies again there will be discrepancy in the selection of poor. It is unclear how the abovementioned problem of correctly identifying families in the appropriate category will be solved. The local political interference and corruption will never let it happen. The whole exercise of creating new categories will be brought to nought.

The new scheme envisions 5 kgs. of food grains per individual which comes to 166 grams per day, enough to make two rotis. Food security doesn't just mean food grains. It should include pulses, vegetable oil and other things necessary for a nourishing diet.

Maternal entitlement is restricted to two child norm, unnecessarily penalizing mothers with more than two children. The ordinance also is insensitive to destitute. There should have been provision for community kitchens for the homeless. The Gurudwara

model of 'langar' could be adopted for replication at other religious and community places. Ultimately it is the community which can control the quality of food programmes. Left to the government it will always be marred by corruption and adulteration. At some places MDM programme is being outsourced to NGOs. But most NGOs become an extension of the corrupt government system. Hence, the best strategy is to allow the community to run the food programme at local level.

Any food security scheme must strengthen agriculture, which is responsible for providing food in the first place. It is an irony that the farmer who provides food to the entire society has to commit suicide because of debt. Even if he doesn't commit suicide most people who do the hard work to grow food live in poverty and in condition of malnutrition. There is a proposal to transfer cash into the bank accounts of people who'll not be able to receive food grains. This is very dangerous for farmers. If government merely distributes cash then there will be no need for procuring food grains and there will be no guarantee to the farmer that he'll be able to sell his food grains at minimum support price. A demand for creation of Farmers' Commission which will set the price of produce at one and a half times that of the expenses incurred by farmers during production is pending since long. The idea of cash transfer is against the basic tenet of food security. Similarly, allowing contractors in Integrated Child Development Scheme or Anganwadi, as it is popularly known, to supply food material also keeps the scope for large scale corruption open. In U.P. the contract for the entire state for supplying nutritious material for ICDS has been with Ponty Chaddha's group for the last seven years. It is no surprise that most Anganwadi centres in the state are non-functional. Local community should also be involved in running of Anganwadis as well.

The government is favouring the entry of corporates in agriculture. Multinational corporations like Monsanto are putting pressure on the government to allow GM variety of crops. FDI in retail has been allowed by the government. All these measures will either displace the livelihood of farmers or make them so dependent on the market that they will be further ruined.

The government has absolved itself of any responsibility to ensure food security during the times of natural calamity whereas it is in times like this when government's intervention is most sought.

The grievance redressal system for food security programme envisioned is quite weak. For the effective implementation of food security scheme there needs to be a strong, decentralized and independent mechanism, especially at the lower levels like Panchayats and Block, with power to penalize the erring officials. Right now there is provision to complain only at the District level.

Some people have criticized the food security programme for creating additional burden on budget. However, calculations show that since it covers mostly already existing programmes, it involves an additional financial commitment of only Rs. 30,000 crores and 40 lakh tons of food grains.

We need a much more comprehensive food security regime which should concretely aim at lifting people out of situations of hunger and malnutrition. The irony is that India is not hungry because of lack of food. We claim to be self reliant in terms of food grains. In fact, our FCI godowns are known to be overflowing. Present stocks are 10 crore metric tons of food grains. We have to solve the simple problem of making food reach the people. This requires correct policy, proper management and no corruption.

(Contd. from Page 7)

This 'Hierarchy of Needs' propounded by Abraham Masslow and his ideas which are even today discussed and debated in the management classes, I think, hits the nail on the head of the criticisms, doubts, fears and anxieties expressed about the scheme to distribute rice at Re. 1/- a Kg.

Thus it is indubitable that people do not become lazy if they get food at subsidized rates. Such criticisms, doubts, fears and anxieties are the figments of the prejudices of the middle classes.

No person who has good health and has a healthy mind can sit idle for long. All those belonging to the middle class and even the well-to-do classes can find its truth from introspection. The famous Fabian Socialist George Bernard Shaw says that 'doing' something under compulsion is 'labour' and 'doing' what one

wants to do is 'leisure' and he equates 'leisure' with 'liberty', the first normative principle of socialism.

More than all this, if the poor people can get some leisure after long and arduous 'labour', and during such leisure think about their future, about their surroundings, will it not 'improve' at least to some extent, the 'quality' of their life? In his book 'Democratic Socialism' Asoka Mehta relates a debate between Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. He writes "Tagore had said that Gandhiji in his pursuit of politics of the masses was sacrificing cultural gains and values, to which Gandhiji had replied that never had he seen birds singing when they were hungry. And if the poor people are to sing and chirp, their problems of food and work must be solved".

If the scheme to distribute rice at Re. 1/- a Kg. can solve the food problem of the poor people and if they get enough leisure, they may also sing, isn't it? It may prove to be a blessing.

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Movements sans Ideology

Sunil

I had never met Anna Hajare earlier. Once I saw him at the Jantar Mantar stage from a distance. Otherwise I knew him through newspapers only. (We do not have a TV set in our home). So it was an opportunity when it was announced that Janatantra Yatra led by Anna Hajare and General V K Singh will come to Itarsi, the town in Madhya Pradesh closest to me. I suggested to the local organizers that, apart from a public meeting, an indoor meeting should be organized with local organizations and activists who are engaged in struggles or constructive activities. They agreed.

On that day, hoards of people came to see Anna in the public meeting. Nari Jagruti Manch, a local women's organization, wanted to start a signature campaign against growing menace of intoxication on this occasion. Their representatives went to the stage requesting him to put first signature. He declined saying that local people should sign. Sunilam, ex-MLA from MP, was the first speaker. He spoke mainly about Anna's life and anti-corruption struggle led by Anna. He tried to answer the criticism that through his fasts Anna was using extra-constitutional methods and trying to encroach upon the rights of parliament.

Then Santosh Bharati, a journalist and an ex-MP from UP accompanying the Yatra, addressed the meeting. He said that the Parliament and assemblies do not represent the spirit of our constitution. There is no mention of political parties in the constitution and therefore they are unconstitutional. They should be banned. But he did not spell out the alternative. He called to the youth to come forward and that those who can devote one full year for Anna movement should give their names and phone numbers. There was little response to this appeal.

Then it was the turn of Anna. There were slogans like '*Anna tum sangharsh karo, ham tumhare saath hain*' (Anna you struggle, we are with you). Anna mainly spoke about his life, his sacrifice and his achievements. After returning from military job, he took a broom and devoted one and a half years in cleaning his village. He removed 40 illegal liquor bhattis from his village. He forced six corrupt ministers of Maharashtra to

resign. He did not marry, does not own any property, lives in a temple and does not know even the names of his nephews and nieces. There was frequent clapping from the crowd. He said that if Janlokpall act is passed, 60 percent of India's problems will be solved. He advocated for Right to Reject, explaining it. He called for electing candidates of good character. He asked the people to struggle, but first to build their own character.

The meeting with local activists was scheduled in late evening after Hoshangabad public meeting at the circuit house where Anna and his team were to stay at night. Anna was perhaps not aware of it. He was tired but when Sunilam explained to him about it, he readily agreed. But much discussion could not take place. I asked Anna about his accepting a reward from Jindals, 'Jindal Steel' being the main source of corruption and repression in areas like Raigad in Chhattisgarh. Sunilam immediately intervened to clarify that the two are separate. Anna defended 'Jindal Foundation' appreciating its services for humanity. I wanted to further ask him about his general approach to capitalists and corporations, but considering shortage of time and Anna's tiredness, I kept silent. Anna again emphasized sacrifice and character-building. He advised not to go after publicity. 'I was never after cameras; today cameras rush after me'. The meeting soon ended.

Anna's personality was an inspiring one. The way he sacrificed his whole life, transformed a village, put his life at risk at Ramlila Maidan and the way he was touring at such an old age, left an imprint on the audience. But apart from that, it was disappointing. The pamphlet of the Jantantra Yatra talked about change of system and 'second freedom struggle'. But Anna, or any other speaker, did not talk about pressing problems before the nation such as price rise, unemployment, poverty, hunger, displacement, terrorism and naxalism, environmental crisis or atrocities on Dalits, women and minorities. He even did not elaborate or analyse the problem of corruption. He did not even ask the people to fight corruption at local level. He did not have any program to offer except calling people to come to Delhi for a 'Jan Sansad' to be held in September.

To be fair, there was a 25-point program on the back of the pamphlet of the Yatra. But none of the speakers spoke about it. A document was given to us in the Hoshangabad meeting. It called for electing candidates with character. It was full of criticism of political parties and parliament. It discussed some of the problems facing the nation, but did not provide any alternative. As a solution, it only talked about Janlokal, Right to Reject, Right to recall, Gram Sabha and Gram Swaraj. But how to achieve them? Are parliament and political parties the only villain? What are the forces at local, national and global level which are operating behind the present system? How to break their equations and their hold? What are the roots of the problems? How will the people with character get elected without an organization and political force behind them, given the present state of elections? Even if a few candidates with good character get elected by chance, will they be able to make a difference? Isn't Manmohan Singh personally an honest and learned person? I was left with all these questions.

Perhaps it is unfair to expect answers of these complex questions from Anna. He is a simple man full with patriotism and good intentions. But that is not enough. We need a vision to move the nation on the path of transformation. Without that no movement can go forward.

A similar problem exists with Aam Admi Party, an offshoot of the Anna movement. It is somewhat better because it has realized the need of a political alternative and is sincerely working for that. For Delhi assembly elections specially, it appears to be working hard. It has raised the issues of 'Bijli and Pani'. It has also started raising issues of corporate corruption which was absent in the whole Anna movement. Like Anna's Jantantra Yatra's 25-point program, it has also issued a provisional document broadly outlining its stand on various issues. But it lacks an analysis and a vision. Perhaps it is not possible given the diverse kind of people with diverse backgrounds assembled in this party. This is a strength but also its limitation.

Arvind Kejriwal has written a small book 'Swaraj', which is being distributed in English and Hindi for the last one year. The cover of the book has a quotation of Anna declaring this book 'a manifesto of our movement against corruption and for systemic change'. I purchased a copy and read it with interest. It is a good critique of the evils of centralized governance. It also

points out the shortcomings of present day Panchayat Raj and calls for empowering Gram Sabhas, Mohalla Sabhas and people at grass root level. There can be no disagreement with it. But is that all?

There is no mention of economic policies in this 'Swaraj'. It does not touch globalization or imperialism. It does not question the present day development model or the consumerist culture promoted by capitalism. It does not talk of corporate loot or the way people all over the world are being uprooted for corporate profit. It does not comment on global warming or the environmental catastrophe created by modern civilization. It does not question the LPG policies being followed by Manmohan Singh and company. It is silent on caste and gender questions. It does not have any comments on communalism, sectarianism or intolerance growing around us. It does not discuss the agricultural crisis in India leading to a large number of suicides every year or the growing casualisation, exploitation and repression of labour. People in India and all over the world are fighting on various issues which are not limited to corruption only. But the 'Manifesto' is silent on all of them. At best, it says, empower the people, everything will be all right. It is a cure for all.

It is difficult to swallow this 'Rambaan' medicine. Can Gram Swaraj work in isolation? Will administrative decentralization be successful without economic decentralization? When corporate power is growing and global market is penetrating even in the remotest areas destroying further the village society (which was never a homogenous one), will the Gram Swaraj work? And can you ignore the question of social justice, so important in the Indian context? Aam Admi Party has formed 22 committees to formulate its policies on various issues. Experts, not necessarily from within the party, were invited to provide inputs for that. But a party document cannot be a compilation of diverse views.

Aam Admi Party has announced that it will not participate in assembly elections in four out of five states (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Meghalay) to be held in November and concentrate on Delhi. Perhaps it may be strategically correct, given its good following in Delhi and fragile organization in other states. Delhi being a metropolitan city has a large middle class which seems to be the main base of AAP. But whenever it will try to expand to the rest of India, what will be its base? For creating an electoral alternative at broader level, middle class will not be

sufficient. Their votes are few. If it wants to attract farmers, workers, artisans, fishermen, Dalits, tribals, backward classes, minorities, women, youth or ethnic groups, it has to take up their issues. Raising issues of corruption will not suffice. And if it does not want to fool the people like other parties, it has to build a mutually consistent set of ideas analyzing their problems and offering solutions. And that is what is called 'ideology'.

For some time, there is a fashion to reject ideology or make a fun of it. To some extent, it is a result of degeneration of ideological movements, whether communist, socialist, Gandhian or Ambedkarite. But one cannot escape it. One can disagree with a particular ideology. One can decide not to be dogmatic and keep one's ideology flexible, open to new ideas and lessons. One can continuously examine and review it and improve upon it. Even those who claim to have no ideology have a hidden ideology and mostly it is a status-quoist one. Any party, organization, group or movement that wishes to change the present system has to clearly spell its ideology. Ideology alone cannot build a movement. It also requires a good leadership, mass mobilization, proper strategy and circumstances mature for it. To use a phrase from mathematics, it is

a necessary but not sufficient condition. Ideological clarity provides a movement a vision, a spirit and preparedness for long term struggle. But that is lacking in movements led by Anna and Kejriwal.

Both of these movements swear by Mahatma Gandhi and their followers wear Gandhi caps. Anna is being presented as a second Gandhi. But Gandhi was never limited to a single issue. In fact, it was he who broadened the freedom movement. He took up issues of exploitation of farmers, Charkha (technology), tax on salt, untouchability, education, language, liquor, hygiene and many other issues which had no direct link to the question of freedom from British occupation. And for that he tried to chalk out a comprehensive blueprint of Swaraj. Throughout his life, he engaged in ideological debates. In fact, he loved to do that. It is not correct to compare Anna with Gandhi or JP.

If movements led by Anna and Kejriwal can chalk out their ideology or at least move towards that, it will be beneficial to them as well as to the nation. Otherwise their future is doubtful. History is full of instances of many movements and upheavals which could not sustain themselves because they had no clear ideological vision.

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Twist in Lives of Olivers Schooling deprived children

Arun Chavan
Anuradha Bhosale

Social activists who are engaged in child care and child development programmes have to be knowledgeable about the legal provisions that are made for child rights protection. Juvenile Justice Act with the Rules framed thereunder in 2006 is an important instrument in the hands of the activists who would protect child rights. Juvenile Justice Committee is expected to be active in each district. It gives fair trial to a juvenile delinquent and it takes steps to admit such children to correctional homes and gives them a chance for reformation. Child Welfare Committees in the districts are called upon to review the cases of children in distress, who eke out a living by asocial activities such as begging, rag-picking, bootlegging, etc. Such children are rehabilitated in children's homes. These child welfare institutions are meant to give protection to children and bring them into the educational mainstream. But the experience is that not many children are benefited, because many remain beyond the reach of these arrangements. Secondly, those whom the administration reaches out have already gone through a long period of suffering and neglect due to which their childhood is horribly blighted and seared. The chances of their genuine rehabilitation through government sponsored institutions are slim at best. These institutions themselves are in need of radical reform.

I have made it a habit to reach those spots in the city where these children are engaged in their daily struggle for existence. Generally those spots are municipal waste dumps where they compete with stray dogs, railway platforms where they are seen moving in small gangs, like packs of dogs on the prowl, always looking for the main chance. I accost them and engage them in small talk. By degrees they shed their reluctance to talk. Slowly they feel persuaded to stop for a while and talk with me. Then, on a pre-determined day they take me to their parents. I tell them about the importance of education. But education can never be their priority because their first concern is how to remain alive, how to get enough to eat.

There is one police station in Kolhapur city where I go frequently for routine work. One morning there I met

a few policemen who were conducting an enquiry of two children of ten or eleven years. They were accused of pick-pocketing. The police were finding it difficult to crack the defense of the children. They were vigorously denying the charges and pleading their innocence. After a time I asked the police to allow me to talk with them. So, I sat with the boys, Sameer and Anil, in a separate enclosure. I asked for tea and some snacks, which they were seen hugely enjoying. They must have been quite hungry. The snacks and my sweet talk must have had its effect. They felt relaxed, shed their instinctive inhibitions and opened up.

They confessed to me in a confidential tone that they have made pick-pocketing their means of livelihood. The skill ran into their family for some generations. Right from their fifth year, their parents themselves taught them the tricks of the trade. Hailing from a nomadic tribe, they were fully convinced that the whole society lives off thieving and there was nothing to be ashamed of. They said the police also were hand in glove with them. Therefore police investigation did not make any dent. They did not yield to the police but they confessed to me.

I requested the inspector in-charge of the police station to give me an opportunity to reform them. He enthusiastically agreed not to take further action for a few weeks. For three weeks thereafter I met the boys regularly. We ate snacks together and saw a few films. I took them twice to our school, where they met the hostel inmates. I showed them documentaries about our school. They taught me the intricacies of their trade: how to identify a gullible victim, how to know if he is a new arrival in the town, how to fix razor blades with Fevicol to outsize finger nails and use the nailed fingers to lift the purse with delicacy. Their three-week exposure to altogether a different world was having its effect. They finally agreed to give up their trade and give a fair trial to a different way of life. The parents were initially unwilling to let them choose this different path. Finally, even they gave in to the determination of their children.

The police officer withdrew the charges. The children came into our school five years ago and now in a year's time they will go to the Xth standard, the school final year. After passing that examination a vast vista of opportunities will open up before them. Thus, these less fortunate souls, rejected by the system, tortured by circumstances, victims of callous neglect of our acquisitive society are now climbing towards a sunny life.

Their induction in the routine of the hostel and school was not smooth sailing. In the beginning I took them under my direct supervision. For about two months they stayed with me in our house. They had no longer to worry about their food. The sense of insecurity vanished. They no longer had to look over their shoulders to ensure that no *havaladar* was chasing them, menacingly wielding a baton. With a satiated belly the feeling of well being took charge of their responses. Yet, in the company of other boarders and the boys at school at the slightest stimuli they bristled and became prickly and combative. But I was able to bring them round by an overdose of warmth and ceding minor responsibilities like house cleaning. Brimming with energy they needed an outlet which I provided to them. The elder one, Sameer, was made a drummer of the house band. He soon was able to play it with an uncanny sense of rhythm. Both the boys are found to be slow learners at school, but they are aiming at a career in the armed forces.

The way of life of these groups lends no scope for privacy of any type and is so exposed to the elements and to one another. They are foreign to the delicacies of human relationships. The boys and girls who come to us are prematurely aware of sensuality which renders

management proposition rather tricky. All these factors need a kind of handling which is tactful and patient overlaid with warmth of understanding. Sameer seems hypersensitive in these matters and was not discrete about female boarders. It took me quite some time to inculcate into him the sense of propriety and moral do's and don'ts. He now conducts himself on an even keel without straying from the correct path. I am sure he will grow into a well-groomed gentleman.

A word about the cultururation of the boys would be in place at this point. It is a skein of complex proposition which calls for an imaginative approach informed by unremitting empathy. An outcome of decades of callous neglect, they are, after all, the scions of a disease infected, cancerous rump of society. The disease has entered their minds. Many of them are seen lurching towards the worse kinds of perversion. Their winning back to civilized refinements involves a perspicacious, yet flexible regime of non-formal education at AVANI outside school hours: Exposure to stimulants which nurture the human spirit in many subtle ways in one-to-one and one-to-group sessions. All that all along is substantiated by the psychologist's inputs in general, as well as in personalized terms. The tasks are ably manned by our members. Snehal, Pushpa and Suneeta and expertly skippered by the American good Samaritan Scott Kafora. These processes and infusions are ably supported by the special care of the management of schools where our boarders are enrolled.

In conclusion I may say that their struggle to achieve a decent living condition is not yet over. They will need persistent help, they will need sympathy and trust. I hope the community will not be found wanting in the face of such a challenge.

“Sorry, Mummy”

Married women involving themselves in genuine social activism face a daily dilemma. Their family responsibilities and their extra-familial duties clash like slybals, sometimes ear-splittingly so. Living tends to become more a racket of conflicting interests rather than an ensemble of harmonizing sounds. At the extremes the contradiction may even have an unhinging effect. Here in such situations one is unwittingly goaded to stoic levels of patience and perseverance. Sometimes looking back to a past studded with such tribulations, you are yourself surprised to see how clashing relationships

and considerations sorted themselves out, leading once again to an even flow of life. Perhaps an uncanny resilience is the essence of life, which keeps things moving on an even keel.

When the child is at the epicenter of social activism the undertaking becomes much more rigorous, delicate and demanding. Extension of maternal bent of mind is stretched to the limit. One's capacity for unrelenting perseverance is tested to the hilt and those who emerge bruise-less from it succeed ultimately.

When my son, (Granth is his name but many call him 'Kumar'), was hardly one and half years, my job of child education was entering a new and more intricate phase. AVANI had then decided to open non-formal residential school for deprived children of 6 and above age group. AVANI's policy decision was based on my commitment and the potential they saw in me. And I owed to AVANI a steadfast stand on my part unmindful of consequences.

There was no one else to whom Kumar could be entrusted, a significant disadvantage faced by most divorcees. I had to take him along on my work routine. He had seen with me all the places in town where child labour is found, the shanties where they lived, the juvenile correction homes and so on. Outside of the hours spent in the kindergarten Kumar preferred to be at AVANI school because he knew he could get my company more at the school than at home, which was more a place for nightly halts, than a bosom for leisurely lolling in the tranquil warmth of loved ones. He has travelled with me to towns and cities where I went to participate in meetings and seminars. In fact as a small toddler he has accompanied me right up to Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai. One time my visits to a particular police station in Kolhapur were so frequent that he easily became thick with the inspector in-charge. So much so that the moment we entered the police station he ran to the officer and ensconced himself on his lap. His uniform fascinated him and he played endlessly with his brass epaulets. Recently when Kumar was asked what he would like to be, pat came the answer, "police fouzdaar!" (officer).

Nonetheless, all such diversions only meant for Kumar temporary substitutes to what he longed for intensely - my close companionship and my undivided attention. Sometimes he missed it too much, especially when he met his Mummie's friends carrying their babies in arms. He would cry and protest vehemently to demand my time for himself. He registered his protests in a variety of ways. One which my friends even now do not let me forget happened at a public meeting when he was hardly four. When my time came I stood before the mike and began, "Bhaio aur beheno!" He resented my standing alone forsaking him in the chair I was sitting in. As I ventured to talk he clung to my legs and literally clambered up to my shoulders like a little monkey and slid down repeatedly as on a 'wrestler's pillar' (better described as 'Malla Khamb' in Marathi, meant for athlete's feats). Naturally, I had to cut short my talk

at the outset to a loud and laughter-laced applause of the young audience. My talk that afternoon remained nearly totally undelivered. Unmindful of the enormity of their loss, the audience felt merely amused at my son's pranks. Undeterred, I was firm in my belief that my would-be listeners got cruelly deprived of many precious pearls of shining wisdom that would have tumbled out from my lips. Their loss was Kumar's undoubted gain. The instant I resumed my seat on the dais he appropriated my lap and sat tight throughout the function, immensely pleased with himself.

Each child that came to be sheltered at AVANI carried the corns and scars of tragedy in one form or another. Pain and sorrow was a common part of their lives' narrative. I have tried my best to tell Kumar about these sad stories and have tried to impress upon him the need they have for love and understanding, apart from bellyful food, clean clothes to wear and a feel of security. However, he remained unconvinced about why his Mummy should be shared by other unconnected children, whom he might have subconsciously loathed as his rivals.

An architect from USA, Scott Kafora, who has been with AVANI for the past two years working as a volunteer was returning from a furlow in Europe. We went to Mumbai to pick him up and came to know about the late arrival of his flight. To while away the time we - I and Kumar - went to see a movie at a cinema house near the airport. The picture being shown was 'Stanleyka Dibba'. It depicted the story of a deprived child who rose from abject squalor to a life of respectability by dint of education and determination. Kumar was only seven years old at that time. But he understood the story that was so skillfully presented on the screen. The instant we emerged from the theatre Kumar hugged me tightly and started uncontrollably crying. I was puzzled. I couldn't know what might have saddened him that much. Amidst sobs he could only mumble, "Sorry, Mummy!"

For good ten minutes he kept on crying in spasms and I was at a loss to know the reason. I too could not control my tears and we both wept together. When the spate of emotion subsided he could bring himself to say, "Today I understood the sorrow of the child labour. Forgive me for what harsh words I have spoken about them." The deeply felt remorse shook him to the core. Out of the fire of scalding repentance a new Kumar is born. I am proud of him, and justly so!

Ever since that incident in Mumbai while with AVANI children Kumar has become a picture of kindness and camaraderie. He shares with them his

brand new bicycle, his football and his cricket bat. And I never find him eating alone without the company of children.

Meaning of Death

Women are on the lowest rung of the exploitative social pyramid. When married off, they enter a form of serfdom under the patriarchal grip which has more than one prong. The male and female in-laws and the master of the set-up, the husband at the top, together rule the roost and the poor women are at the receiving end. In the absence of education, their body is the only dependable apparatus for earning a living. Overwhelming majority of the husbands are addicts. Much of their earning is invariably blown on drinks. That results in starvation of the women and their children and multiple deprivation. Government has enacted welfare laws with these people in focus. Implementation of the laws is in the hands of bureaucracy and local politicians who lack the necessary motivation and commitment. The funds are frittered away and end up in the wrong pockets and the target groups remain high and dry. Illiterate women do not get organized to be able to gain advantages of the government schemes. These women at the bottom of the pyramid are hemmed in from all sides and, where they are not organized they fall prey to despair and frustration. When a point beyond endurance is reached self-inflicted death becomes a welcome relief.

Death is a matter of indifference to the woman who chooses it in a dark moment of desperation. In the form of her innocent children she leaves behind an endless trail of sorrow and suffering.

Kavita was one such unfortunate mother. In the life of twenty-eight summers, she had become a mother of four children, three daughters and a son, the last born, only two years. The main cause of her suffering was her husband, a chronic tippler. He had a fixation about Kavita's infidelity. I knew her well because her two daughters, Anjali and Usha are in our hostel. She regularly attended the monthly meetings of the parents. Her husband never attended the meeting even once. Kavita was in the habit of spending some time with me after the meetings were over. Invariably, she complained to me about her husband's addiction, and the bashing she underwent. The husband blew his income on drinks. Kavita had to work for a living. She

was in effect the bread-winner of the whole family. Several times I had asked her to get separation from the husband, but she did not agree for fear of the stigma from her community and even a slur on her character. She was of a nomadic tribe which has borrowed the conservatism and patriarchal social ethos of the traditional Hindu society.

2nd January of 2011 proved to be the point of no return. In a make-shift shelter at a brick yard violent quarrel happened between her and the husband which culminated in merciless beating by the inebriated man. In a moment of utter despair she doused kerosene on her saree and lit herself. She died that evening in Sangli hospital.

"Please take care of my children and give them good education!" were the last words she spoke to our activist and then sank into eternal silence. My two-hour journey from AVANI to Sangli with Kavita's children was a trying experience. I had seen that they had their food before embarking on the journey. They knew that their ever loving mother who bought new clothes for them and took them home for Diwali, who fondly brought their favourite snacks whenever she came on visits to AVANI, who impressed upon them the importance of education was severely burnt, and they were travelling to see her in a hospital. But they did not know that she was already dead, and I did not know how to tell them about it. Because at their tender age they did not understand what death really means. After a time I braced myself to tell them that they would see their mother sleeping on the hospital cot for the last time; that she would no more come to AVANI to meet them or bring sweets for them. I gathered them in my arms and my forbearance gave way. I wept uncontrollably. Anjali and Usha tried to mop my tears with their little kerchiefs. Their eyes too brimmed with tears and crying loudly they clung to me in a tighter embrace. They vaguely understood that a calamity had overtaken their lives.

Months passed in the usual routine and Diwali vacation began. Parents and guardians of other

children came to AVANI to take their children home. But Anjali and Usha did not expect their mother to

come this time, for they knew what death really means: Total absence of your loved one from your life.

Beware of Pity

Come to think of it, the inmates of AVANI residential school are the flotsam of the turbulent oceans of life. They are living embodiments of pain-studded stories and traumatic upheavals which are far beyond the tolerance thresholds of their tender minds. Having known the stories whose pathos cannot be overstated, I am predisposed to all of them in a steeply compassionate manner. Sometimes I am impelled to take a decision much against my instinctive feel, and then what follow are repercussions, stranger and trickier than one had bargained for.

The vast swathe of poverty is in a way inclusive in its sweep. It is no respecter of man-made barriers like caste and religion. The discovery of Pallavi illustrates the point. She came in our trajectory, when? Yes I remember, in 2007.

Seven years ago a social worker well known to me phoned and requested me to admit a small girl and her handicapped brother to AVANI. When Pallavi was three, her mother had killed herself due to the husband's gross ill-treatment. The father of course had remarried. The step-mother, as happens in most cases, treated Pallavi and the brother Deepak very cruelly and persecuted them in many ways. The father was totally indifferent to the plight of the children. In effect they were driven to destitution by the sheer callousness of their father. They were given entrance to AVANI. My colleagues and I felt that Pallavi would make some kind of a career for herself and at the same time help Deepak to make something of his life. Pallavi soon became very popular with the staff members. She would take part enthusiastically in every part of school management. Work in the kitchen, like cleaning of vegetables, pounding masala, baking of bread was of particular interest to her. Gradually as time passed she became senior-most among the inmates, and she was treated with deference by the later entrants to AVANI. Deepak was a different and, rather a curious cup of tea. He treated younger kids harshly, became a regular truant at school. The teachers complained about his eccentric behavior in class and a time came after few weeks of school when the teacher cancelled his admission altogether. Deepak at the same time made

himself scarce. Two days later we came to know of his return to his grandfather's house. Pallavi continued her regular routine at school, but the teachers were not happy about her learning record. To me she made her dislike for formal studies amply clear.

When relatives of other boys and girls came to AVANI to take them home for holidays or when they came with packets of eats and fed the children sitting underneath the shade of the trees and bushes in the garden of the school, I have seen Pallavi's eyes brimming with tears, because she was alone for whom no one came with things to eat.

Within my limits I tried to give special attention to her. On Diwali, the most important religious festival which heralded the winter season, I took her home, woke her up in the wee hours of dawn, gave her ritual bath, rubbing her body with strongly scented oils and a mixture of aromatic herbs and incense, decked her out in new clothes, gave her quantities of pyrotechnic stuff, and then, finally sat her before plateful of sweets and fries by the side of my two children. Withal, I have seen her enjoying the occasion to the fullest. In short, I did everything, and more, than what her mother would have done for her, if she were alive.

Pallavi, a Patil is from the middle stratum. Once her caste, largest single group in the State, ruled the pack because they owned most of the agricultural land and enjoyed privileges of a feudal social set-up. Now Pallavi is buried in a mud slide of misfortune which has only an economic dimension. She doesn't suffer from any social disability. The accident of birth has guaranteed that. She is from the so-called well born antecedents. Yet her deprivation is as bad, or worse than that of the socially deprived sections and hence deserves a helping hand - and to be viewed without prejudice and with equanimity. AVANI has even-handedly accepted her and have sought to shield her from the 'slings and arrows of fortune'.

She has a well-shaped nose, proportionate facial features, wheatish complexion, well-formed teeth, winning smile and a pleasing lilt in the voice. She
(Contd. on Page 32)

Uttarakhand

Dear Friends,

Yusuf Meherally Centre has set up Uttarakhand Relief Committee, and started collecting money, material, etc.

We have a small but good unit in Uttarakhand and a group of workers. Jabar Singh Verma is one of the convener of our youth wing, Yusuf Meherally Yuva Biradari, and is a noted journalist. He is the person who is looking after our relief activities there and Guddi, national convener of the Biradari, has almost shifted there.

After a survey of 12 villages we have identified five villages for intensive intervention. While we have distributed relief material in all the surveyed villages and will continue to do so, we will be concentrating on rehabilitating five. We hope to build houses (114 houses have collapsed in these villages) with the help of other organisations, start giving education to the children, (the school buildings have collapsed) build one common shed in each village - this will double as school and Panchayat office, etc., repair two Panchakkis, make Rajais out of the surplus unusable

clothes, organize self- help groups and mobilize trainees and give training and plan their future in a participatory manner - and will try to identify an eco-friendly development model. The last one is very ambitious, we are quite aware.

The Centre has considerable experience of relief work. In its very early period, it provided relief to the victims of flood in Orissa. It organized a student committee in Mumbai to help the draught affected students of Maharashtra. We provided relief in Raigad when there were flash floods. And, after the cyclone and earthquake, we worked in Kutch. Again after the earthquake in Kashmir, we undertook relief. The floods in Ladakh made us go there. And after the tsunami, in Nagapattinam, we did a lot of relief and rehabilitation work. The same after Koshi floods in Bihar.

You can participate in this effort by depositing your contribution in any of the following accounts of Yusuf Meherally Centre. Or you can send your contribution to the Centre's office.

Yours sincerely,
Haresh Shah - Sudhir Gandbhir

Name of Bank	The Shamrao Vithal Co-operative Bank Ltd	State Bank of India	Dena Bank
Account No	100920950000011	10066940217	007710009865
Branch Name	Sleater Road	Hughes Road	Tardeo
IFSI No.	SVCB0000009	SBIN0005800	BKDN0450077
Branch No	400089009	400002033.	400018042

You can inform us of your contribution along with some details including your name, address and PAN, if you have, by e-mail. post or courier.

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Caste System and the Socialists

Bapu Heddurshetti

1.1 The 'Caste System', is unique to India. Interestingly the nomenclature 'caste' for the Indian nomenclature 'Jati' is derived from the Portuguese word 'Caste' which is pronounced as 'Kassi' and the Spanish word also 'Caste' which is pronounced as 'Kyastee'. It may be of interest to note here that the nomenclature 'India' was given by the Greeks who could not pronounce 'Sindhu' and hence called the river 'Indus' and the people living on the banks as 'Indians' and the nomenclature 'Hindu' was given by the Persians who also could not pronounce the word 'Sindhu' and hence called it 'Hindu' and the people living on the banks of that river 'Hindus' and the land 'Hindustan'. Perhaps when the Portuguese landed on the shores of India, they noticed the system and since they could not pronounce 'Jati', called it 'Kassi' in their own language which in English language became 'Caste'.

1.2 At the outset a distinction has to be made between the 'castes' and the 'caste system'. This distinction is not only central to the understanding of 'castes', 'caste system' and the socialist attitude towards both, but also because much of the confusion about the castes and the caste system stems from not cognising the distinction.

1.3 Marx spoke about a 'class-less' society. He had categorised the classes as the propertied and the property-less classes. Property in the 'means of production' distinguished these classes. Hence these classes inherited 'inequality'. Marx called them the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In India also there were 'classes' in the Marxian sense, as in Europe. Socialists of all hues, utopian and scientific, Marxian and democratic, all over the world, agitated against such class based inequality.

1.4 But in India, in addition to the 'classes', there were 'castes'. If there was a single 'caste', like 'Allah' of the monotheist Muslims, there would be no question of inequality, because inequality can exist only in a plural situation. But as Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, who though did not claim to be a socialist, was more socialist than many who so claimed, would rightly say, "A single caste cannot exist, it has to exist in a group of castes, i.e., a caste system". So "caste in the singular number is an unreality. Castes exist only in the plural number. There is no such thing as a caste: There are always castes".

1.5 But there is socio-cultural inequality among these castes. Hence plurality of castes with built in inequality constitutes the 'caste-system'. This socio-cultural inequality based on 'castes' appeared to be independent of economic inequality based on property, though at times they appeared to be overlapping. Hence both the Marxists and the democratic socialists, in India, had to grapple with the phenomenon of castes and the caste system.

1.6 Attitude towards this caste system was the point of departure between the traditional Marxists and the democratic socialists. The Marxists were of the view that the basic structure of the economic institutions, determines the super structures of socio-cultural institutions including the castes. Hence they believed that destruction of the 'classes' will result in the destruction of the castes.

1.7 However, the democratic socialists in India did not agree with this Marxian formulation on the relationship between the basic and super structures. They recognised that efforts will have to be made to eliminate this socio-cultural inequality independently of economic inequality. Hence in order to create an 'egalitarian' society, the Indian democratic socialists had not only to speak of the destruction of the hierarchical class system but also of the destruction of the hierarchical caste system. Thus they had to take an ideological position on the 'caste system'. Ever since the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 the Indian democratic socialists have been taking ideological positions on the 'caste system'. What was their position?

2. Characteristics of the 'Castes' and the 'Caste System'

Before we embark on a discussion of the socialist positions on castes and caste system, it is necessary that we briefly examine the characters and some theories on the origin of the castes and the caste system.

Two characters of the 'castes' can be that they are determined by birth and that they internalise marriage, or mating or regeneration, i.e., endogamy. However,

these characters are not unique to the castes in Hindu Society. Even amongst Muslims and Christians the socio-cultural groups exhibit these characters. For example, a child born to a Shia couple is automatically Shia and a child born to a Sunni couple is automatically Sunni. Equally a child born to a Roman Catholic is automatically Roman Catholic and so is a child born to the Protestants a Protestant. Though it can be argued that the children do not inherit the religion let alone the sects since they are baptised into a religion or a sect later on, the fact remains that the children do not have a 'choice' and hence their religion and sect are 'determined' by 'birth' in the family of parents who belong to a particular religion or sect.

Though a person may have a 'choice' in marriage, generally marriages take place between two persons belonging to the same sect and the marriages outside the sect are taboo if not prohibited. Thus a Shia tends to marry a Shia and a Sunni tends to marry a Sunni thereby generally internalising marriage. This happens in the sects of perhaps any religion.

The character of a 'caste system' is that it is hierarchical involving inequalities. For example, while the 'Brahmins' consider themselves 'superior' to other castes, the 'dalits' consider themselves 'inferior' to the other castes. While 'Brahmins' proudly announce their caste, the dalits try to hide it because of inferiority. However, though there are 'castes' among Muslims and Christians, there is no 'caste system' among them, meaning that there is no inequality between them. Though there is a claim for superiority by a sect there is no acceptance of inferiority by any sect. For example while Shias may consider themselves superior to Sunnis, Sunnis do not consider themselves 'inferior' to the Shias. On the contrary they consider themselves superior to the Shias. This happens between different sects of the Christians also where one sect may consider itself superior to other sects, but no sect considers itself inferior to other sects.

Thus it can be said that of the three characters, namely 'determination at birth', 'internalising marriage' i.e., endogamy and a system of hierarchy based on inequality, the first two are the characters of 'caste' and the three together of the 'caste system'. As inequality is inherent in the definition of 'class', i.e., the classes are hierarchical, it is not necessarily so in the case of 'castes'. Hierarchy or inequality is not inherent in the 'castes'. Two or more 'castes' can be equal to each other in their socio-cultural standing and can coexist. For

example the Lingayats and Vokkaligas in Karnataka, Reddis and Kammas in Andhra, Yadavs and Kurmis in Bihar and so on. However, the hierarchy or inequality is inherent in the 'caste system' where some castes consider themselves superior to others whereas some other castes consider themselves inferior.

There is another factor which appears like a characteristic of caste system. It is the inextricable nexus between the 'castes' and the 'callings'. Certain callings are identified with certain castes and generally a person born in a caste is supposed to pursue that calling only and none other. Thus callings became hereditary. It is even argued that the castes came into existence as a result of exclusive pursuit of certain callings. This relationship between the castes and the callings was noticed by Karl Marx and challenged by Dr. Ambedkar.

With the first two characters, the socio-cultural groups, which may be called castes or sects are only a part of a social paradigm, the pieces in a collage forming a design whereas the four characters put together form a hierarchical system which can be called the 'caste system'.

3. Some theories on the origin of castes and caste system

3.1. The Purusha Sukta, the poem describing the 'cosmological being', which is considered by many scholars as depicting the birth of the system of castes, appears in the tenth and last *Mandala*, or chapter, of the Rigveda. This is supposed to be chronologically the earliest reference to the four Varnas of the Aryan Society. Though some have argued that the Sukta was interpolated later on, it cannot be overlooked in our analysis of the system of castes in India. One verse reads as follows:

*brAhmaNo asya mukhamAseet|bAho rAjanya:
kṛta: |*

*ooru tadasya yad vaishya | padbhyAm shoodro
ajAyata ||*

a simple translation of the above verse reads as follows:

His mouth formed the Brahmin (teacher or priest), his two arms were made the *Raajanya* (Kshathriya or warrior), his two thighs the Vaisya (traders or agriculturists) and from his feet the Shudra (worker or servant) was born.

3.2 Were the four Varnas based on the vocations or birth? In an article entitled “Is Caste System Intrinsic to Hinduism? Demolishing a Myth” M.V.Nadkarni, takes the view that they were vocations. He says that the Purusha Sukta “is essentially a metaphor taking the society to be an organic whole, of which the four Varnas based on division of labour are intrinsic parts.... Since Vaishyas and Shudras support the society through their economic or productive work, they were taken respectively as coming out of the thighs and feet of the purusha, without necessarily hinting at any lowly status of their work. Similarly since Kshatriyas work in warfare involved mainly the use of their arms, they were taken as coming out of the arms of the Purusha. Since Brahmins work consisted of reciting mantras and preserving Vedas through oral transmission, they were taken as coming out the Purusha's mouth”.

3.3 However, the Purusha Sukta has been so carefully worded that it is amenable to both the interpretations, i.e., that the Varnas were based on the vocations carried on by the concerned socio-cultural groups as also that the Varnas were inherited by birth. While the *Purusha's* ‘mouth’ ‘became’ or ‘was’ the ‘Brahmins’, as the verb used is ‘*Aseet*’, the ‘Kshatriyas’ were ‘made of his arms’, for the verb used is ‘*krita*’. For Vaishyas the Sukta says that the ‘thighs were’ the Vaishyas. But for the Shudras the Sukta uses the verb ‘*ajaayata*’ – i.e., the Shudras were ‘born’ of the feet.

3.4 Thus the Sukta can be interpreted to mean that those whose vocation was the use of the ‘mouth’, were Brahmins, those whose vocation was the use of the ‘arms’ were Kshatriyas, those whose vocation was the use of the ‘thighs’ (sic) were the Vaishyas and those whose vocation was the use of the ‘feet’, or doing ‘service’ were the Shudras. In Bhagavadgita, Krishna says “*Chaturvarnyam mayaa srishtam, guna karma vibhagashah*” which means that the four Varnas were created by him based on the ‘character’ and ‘deeds’ of the people belonging to those Varnas. However, it is also possible to interpret the Purusha Sukta to say that the Brahmins were ‘born’ out of the ‘mouth’ of the Purusha, the Kshatriyas were ‘born’ out of his ‘arms’, the Vaishyas out of his ‘thighs’ and the Shudras were ‘born’ out of his feet.

3.5 Whether the Varnas were based on vocation or birth, both appear to be inhering the hierarchy where those related to mouth were definitely superior as the mouth exists on a higher or superior position in the human body and then the ‘arms’, the ‘thighs’ and the

‘feet’ form successively the lower parts of the body and progressively lower or inferior positions in the body.

3.6 However it appears that though the Varnas were based on birth, there was mobility between the Varnas i.e., a person born in one Varna could enter another Varna through his deeds. For example, a person born as a Brahmin could become a Kshatriya by ‘character’ or ‘deeds’ i.e., by taking to arms, like Dronacharya of Mahabharata and Pushyamitra Sunga, who while being a Brahmin was the Commander of the armed forces of Mourya kings, who were themselves Shudras, and who assassinated the last Mourya King to become the King himself. A Vaishya or even a Shudra could become a Kshatriya by becoming a King like Harshavardhana or Mahapadmananda who was born to a dancer and a barber. Some argue that these examples are only exceptions proving the rule that there was no mobility in Varnas, while the reality appears to be that these examples were only the tip of the ice berg.

3.7 However by the time Mahabharata was compiled or Manusmriti was compiled, the caste system had appeared on the scene. In Mahabharata, Arjuna tells Krishna that when thousands of men get killed in the war, women, not finding men of their own ‘Varnas’ to marry, will start marrying men belonging to the other ‘Varnas’ and thus ‘*Varna Sankara*’ i.e., the mixture of Varnas will take place. Thus it appears that even Varnas practiced endogamy. But what happens when the mixture of Varnas takes place? The question was as to whether the progeny of an exogamous marriage belonged to the Varna of the male or the female of its parents?

3.8 It is here that Manu steps in. In order to retain the endogamous purity of the four Varnas, Manu starts collecting the progeny of such *Varna Sankara* into castes giving them different names so that they would remain separate from the original Varnas. So a child born to a Brahmin father and a woman of any other Varna was not to be a Brahmin. Thus the Brahmin Varna would remain unadulterated. Since the Varnas themselves inherited inequality in the sense that the Brahmins were superior and the other Varnas were inferior to them successively, Manu had to create a hierarchy of castes born out of *Varna Sankara* also.

3.9 Hence, Manu divides marriages ‘between’ different Varnas into ‘*anuloma*’ i.e., marriages in descending order and ‘*pratiloma*’ i.e., marriages in ascending order. Brahmin men marrying Kshatriya,

Vaishya or Shudra women, Kshatriya men marrying Vaishya or Shudra women, and Vaishya men marrying Shudra women were *'anuloma'* marriages. The marriages in the reverse order i.e., Shudra men marrying Vaishya, Kshatriya or Brahmin women, Vaishya men marrying Kshatriya or Brahmin women and Kshatriya men marrying Brahmin women were *'pratiloma'* marriages. The progeny of each such marriage was bundled by Manu into a caste and he even gave a name for each of such castes. For example, he calls the progeny of a Brahmin father and a Shudra mother 'Nishada' and the progeny of a Shudra father and a Brahmin mother 'Chandala'. He even gives a name to the progeny of a 'Nishada' and a 'Chandala' – 'Antyavashayin'.

3.10 It appears this is how the castes and the caste system appeared in the Hindu Society. All the four characteristics of the castes and the caste system, namely, determination by birth, endogamy, hierarchy and caste-calling nexus appear in ancient India. So even though 'exogamy' i.e., marrying outside one's own Varna was the cause for the origin of the castes, 'endogamy' i.e., marrying within one's own group, came to be a character of the caste.

3.11 Marx vividly describes the origin of castes and their relationship with vocation or 'calling' and other groups based on vocations called the 'guilds'. He accurately listed its characteristics in his 'Capital' as follows:

“... the conversion of fractional work into the life-calling of one man corresponds to the tendency shown by earlier societies to make trades hereditary either to petrify them into castes or whenever definite historical conditions beget in the individual to vary in a manner incompatible with the nature of caste, to ossify them into guilds. Caste and guilds arise from the action of the same natural law that regulates the differentiation of plants, and animals into species and varieties except that when a certain degree of development has been reached the heredity of caste and the exclusiveness of guilds are ordained as a law of society.”¹

3.12 But Marx neither elaborated on the system nor thought of means to end the system. Perhaps his theory of the basic structure determining the super structure made him complacent about caste. In India also, socialist leaders did not theorise on the origin and the characteristics of castes and the caste system but recognized their existence and took positions about

them.

3.13 Rammanohar Lohia, who played an important role in the socialist movement in India, advanced certain ideas about the origin and character of the castes and the caste system after he left the Praja Socialist Party and set up his own Socialist Party. However, he does not appear to have made the distinction between the 'castes' and the 'caste system' and uses the terms as synonyms with attendant consequences.

3.14 In an article written in 1960 about the pilgrimage centers of India, he says that perhaps it is the castes, more than anything else, which are preserving the pilgrimage centers and the national unity without causing any break and then in the same article later says that the castes are dividing India.

3.15 On the origin of the castes he appears to have held three different views. In his article "Towards the destruction of Castes and Classes" written in 1958, he advances the idea that the 'callings' and 'castes' were interconnected. He says: "The tiny beginnings of its (Caste's) roots were laid bare by Mr. Khrushchev when he bemoaned in present-day Russia, the unwillingness of persons with a higher education to do manual work. This rift between manual and brain work and evaluation of one as the lower and the other as the higher and the increasing complexity and permanency of this rift are behind the formation of caste". However, he did not elaborate on the theme.

3.16 In an article written in 1961 Lohia appears to have held two views on the origin of the caste system. He said that the caste system was a result of the 'spoils system' in the wars when instead of destroying the vanquished people, their incomes were sought to be restricted by the victors.² He appears to have been influenced by the theories advanced by some of the western scholars that the Shudras and the Untouchables were originally non-Aryan people who were defeated by the Aryans but accepted in the Vedic society by giving them a lower status. Anuradha Ghandy, a Marxist scholar, in her "Caste Question In India", in which she has given Marxist interpretation of the rise and evolution of the caste system in India, also subscribes to the same view that it is the 'subjugated tribals, both Aryan and non-Aryan, who gradually came to form the Shudra Varna'.

3.17 The theory was advanced by some scholars to explain the appearance of the Shudras and the

Untouchables in the Hindu society. This also was in consonance with their theory that the Aryans were a different race, descending on the Indian peninsula from the Asia-minor and occupying the peninsula through the conquest of the Dravidians or other tribes who were the original inhabitants of the peninsula. Can this theory be extended to explain the rise of thousands of castes in India?

3.18 If one accepts the hypothesis, many inconvenient questions arise which it is difficult to answer. If all castes arose out of the vanquished people, who were the victors? If Aryans were the victors, Aryans themselves were divided into Varnas which had the characters of castes. If Varnas were castes, who vanquished the Brahmins and restricted their incomes? Vaishyas were a very rich people who were lending money even to the kings and emperors. Who vanquished the Vaishyas and were their incomes also restricted by the victors? Or, if their incomes were not restricted, were they the victors? If after such restriction, the Vaishyas still grew rich, how did the victors allow such growth? The theory also does not explain how thousands of castes could have arisen out of the vanquished people. And the equation of incomes with castes certainly appears very incongruous here.

3.19 But then in the same article 'Class and Caste' Lohia says that the caste system is a social conflict resolution system in which different classes of society, after obtaining the places they could get, continued to co-exist without fighting much with each other. He says: "Some may be inclined to think that caste is a specifically Indian phenomenon. In the sense that caste has endured an unbelievably long time that it has acquired some very sharp features, it is a uniquely Indian institution. But as an institution in which different classes of population have found their proper place and do not dispute much with one another, it is universal". But if one accepts this theory also very inconvenient questions arise. How did they get their places in society? Through conflict? If so, how come the Brahmins occupied a higher place than the Kshatriyas? What made the Shudras accept a lower position in the society? In what sense were the places obtained by them 'proper'?

3.20 In 1936 Ambedkar had said that "Varna is based on the principle of each according to his worth, while Caste is based on the principle of each according to his birth."³ Lohia says that the ancient caste system in India was based on the principle of 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his needs'.

Lohia was fond of applying the formulation to different situations. In his book 'Wheel of History' he says that if an international fund is not created which takes capital from each nation according to its capacity and gives the capital to each nation in accordance with its needs that will render the World government redundant.

3.21 If I remember correctly, it is Engels who characterized 'socialism' as a society based on the principle of 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his contribution' and 'communism' as a society based on the principle of 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his needs'. And since, according to Marx, "communism" was the highest form a society could achieve, did Lohia mean that the caste system in ancient India was the highest form of society of Marx's conception? And by saying that he wanted the castes to be destroyed, did Lohia mean that the highest form of society of Marx's conception had to be destroyed? It would be difficult to understand what Lohia meant by such formulations. Then again he procrastinated in his article 'Class and Caste' "Whether this formula (to everybody according to his needs and from everybody according to his capacity) ever got worked out in the Indian caste system is more than I can say".

3.22 There is an intrinsic problem with the formulation. It presumes that when 'from each according to his capacity' is taken, it would be sufficient to meet the 'needs' of the people. How much is taken may not match how much has to be given. There may clearly be a mismatch between the quantity to be 'taken' and the quantity to be 'given'.

3.23 However, Ambedkar takes a different view on the origin of castes and the caste system. He makes a distinction between the two. In his paper presented at an Anthropology Seminar at the Columbia University on 9th May 1916 entitled 'Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development', Ambedkar, says that the "Aryans, Dravidians, Mongolians and Scythians who came to India...settled down as peaceful neighbours and... .. through constant contact and mutual intercourse they evolved a common culture that superseded their distinctive cultures" and hence he defined caste and its genesis as "a parceling of an already homogeneous unit, and the explanation of the genesis of Caste is the explanation of this process of parceling..." He said that caste cannot be considered in the form of an "isolated unit by itself but only as a group within, and with definite relations to, the system of castes as a whole".

3.24 He then said that “prohibition, or rather the absence of intermarriage—endogamy, to be concise—is the only one that can be called the essence of Caste when rightly understood”. He hence defined caste as “an artificial chopping off of the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy”. But then, he distinguished caste from other endogamous groups like Red Indians by saying that those endogamous groups were not parts of a homogeneous unit but were themselves heterogeneous and hence were not castes.

3.25 Ambedkar felt that endogamy is foreign to the people of India and hence concluded that “Castes, so far as India is concerned, means the superposition of endogamy on exogamy”. “Thus the superposition of endogamy on exogamy means the creation of caste”.

4 Socialists on Castes and Caste System

4.1 Ever since the formation of the Congress Socialist Party the Socialists have been concerned with Castes and Caste System in view of the inequality that inheres in the system. They realized that in order to build the egalitarian society of their dreams they had to contend with the social inequality represented by the caste system in addition to the economic inequality represented by the ‘classes’. They were particularly agitated about untouchability which was the bane of the Hindu society as it engendered the worst form of social inequality. Untouchability also agitated social reformers like Mahatma Gandhi. The difference was obvious. While the social reformers stopped at the elimination of untouchability, the socialists went further and desired a society based on social equality of all castes.

4.2 Though the socialist leaders in India did not theorise on the origin and evolution of the castes and the caste system, they recognized the existence of castes and the hierarchical character of the caste system and the caste-calling nexus and opposed it and tried to find out ways and means of ending the inequalities in the caste system. However two points of view emerged. First, that the socialists wanted to eliminate the inequalities inherent in the caste system and not eliminate the castes themselves and second, that the same was to be achieved by facilitating the economic, social and cultural advancement of the downtrodden castes, though at times rhetorically they spoke about ‘caste-less’ society.

4.3 Acharya Narendra Deva, the doyen of the Indian socialist movement, even though a Marxist to the core, recognised the caste dimension of the social inequality obtaining in India. He said: “The Hindu social organisation is a hierarchy of castes and perpetuates social inequalities. We have also placed vast sections of our people beyond the pale of civilisation and we treat them as sub-human beings.....and unless we start a crusade against these institutions and customs which perpetuate inequalities and sanction inhuman treatment to our fellowmen, we cannot hope to make any progress towards the realisation of our new objectives”.⁴

4.4 After religion, castes have the greatest potential of bonding people. Acharya Narendra Deva also recognised the rallying force of the castes and their political potential and its consequences. Speaking on the move of the government of the United Provinces in introducing village panchayats elected on the basis of adult franchise, he said “The right to vote has brought about an unprecedented awakening among the masses, the downtrodden and the suppressed for centuries and the fact that a large number of so-called untouchables and lower caste people have been returned to the panchayats defeating their high caste opponents amply evidenced it”. He further said “...since India is a caste ridden country, in the first flush of enfranchisement the oppressed have justly rallied round their castes. I welcome the victory of the lower castes in the elections and the alignment of the downtrodden on the basis of their castes is a happy and an inevitable feature of the elections. It reflects that the lower castes, who are the expropriated ones consisting of landless agriculture labourers and small peasant, are rising against the vested interests and economically superior higher castes”.⁵

4.5 On the castes, caste system and untouchability, Jayaprakash Narayan said: “The problem of democracy is intimately connected with such social institutions and attitudes of mind as are represented by the caste system and the practice of untouchability. A society in which men are considered high, low, or untouchable according to the families into which they are born, is very far from being democratic. It is quite a different matter that individuals are endowed at birth with different abilities and aptitudes. That is a biological phenomenon, with which caste has nothing to do.”⁶

4.6 In the alternative Constitution for India which the socialists drafted, they said, “Equality to be real must be not only legal and political but also social. It should be the foundation of the whole structure and the fundamental principle of all public activities”.

4.7 The chapter under the heading “Caste” in the Policy Statement of the Socialist Party adopted in 1947 said “In India, apart from economic inequalities, there are social inequalities, particularly among one of the communities, namely, the Hindus. The system of caste is anti-social, undemocratic and tyrannous, inasmuch as it divides men into high and low, touchable and untouchable, curtails human liberties and interferes with economic activities”.

4.8 In their first election manifesto entitled ‘We build for Socialism’ issued for the first general elections in 1952, the socialists said: “Castes have stratified Indian society. There are groups of men who enjoy hereditary privileges and there are castes that are hereditarily under privileged and suppressed. Freedom must mean the tearing down of these traditional barriers it must mean free mobility for talent”.

4.9 Thus not only the socialist leaders like Acharya Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan, but also the statements on castes and caste system made by the Socialist Party from time to time also emphasised the elimination of the social inequalities inhering in the caste system rather than eliminating or destroying the castes themselves.

4.10 After having been a party to the positions taken by the Socialist Party, Lohia started taking different positions after he left the mainstream socialist party. He took two distinct positions that flowed from his non-recognition of the distinction between castes and the caste system. He took the position that castes themselves had to be destroyed and not just the inequalities between the castes, i.e., the caste system, and as a corollary he took the position that since the castes themselves had to be destroyed, achievement of economic equality will not suffice to achieve the purpose.

4.11 He said that economic improvement does not eliminate the castes. He was right. But he went further. In a letter dated 10th December 1957 written to the Minister for Prisons of the Uttar Pradesh Government, he said that any talk of creating equality while retaining the differences between castes is meaningless and that hence castes had to be completely destroyed. Addressing the party workers in Nagarjunsagar in 1962, he said “it was believed that if economic equality is achieved the castes will end by themselves. But I felt that it was not so”⁷. On 3rd February 1961 in a statement he had even ridiculed the legislators belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes for running around to get

scholarships and jobs for their people. He said that no social change can take place with such efforts.

4.12 Lohia went further and said in his article ‘Towards the destruction of Castes and Classes’, that “This policy of uplift of downgraded castes and groups is capable of yielding much poison. ...it may speedily antagonize the *Dvija* without as speedily influencing the Shudras. ...Secondly, the colossi among the lower castes like the Chamars and Ahirs may want to appropriate the fruits of this policy without sharing them with the myriad other low-castes, with the result that the Brahmin and Chamar change places but caste remains intact”.

5. Class-Caste Equations

5.1 Socialists in Europe were fighting against the division of society into classes by capitalism. However, in India there were castes also which were not the creations of the capitalist society. Was there any relationship at all between the classes and castes or were they two distinct entities without any relationship whatsoever? Socialists in India have been trying to understand the relationship between the classes and castes and find an equation between the two.

5.2 Socialists noticed that the lower classes and the lower castes generally coincided. It is in this context that Acharya Narendra Deva had said “that the lower castes, who are the expropriated ones consisting of landless agriculture labourers and small peasant, are rising against the vested interests and economically superior higher castes”⁸. That is why the Socialists also believed that economic upliftment of the poorer classes also paved the way for the socio-cultural upliftment of the lower castes. But they realized that mere ‘de-classing’ the lower castes will not ‘de-caste’ them.

5.3 Examining the class-caste relations Ambedkar said “class and caste, so to say, are next door neighbours, and it is only a span that separates the two. A Caste is an Enclosed Class”. He summarized his thesis on casts in four points: “My study of the Caste problem involves four main points: (1) that in spite of the composite make-up of the Hindu population, there is a deep cultural unity; (2) that caste is a parceling into bits of a larger cultural unit; (3) that there was one caste to start with; and (4) that classes have become Castes through imitation and excommunication.

5.4 Lohia also tried to express the class-caste relations with an equation “Caste is immobile class. Loosening

caste is class". So it was Class = Caste + Mobility and hence Caste = Class – Mobility. The equation has two elements. – one, the equation presumes that there was mobility in classes whereas there was no mobility in castes, and two, if both were different states of the same substance, then destroying one would entail the destruction of the other automatically.

5.5 In his article 'Class and Caste' Lohia explained mobility saying that "What distinguishes caste from class is immobility that has crept into class relationship, the immobility of an individual to get into a higher caste and of a whole caste to move up in status or income". Based on such positions Lohia even ridiculed Marx in the same article: "Karl Marx tried to destroy class, without being aware of its amazing capacity to change itself into caste".

5.6 If Varnas of ancient India are to be treated as castes, para 3.6 above shows that there was mobility among the Varnas. But was there mobility even within the caste system? Could a person born in one caste enter another caste? Even Manu mentions that a Brahmin who sells flesh, salt and lac immediately becomes a Shudra and a Brahmin who sells milk becomes a Shudra in three days. A Brahmin who sells other things becomes a Vaishya in 7 nights.⁹ And a person who has good nature, (*Satvik*) becomes a Brahmin in the next life.¹⁰ Many such examples can be given from Manusmriti itself.

5.7 In her "Caste Question in India", Anuradha Ghandy, explains the process by which the Vaishyas who were the agriculturists (*Vīs*) became the traders and the Shudras who were the labourers became the agriculturists. M. N. Shrinivas, the noted sociologist, in his article "Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India" concludes that there was mobility even among castes. M. V. Nadkarni says that "even after the caste system emerged in Hindu society, there was considerable social and occupational mobility". He further says "To gain a higher rank in the caste system, they practised what the upper castes practised, like *upanayana* (sacred thread ceremony), and even certain '*homas*' and *pujas*. Such attempts are called as Sanskritisation by M N Shrinivas (1977), through which eventually several castes gained in caste status".

5.8 M. V. Nadkarni quotes verses 14-15 of Chapter 216 of Vanaparva in Mahabharata in support of his views:

*Yastu Shudro dame satye
dharme cha satatottithah |
tam brahmanamaham manye
vritten hi bhavet dvijah ||*

*Na jatih karanam tata
gunah kalyanakaranam |
Vritasthamapi chandalam
tam devah brahmanam viduh ||*

A free rendering of them in English would be: That Shudra who is ever engaged in self-control, truth and righteousness, I regard him a Brahmin. One is a twice-born by conduct alone. And birth is not the cause, my friend; it is virtues, which are the cause of welfare. Even a Chandala observing the vow is considered a Brahmana by the gods.¹¹

5.9 Secondly, in the equation, if caste is infused with mobility it will become class and then class can be destroyed using Marxian methods. Again, if class is destroyed the caste would automatically get destroyed because of the caste-class equivalence. For example, if steam, water and ice are the three forms of the same substance depending upon its state, then if water is destroyed, then there will be no question of its becoming steam or ice. Could such an equation have explained the castes and guided their destruction?

6. The Three Remedies

6.1 The Socialists, Rammanohar Lohia and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, suggested three different remedies for the malady of the caste system. Socialists wanted removal of caste distinctions. Ambedkar wanted the annihilation of castes. Lohia, in the beginning wanted the destruction of castes but later veered round to the socialist position of destroying inequalities among the castes.

6.2 Having realised the rallying force and the political potential of the castes, Acharya Narendra Deva wanted the depressed castes to be drawn into the mainstream. So he said "...to unite the people and invoke their co-operation in preparing the foundations of a new life, we shall have to obtain the hearty co-operation of the depressed classes. Moreover, we can fruitfully use their collective power only if we let them feel that the present discriminatory social system would very soon come to an end. We must assure the people that the nation accepts their undeniable importance and that they are themselves a leading component of our political order. .. it is absolutely essential to end social inequalities for the proper evolution of a democratic order. .. we should

make every effort towards social, economic and cultural advancement of the backward classes.”¹²

6.3 Jayaprakash Narayan said “It should be appreciated by every Indian democrat that the system of caste hierarchy and untouchability is the greatest and most stubborn enemy of democracy in this country. At the same time it should also be appreciated that vanquishing of this enemy is, again, not a political but an educative task. It is also, but to a much lesser degree, an economic task. The social stature of the depressed and backward castes will undoubtedly rise with improvement in their economic condition. But it would be a mistake to believe that economic improvement by itself would be sufficient to remove caste distinctions”.

6.4 In the objective section of the Programme of the Congress Socialist Party, the Party said that there will be “no recognition of any distinction based on caste or community”. The Constitution of the Socialist Party as also of the Praja Socialist Party later stated that a person can become a member of the party if he, among other things, ‘does not believe in nor observe caste and communal distinctions’.¹³

6.5 Policy Statement of the Socialist Party adopted in 1947 under the heading “Caste” said “In socialist India, this system cannot exist and no distinction or discrimination based on caste is permitted”.¹³

6.6 In the alternative Constitution for India which the socialists drafted, they said: “Harijans are provided special facilities for educational advancement. Special schools are opened for them and freeships and scholarships are liberally granted to them by the state and various public organisations. All this has, no doubt, promoted their educational advancement. But it is generally recognised that separate schools are a hindrance to social assimilation and education should be imparted to Harijans in common public schools. Of course, they may be granted special fee concessions and scholarships. When untouchability in all forms is prohibited, special schools are not needed”.

6.7 They further said “It is also necessary to make it clear that constitutional guarantees regarding equality in all forms, does not absolve the state of its responsibility to provide special facilities to aboriginal tribes and other backward peoples for their economic and cultural advancement. It is obvious that without such facilities real equality will never be achieved by them, and

legal equality assured to them by the constitution will serve only a negative purpose”. Even in 1971 election manifesto, the PSP said “The PSP’s efforts to usher in equality will not be restricted to economic field alone but will be extended to the social plane as well”.

6.8 Thus the Socialists always talked about ‘social assimilation’ of the downtrodden castes, ending ‘social inequalities’ and ‘ending caste discrimination’ through ‘social, economic and cultural advancement’, through ‘special facilities’ for them.¹⁴

6.9 Acharya Narendra Deva connected the castes with classes and gave the ultimate solution. He said “The growth of conscious ‘casteism’ however, must be arrested now since it has exhausted its utility. It is now necessary to tell the lower castes that their real enemies are the vested interests, and that the upper castes have held them under their yoke only on account of their economic superiority. The oppressed castes must be told that the remedy of all their ills lay in joining hands with the other economically oppressed people, may they be of any caste or creed to fight the vested interests even among the lower castes”.¹⁵

6.10 Ambedkar had raised another important issue with the castes. He had recognized that the castes were inextricably connected to ‘callings’. A person born in a particular caste had to pursue the ‘calling’ attached to that caste only. Verse 35 of Chapter 3 of Bhagavadgita says:

*śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt
sv-anuṣṭhitāt*

*sva-dharme nidhanam śreyah para-dharmo
bhayāvahah*

It is far better to discharge one's prescribed duties, even though faultily, than another's duties perfectly. Death in the course of performing one's own duty is better than engaging in another's duties, for to follow another's path is dangerous.

6.11 It is in this context that Ambedkar says “The supporters of Caste, who would allow liberty in the sense of a right to life, limb, and property, would not readily consent to liberty in this sense, inasmuch as it involves liberty to choose one's profession... But to object to this kind of liberty is to perpetuate slavery.... It is found where, as in the Caste System, some persons are compelled to carry on certain prescribed callings which are not of their choice”.

6.12 Socialists were aware of this dimension of the caste system. Hence they proposed to break the nexus between the castes and the ‘callings’. In the very first election manifesto the Socialists addressed this issue. The Manifesto said that, “the Socialist Party offers the following programs: a vast program of education costing Rs. 100 crores, over a period of ten years providing educational opportunities to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will help to remove the cultural and educational lag between the advanced and backward castes. It will also remove the barriers confining them to hereditary occupations”.

6.13 But Ambedkar wanted the abolition, nay, annihilation of castes. One of his early monographs written in 1936 was entitled ‘The Annihilation of Caste’. In that monograph, he asked the question “How to abolish Caste?” He also answered it. “I am convinced that the real remedy is inter-marriage. Fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin, and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindred, becomes paramount, the separatist feeling—the feeling of being aliens—created by Caste will not vanish.” “The real remedy for breaking Caste is inter-marriage. Nothing else will serve as the solvent of Caste”.

6.14 However he did not believe that inter-dining and inter-caste marriages were practical solutions. He said: “To agitate for and to organise inter-caste dinners and inter-caste marriages is like forced feeding brought about by artificial means”. “Criticising and ridiculing people for not inter-dining or inter-marrying, or occasionally holding inter-caste dinners and celebrating inter-caste marriages, is a futile method of achieving the desired end” he said.

6.15 He diagnosed the problem of caste as a religious one and not a social one. He said that “the people observe Caste because they are deeply religious. People are not wrong in observing Caste. In my view, what is wrong is their religion, which has inculcated this notion of Caste. If this is correct, then obviously the enemy you must grapple with is not the people who observe Caste, but the *Shastras* which teach them this religion of Caste. . . . The real remedy is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the *Shastras*”. “You must destroy the religion of the *Shrutis* and the *Smritis*. Nothing else will avail. This is my considered view of the matter” he said.

6.16 Then Ambedkar proceeded further and said “The only question that remains to be considered

is—How to bring about the reform of the Hindu social order?” He said that “the Hindu Society must be reorganized on a religious basis which would recognise the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity”. “I am told that for such religious principles as will be in consonance with Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, it may not be necessary for you to borrow from foreign sources and that you could draw for such principles on the *Upanishads*”.

6.17 But Ambedkar realized that it was not possible to change or reform the Hindu religion and society. He said “I see the task to be well-nigh impossible”. Tired of trying to reform Hindu society, Ambedkar became a Buddhist.

6.18 Rammanohar Lohia, who ploughed a different furrow after he launched his own Socialist Party, began with the slogan of eliminating the castes themselves and not just the inequalities in the caste system, through ‘inter-caste dining’ and ‘inter-caste marriages’. But later on he veered round to the idea that not the castes themselves but the inequalities inherent in the caste system had to be eliminated by providing preferential opportunities for the economic and socio-cultural advancement of the downtrodden castes.

6.19 Why should the socialists have opposed the caste system? What were the reasons advanced by Lohia for the destruction of the castes themselves? If it was the social inequality, then the efforts should be to eliminate the inequalities and if that was not possible, then only eliminate the castes themselves. If the problem with castes was not social inequality but that it restricts opportunity and restricted opportunity constricts ability and constricted ability further restricts opportunity, as Lohia argues in the introduction to ‘Marx, Gandhi and Socialism’, the argument applied to the classes also a fortiori. George Bernard Shaw in his book ‘An Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism’ gives lucid examples of how class restricts opportunities and abilities.

6.20 Did Lohia come to the conclusion that the social inequalities in the caste system cannot be eliminated and/or that opportunities cannot be opened up is why he called for the elimination of the castes themselves? At least I have not found such reasoning in Lohia’s thinking. On the contrary lately he advocated the opening of the opportunities through preferential opportunities for the downtrodden to eliminate inequalities in the caste system.

6.21 Anyway, in the beginning, Lohia's prescription for destruction of the castes was 'inter-caste dining' and 'inter-caste marriage'. He failed to notice that inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriages have been taking place in India since times immemorial. Historian K. M. Pannikar opines that even before the end of the Vedic period, inter-caste marriages had been started by Seers themselves.¹⁶ The rules relating to the 'Gotras' show that exogamy was the rule in ancient India. It is precisely when inter-Varna marriages started taking place that endogamy had to be forced on the society and that is how the castes came into being. Manu had prepared such a water tight compartment for castes that even inter-caste marriages gave rise to newer and newer castes so that the purity of the original castes was never compromised.

6.22 Moreover marriage was a personal matter and involved the 'liberty' of the persons marrying. If one opts for marrying within one's own caste, nothing could be done about it. Every one had to be persuaded to marry outside his caste and see that the child did not inherit the caste of the father or the mother but became caste-less. However, Lohia was keen to enforce inter-caste marriages. He even said that inter-caste marriage must be made a compulsory criteria for getting a government job.

6.23 However, by 1962, Lohia had started talking about preferential opportunities for the backward castes, a position which the socialists had taken in their very first election manifesto. Speaking to the party workers in the training camp at Nagarjunsagar in 1962, Lohia said that without special opportunities the Castes in India will not melt... Only special opportunities can destroy castes". Thus Lohia appears to have given up on his insistence on 'inter-caste dining' and 'inter-caste marriage' as the solvent for the destruction of castes

6.24 He reiterated the position in the introduction to his collection of articles entitled "Marx, Gandhi and Socialism". He says: "Caste restricts opportunity. Restricted opportunity constricts ability. Constricted ability further restricts opportunity. ... The only way out is preferential opportunity for groups whom caste has more or less disabled".

6.25 But then the question is whether the preferential opportunities will 'destroy' the castes or strengthen them? A person who does not believe in caste will marry a person from another caste. But a person who wants the benefit of a preferential opportunity will have to

stick to his caste to claim the benefit. This would only tend to strengthen the caste rather than destroying it. But though the preferential opportunities may not be able to destroy the castes, they would certainly reduce the inequalities between castes and bring about equality among them.

6.26 This was precisely the crux of the movement launched by Basaveshwara, who was a minister in the court of a king in Karnataka in 12th century. He was opposed to the hierarchy in the caste system and he recognized that the major factor in perpetuating social inequalities was the hiatus between the manual and mental labour and the nexus between the caste and the 'calling'. Hence he insisted on every one of his followers to undertake 'manual' labour and eulogized it by saying that 'manual labour is itself the heaven' and also made the 'manual labourers' not only learn literacy but even compose poems called '*vachanas*'. This two-pronged attack on the social inequalities of the caste system created an almost egalitarian group if not the society. Though these Lingayat or Veerashaiva devotees gathered together and held philosophical discourses and did not observe caste rules or untouchability, they did not give up their castes and on the contrary identified themselves with their castes. Actually they proudly mentioned their castes to which they belonged in their poems. Thus Basaveshwara destroyed the caste hierarchy by destroying the hiatus between manual and mental labour while retaining the castes and the nexus between castes and callings.

6.27 However, when Basaveshwara tried to get an inter-caste marriage performed between a Brahmin girl and an untouchable boy, there was a social upheaval in the society and not only he had to run away from his place to escape the wrath of the orthodox but his entire movement towards caste equality got scattered.

6.28 By 1962, Lohia said the real and modern revolution can take place only when the poor of the lower castes and of the upper castes together take up the leadership.¹⁷ This was a case of class overtaking the caste.

6.29 Thus it can be seen from the discussion above that the socialists from the beginning were not in favour of destruction of the castes themselves but favoured only elimination of the social inequalities which inhered in the caste system. And they proposed to do it not by methods like inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriages but by uplifting the backward castes

through economic, social and cultural advancement by providing them special opportunities.

1. Vol 1, Page 321
2. See Uttara-Dakshina-Page 131-published by the Dept of Kannada and Culture , Govt of Karnataka.
3. See Uttara-Dakshina-Page 131-published by the Dept of Kannada and Culture , Govt of Karnataka.
4. Towards Socialist Society : Ed: Brahmanand. P- 430
5. Towards Socialist Society : Ed: Brahmanand. P-340
6. Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy: Ed: Bimla Prasad. P-200
7. Samajavadi Andolanaka Itihas – 112-113
8. Towards Socialist Society: Ed: Brahmanand. P-340
9. Manusmriti – 10/92-93
10. Manusmriti – 12/48

11. The original of this verse taken from P V Kane, op cit, Vol V, Part II, p 1006, and the translation from Arvind Sharma (2000), op cit, p 158; Kane cites several more verses on the same theme, see esp Vol II, Part I, p 101.
12. Towards Socialist Society: Ed: Brahmanand. P-254
13. Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy: Ed: Bimla Prasad. P-200
14. “The first challenge to caste system came from Lord Gautam Buddha, who talked of Samata, equality” says Ram Puniyani. Janata, May 1, 2013.
15. Towards Socialist Society: Ed: Brahmanand. P-340-1
16. See ‘Geographical Factors in Indian History’
17. See Uttara-Dakshina-Page 146-published by the Dept of Kannada and Culture , Govt of Karnataka.

(Contd. from Page 19)

looks smaller for her age, result of chronic malnutrition during early childhood. Nevertheless, in her dol-like cuteness she has sufficient aphrodisiac alchemy to raise libidinous hunger even in a casual beholder. A survey shows that 80 percent of rural women are anaemic. She must have been mothered by one such specimen. To what extent was she breast-fed? Or given appropriate supplements, when getting a bellyful to eat whatever foodstuff could be at hand is an endemic problem? Most rural women are seen at heavy work till the full term of pregnancy, and again fastened to the same grind after barely few weeks of ‘confinement’. Lactating mothers are seen in the work place hovering around tiny make-shift canvas shacks sheltering their litre, covered with dust and swarms of flies, when the feeding time is signalled by shrill, spasmodic cries arising from the tiny mouths.

When she was five or six Pallavi went to other people’s farms as wage labour. After returning from a day’s toil she had to do house cleaning and cook for the whole family. The hawk-eyed step-mother just supervised or sat breast-feeding the youngest arrival. The father came to the house late at night fully drunk, gorged on the food served by Pallavi, bad-mouthing all and sundry till his meal lasted and then went out in the yard and threw himself on the mat and soon was fast asleep. Despite this harrowing childhood experience, she appears not to care that if she tries to plough her lone furrow without the life guard of some kind of education or skill training, she will be utterly vulnerable

and even helpless. She has given all indications about her inclination to plunge into the family way as soon as possible. Aroused sensuality seems to be the main driving impulse clouding all other considerations like security and stability. Devil may care seems to be her instinctive response if such questions would ever nudge her mind.

We looked to her for the past few years as our show piece, our success story. We have tried all possible alternatives but to no avail. She likes cooking. Therefore we thought of giving her training in hospitality or catering, but she did not show any interest in building a career as such. She became very domineering and violent in her behavior with the younger inmates of AVANI. Indulged in indiscipline, absented herself from the hostel and stayed with a relative without prior permission from our Rector.

For seven long years none came to take Pallavi home for a holiday, and suddenly one day in May last Pallavi’s uncle came to AVANI to take her to his home. She was overjoyed; at last some relative did care for her. She implored me urgently to allow her to spend just two days in uncle’s home. The uncle also seemed quite keen and sincere in his importunities and I finally agreed to allow her to take leave for two days. I had nonetheless taken care to arrange for the sojourn with the written consent of the Child Welfare Department, because she now was 18. Days passed but there was no inkling about her whereabouts. After good 15 days when

I phoned her she flatly refused to return. She showed the temerity of telling me to handover her things to the uncle who would arrive to collect them! We all were much perplexed. In strong words I demanded of her uncle to bring Pallavi along. Then they came: I was astounded to see the complete transformation in her looks. She had got her eyebrows done, she had shortened her hair, and the hairstyle had become completely rakish. I was very furious but I controlled myself. I asked the uncle to sit in the office; and I took her into an anteroom; and tried to find out the truth. At her uncle's place she came in contact with her young cousin. She was emphatic she wanted nothing else in the world but to get married to him, as quickly as possible. Even our chairman Dr. Arun Chavan travelled to Kolhapur from Sangli and spent quite some hours persuading her to reconsider. But she was adamant. My anxiety about her future is well-founded: the young fellow is uneducated, survives as an unskilled wage labour and, to boot, is prone to alcoholic drinks. The one mistake I made of allowing her to have a break caused such complications. I learnt an important lesson : one must be wary about reacting on the spur of an emotional moment.

She has affection for her brother. He gets epileptic fits. His lot as a motherless child and with a part of the hand missing, the grandparents doted upon him to a fault, which twisted him into a spoilt child. And now he has no means for survival other than begging; unless succor somehow comes forth from Pallavi. She likes her maternal grandfather, who is now very old and hardly lives hand-to-mouth. But she has never betrayed any feelings for those AVANI activists who have taken care of her for all these years. I do not think she has developed close friendship with any of those of the inmates with whom she grew together. It seems there is some psychological no man's land in her inscape which is bereft of any living organisms, a landscape without greenery, drab and disheveled. Perhaps, if able to make a family on her terms, her ship of life may regain a smooth passage on an even keel. But, admittedly, in this venture there are obvious pitfalls. Only an angel for a husband, a loving father figure, a man of infinite understanding, endowing only a few children for her to dote upon, can embody the cure fit for her chronic absence of wellness.

The roots of her problems, or I should say, the cause of our problem which she has posed before us lies elsewhere. She refuses to have her life mended and laundered clean of the injurious past. She is blithely

indifferent about her fate if she goes into the wide world and fend for herself. And finally, after exhausting all possibilities we notified the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) of the Government. and planned to hand her over to her relatives in the presence of the CWC. On the appointed day our activists waited for her relatives (an uncle and someone else) from 4 to 8 pm but none turned up. So, Pallavi was brought back to AVANI. I was interested to know what her immediate reaction was at the moment she realized that no uncle or none was interested to officially take charge of her. What puzzles and perplexes me is the casualness bordering almost on flippancy with which she faced the situation. Neither remorse, nor anxiety, nor pensiveness about another beginning. She came back to AVANI, where she apparently loathed to be, and resumed her life's narrative just turning the next page with light fingers.

I remember the Hollywood film 'Belinda', a story of a raped deaf and dumb girl. I think she is our Belinda. But Belinda of the film finds salvation in a man who urges her to accept him and finally wins her. I do not know what is written in the fortune of our 'Belinda.'

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Refocusing the Middle Class

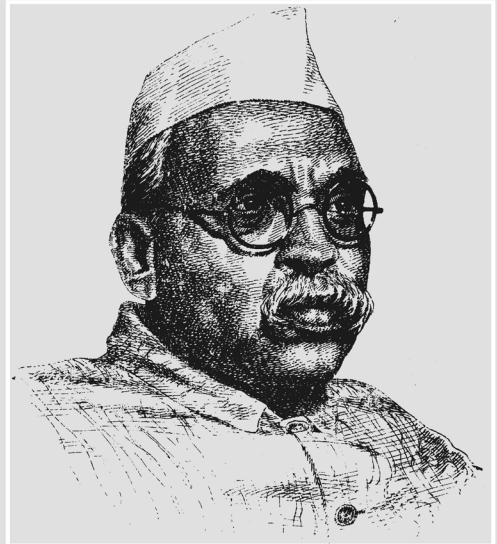
Uday Dandavate

“I didn’t grow up with great privilege, nor did I grow up wanting for anything. I was a middle-class kid and, relative to the rest of the world, that’s great wealth.” - Matt Damon, actor.

The middle class reflects the core character of a society. It can be a social space where creativity blossoms from the restlessness of the daily grind and where revolutionary ideas emerge from compassion for the oppressed. It is the middle class that has historically championed the cause of the poor and articulated society’s anger against the establishment. People from the middle class enjoy just enough security to allow them to aspire for a better future but suffer just enough to have empathy for the less privileged. The lower class, on the other hand, does not have the luxury of thinking through the moral framework that the middle class maintains. As laggards in an economic order that rewards the elite and punishes the under-skilled and under-privileged, the poor get marginalized and are forced to survive by hook or by crook. The upper class often lives in a bubble removed from the ground realities of society as a whole, which allows them relative freedom to choose between conspicuous consumption and responsible philanthropy, balancing their emotions between the joy of indulgence and atonement from privileged guilt. As the middle class climbs the ladder of social mobility, there is a growing risk of the middle class losing its deeper connection to society through loss of sensitivity to a larger cause and morality. An indifferent middle class can cause greater harm to society than detachment of the rich and desperation of the poor. By disengaging from the discourse for social justice, the middle class stands the risk of relinquishing its historical role as the catalysts of creative imagination and evangelists of social justice. As governments grapple with macro issues such as social welfare, terrorism, recession, global warming, the energy crisis and health care, civil society faces the risk of getting weakened by a shrinking middle class. Gradual erosion of the middle class poses one of the gravest challenges to a society that is eager to progress and prosper. There are signs worldwide of the middle class renewing strength through spontaneous movements such as the Arab Spring in the Middle

East, the Occupy Wall Street movement in the U.S., and Anna Hazare’s campaign against corruption in India. Unfortunately, growth of fundamentalist forces is swaying the middle class away from secular ideas and an egalitarian ideal. It is imperative to rekindle the spirit of the middle class and motivate it to continue to lead the transformation toward a just society.

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Narendra Dabholkar
(1944-2013)
Shanta Gokhale
Suhaz Palshikar
Priyanka Kakodkar

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Murder, most foul

Amarendra Dhaneshwar

“The situation is replete with tragic contradictions. On the one hand, we see an intrepid rationalist like Dr Narendra Dabholkar who waged a life-long battle against superstition getting killed in broad daylight. On the other hand, we also see another ‘Narendra’, his polar opposite, being showered with eulogies of all kinds and poised to take oath as future ‘Prime Minister’ . The forces which assassinated Narendra Dabholkar have drawn strength from and have been unleashed by none other than Narendra Modi”, writes Ashok Rajwade in the letters column in the leading Marathi daily ‘Loksatta’. The brutal assassination of Dr Narendra Dabholkar in Pune on August 20 has sent shock waves all over Maharashtra and has led to spontaneous demonstrations of anger and resentment against obscurantist forces.

Dr Narendra Dabholkar who was the editor of the socialist weekly ‘Sadhana’ was one of the most dedicated activists. He hailed from Satara where he had a lucrative medical practice which he gave up for the sake of social and political work in the early 1980s. He belonged to a family which was politically

and culturally progressive. His eldest brother Devdutta was the vice chancellor of the Poona University and Narendra was the youngest of the 10 siblings. His brother Shripad was an agricultural expert and other brothers Dattaprasanna and Dattaprasad are also active intellectuals. Narendra, besides being a practising doctor, was also a sportsman of distinction. He was a national level Kabaddi player who won many awards.

He was drawn towards the socialist circles in the late 1970s. Youth organizations like ‘Yuvak Kranti Dal’ and ‘Samajvadi Yuvak Dal’ were active recruitment centres in those days. Committed social workers and reformers like Hamid Dalwai of the Muslim Satyashodhak Mandal and Dr Baba Aadhav who initiated the ‘ek gaon ek panavatha’ (one village one well) movement to combat hidden untouchability in rural Maharashtra inspired Narendra to take a plunge into the movement for social reform. Both Aadhav and Dalwai were rationalists. Rational thinking and outlook forms the backbone of true secularism. He shared such close comradeship with Dalwai that he named his son Hamid . Narendra also drew inspiration from rationalists like Abraham Kovur.

He stood against discrimination and enmity

Shanta Gokhale

Narendra formed the 'Andhshraddha Nirmulan Samiti', a body to eradicate superstition and superstitious practices, in early 1980s and devoted himself completely to spread scientific approach and outlook among the population in general. This Samiti rapidly expanded its network and brought within its ambit remote and far flung areas of rural Maharashtra. Narendra logged hundreds of kilometers in state transport buses, like Pannalal Surana of the earlier generation of socialists and worked with a missionary zeal. This was bound to incense the so-called spiritual godmen and tantriks who thrived on the superstition and made a fast buck by hoodwinking ignorant masses. They began to instigate mischief makers to attack Narendra Dabholkar and his associates. They disrupted meetings, hurled stones and heaped abuses on the rationalist reformers. Pro-superstition anti-social elements always use religious beliefs to provoke masses to attack reformers. This is a technique developed and used since times immemorial.

Maharashtra, once upon a time, took pride in calling itself the best ruled state where law and order prevailed and the ordinary citizen could live peacefully and pursue his or her vocation without any threat from any quarters. That is no longer the case. Over the years, the culture of tolerance and civilised public discourse has been slowly replaced by raucous elements which indulge in mindless violence and rampant vandalism. Political parties like the Shiv Sena, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena as well as some sections of the Dalit movement are quick to take offence and indulge in street fighting. Right wing casteist groups

(Continued on Page 10)

When Dr Narendra Dabholkar was shot dead on Pune's Omkareshwar Bridge on Tuesday morning at 7.15, the needle that had been oscillating for the last three decades between Maharashtra's progressive and regressive heritage, stopped on the side of regression. Those five bullets fired at Dr Dabholkar by two men on a motorbike, shouted out to the world, "We are intolerant. We have a right to be intolerant. We have a right to reduce the world of ideas to the space between our ears. Anybody who tries to tell us to question our beliefs, offends us fatally. We will deal with such a one in the only way we know how. We will finish him."

Dr Dabholkar was a man who stood against social discrimination and enmity. He stood for rational thought against blind faith. He gave up his 12-year-old medical practice in 1982 to put his actions where his mouth was. Inspired by men like Dr Abraham Kovoov of Sri Lanka and Basava Premananda of Kerala, he founded the Andha Shraddha Nirmoolan Samiti (Society for the abolition of blind faith) to fight the forces of superstition that exploited the gullible. His target was not religion, as it was with other rationalists world wide. He didn't ask any of the thousands of men and women who threw themselves into his work to give up their faith. What he desired was that they and all the people of this State should put their beliefs to the test of rational thought in order to discover where legitimate religion shaded imperceptibly into the falsehoods

of blind faith. In his opinion, belief in astrology was blind faith; belief in godmen who worked miracles which were nothing but sleight-of-hand was blind faith; belief in black magic, witchcraft and human sacrifice for material gains was blind faith.

In a country where the highest, the richest and the most powerful look to the stars for auspicious dates for every beginning, where people throng to see Ganapati drink milk and crowd beaches to taste sea water that has turned sweet, Dr Dabholkar was fighting an uphill battle. There was a powerful reason why the government of this allegedly progressive State had dilly-dallied for twenty years over the bill he had proposed against blind faith even in its watered down version. In a long interview with Nikhil Wagle, Dr Dabholkar recalled a meeting with politicians who told him he didn't have on his side what godmen had on theirs - lakhs of followers. For politicians, numbers could not be risked for social progress.

It was in the course of this interview again that Dr Dabholkar spoke of how the press too was political where numbers were concerned. The ANS once wrote to editors of so-called progressive newspapers suggesting that, if astrology columns could not be taken off their pages, at least a line that said, "This matter is for amusement only" should appear at the top. It was like allowing

(Continued on Page 11)

Case of missing files

S. Viswam

The case of the missing files, currently the theme of Parliamentary proceedings, is becoming so bizarre that the CBI may well have to seek the assistance of Erle Stanley Gardner and the Perry Mason-Paul Drake duo to sort it out! One can understand when a single or a couple of files go missing in government departments. But what is one to say when as many as 256 files go missing at one single time? And specially one in which all the missing files relate to a single case under the Supreme Court's supervision and impinge on the UPA government's role in it? The disclosures about the "disappearance" of the files relating to the controversial coal mining licences have eroded the UPA government's credibility further, at a time when official credibility has declined precipitously over the last few years. The case of the missing files may well be part of the epitaph that waits to be written on the UPA's demise next year.

Piecing together published information, one learns that the concerned files vanished not from a single office but from several ministries viz. coal, steel, power, industry and relevant departments of state governments. Some 157 missing files pertain to a screening committee's rejection of applications for coal block allotments, currently being investigated by the CBI in the wake of the exposure of the Coalgate Scam. The Supreme Court has tasked the CBI with finding out whether or not the official guidelines set for allotment of

coal blocks were adhered to by the licensing ministries and officials or whether discriminatory policies were followed in order to favour specific interests.

A search committee appointed at the instance of the Supreme Court has been unable to trace the missing files. Nor has it been able to find out how so many files from so many offices and departments could vanish, and that too, all together. Clearly, this is a scam willfully perpetrated by a single or group of officials anxious to hide their culpability. Clearly discernible also is an organized attempt to prevent any kind of investigation into how licences were issued and by whom and to whom. Such a well-organised conspiracy is the first ever attempted, and apparently quite satisfactorily, at such high levels. Rajya Sabha leader of opposition Arun Jaitley cannot be faulted on any ground for his apt comment that the files have been made to disappear. And, since the files have been made to disappear the chances of their "re-appearance" are remote. They probably have been buried deep somewhere and will stay buried till those involved in their disappearance feel safe.

On what basis has the government promised to trace the files and hand them over to the CBI? Does this mean that the Coal Ministry headed by Jaiswal is party to the organized misplacement of official documents and their denial to the CBI? Does it mean that government files can be made to "disappear" and "re-

appear" at someone's fancy? This is obviously a well-plotted cover-up that has succeeded in misleading the Supreme Court, the CBI and Parliament. But such a success is apt to be short-lived since the truth is bound to come out, sooner rather than later. And when and if it does, the UPA will have much to answer for.

There is much merit in the Opposition's contention that the Prime Minister must take Parliament into confidence on the latest situation since he was the Coal Minister in charge during the Coalgate Scam period 2006-2009. Dr. Manmohan Singh is a seasoned politician and is aware that cover-ups cannot be sustained for long against a vigilant media, an adamant opposition and a weak defence. Let Dr. Singh not sacrifice his reputation for personal probity and honesty by covering-up a cover-up. Let accountability prevail and parliamentary processes be upheld.

Madhu Dandavate

By

B. Vivekanandan

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Between the lines

IAS must assert itself

Kuldip Nayar

THE Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is at the apex to run the country's administration. It replaced the Indian Civil Service (ICS) which was an instrument in the hands of the British to rule over India. After independence, there was serious thinking whether there should be an all-India service at all. The states wanted persons from their own area to administer.

But, then Home Minister Sardar Patel was particular to have an all-India service to articulate the feeling of unity and to maintain the diversities prevailing in the country. The service would also, Patel asserted, ensure that the Indian constitution remained supreme in the medley of pulls by different states. Two all-India services, Indian Administrative Service and Indian Police Service (IPS), were constituted. They came to occupy top positions in the states.

This arrangement worked fairly well till the early seventies when the rot started due to the Centre's maniac effort to concentrate power and the states' ambition to play politics through civil servants. This has practicably nullified good administration. The IAS has become a glorified state service. The rulers use it in the manner they like.

In real, the Emergency is the watershed. Then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi suspended the Constitution and used the IAS officers to enforce illegal acts and suppress the critics. This was the time when the thin line between right and wrong, moral and immoral was erased. Only a couple of officers

stood up against what was sheer dictatorship.

Fear of punishment for disobedience made the service servile. It was once a steel frame but it had now turned into a seal frame. The Shah Commission, appointed to look into the excesses during the Emergency, deplored how the bureaucracy caved in. The Commission has said: "The ethical considerations inherent in public behavior became generally dim and in many cases beyond the mental grasp of many of the public functionaries. Desire for self-preservation as admitted by a number of public servants at various levels became the sole motivation for their official actions and behavior..."

The service has not recovered from the carrots dangled before it during the Emergency. In fact, it is going out of the way to placate the rulers. The latter, in turn, have rewarded those who did what the rulers wanted. The malaise is largely because of two reasons: one, the rulers do not respect the regulations and violate them to reap benefits for themselves and their parties; two, the IAS officers who are allotted to the states, have surrendered because of threat of transfer or posting to an unimportant position.

Therefore, it is heartening to see, when IAS officers like Durga Shakti Nagpal from UP and Ashok Khemka from Haryana, standing up against the wrongs the rulers wished them to do. Nagpal has been suspended because of stopping the illegal mining by sand mafia. The

Samajwadi Party, ruling UP and placating the Muslim electorate, has justified her suspension, saying that she had endangered the communal harmony by ordering the demolition of an outside wall of a mosque. One, this is not true. Two, she was within her right to demolish any unauthorized structure on the government land. In a judgment, the Supreme Court has said that a place of worship should be pulled down immediately if the government land had been encroached upon.

It is a pity that the Supreme Court rejected a public interest litigation petition challenging her suspension. The court is technically correct that it cannot interfere in matters between the government and the employees. The Court had the opportunity to set right the rot. It should have realized the anger which swept through the country following the action against the two officials.

The support of IAS associations from some states and the trainees at Mussorie to Durga evokes hope that the service which has ingratiated itself with politicians may begin to assert itself as was the case before the Emergency. The manner in which the three-member IAS officers' committee endorsed the Haryana government casts shadow on the behavior of the service. The nation still hopes that the bureaucracy will make up for the deficiencies which the politicians, particularly belonging to the ruling party in a state or at the Centre, have created in the system.

In many foreign countries, there is a committee for civil service

supervising the suspensions, transfers and promotions of officials. A similar committee can be constituted in India as well. The task can also be entrusted to the Union Public Service Commission, which is also the recruiting authority.

The service itself will have to do introspection if officers were to act only on the basis of self-promotion. Today, when the common man does not get even what is rightfully due to him, he is disillusioned with the entire system. True, politicians will continue to keep an eye on the electorate, but the IAS cannot afford to fall prey to their designs. A public functionary must display a degree of vigilance and willingness to sacrifice.

The Gandhi dynasty should draw a lesson from the example of Feroze Gandhi, son-in-law of Jawaharlal Nehru. Feroze Gandhi would take up cases of corruption in parliament, even to the embarrassment of Nehru. He was so upright that he did not even live at the Prime Minister's house but had a separate bungalow to which he was entitled as a member of parliament. It is another matter that Feroze Gandhi's son, Rajiv Gandhi, got the atmosphere contaminated when, as the Prime Minister he bought the Bofors guns. Corruption of the dynasty has not lessened either in tone or tenor. Robert Vadra, son-in-law of Congress president Sonia Gandhi, has created a stench.

Coming back to the IAS, its name is in the mud. It must retrieve itself not only for the sake of the Durgas and Khemkas, but also for the public which is still hoping against hope that the service will not dance to the tunes of the rulers. That is how the democratic structure in the country can be made safer.

RUSA to fund colleges and universities

K. S. Chalam

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has drafted Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan - National Higher Education Mission – (RUSA) for public debate. The mission document seems to have been drafted on the lines of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for school education that is implementing MDM and other programmes to achieve universal elementary education by 2015. The central government seems to have been exasperated with the established regulatory bodies that became notorious in recent years about safeguarding and improving the quality of higher education and therefore brought out RUSA.

The UN Millennium Development Goals or MDGs have obliged nations to develop strategies to achieve the targets by 2015. Among the eight prominent goals, realizing universal schooling is one of the very important aims that has a bearing on the whole system of education. The Government of India has started different models to execute the strategies to accomplish the targets by the year 2015. It appears that the RTE, SSA and similar models are the outcomes of this craving. The mission mode of SSA has suited our conditions and seems to have paid dividends in terms of achieving, almost, the targets in school education. We must appreciate the initiatives and the reasonable success.

It was projected by some of us who were working in the area that the universalization of school education would ultimately put pressure on other levels of education

in view of the rise in incomes and the eligibility of students to enter higher education. Now we have seen the pressure mounting on our colleges and universities. This will continue. Yet, the enrolment ratio of the eligible age group of 18-23 who enter higher education has almost remained around 15 per cent, one of the lowest in the world. The ICT boom in the West and the demographic dividend helped India (in some pockets) to capture the opportunities by creating short term mechanisms that had ramifications for our system of higher education. No one seemed to have bothered about the consequences and we have responded to the circumstances and external demand by making some changes in the structure, content and process of education. All kinds of incongruities entered the system. Some bureaucrats responded to the situation without much vision and comparative study except getting clues from the West and the World Bank. They landed us in trouble and higher education, particularly state universities and colleges have suffered the most. There are no teachers, labs are empty and research output is dismal. Can RUSA bring remedy?

RUSA draft consists of features like; mission mode, flow of funds through state councils, state specific plans and outcome-dependent grants to colleges and universities. The major objective seems to be to achieve the target of 30 per cent GER in higher education. RUSA would also take care of autonomy, faculty, quality, regional balances and equity considerations. The strategy to achieve the targets is

indicated as 'Centrally sponsored scheme' with ratios of centre and state contributions varying with the status of each category of state. The funds will directly flow into the institute through state councils. The scheme has ambitiously taken on itself 21 targets. It has also provided a methodology to arrive at equalisation formula based on 19 indicators to allocate grants to different states. It appears that RUSA is following the route set by SSA to avoid political interference in the distribution of grants to state universities and colleges, shelving UGC, AICTE etc.

Education was brought under concurrent list under item 25 through a constitutional amendment that came into effect from 1977. Yet, school education has been the obligation of the provincial governments and in some states, the major part of the budget consisted of expenditure on school education. It is only in the recent period, particularly after SSA, some grants are given by the centre to the states because the education cess on income tax is collected and supposed to be spent on education. In other words, school education was purely a state enterprise designed and advanced to suit their specific conditions occasionally leading to controversies due to the political mandate of the ruling party. Higher education or university education on the other hand is a wide-ranging academic enterprise often supported by the central government in matters of standards and funding from the very beginning. The scope and mandate of higher education is substantive knowledge and therefore required the support of a national government for an international or so-called universal learning and application. Thus, the national leaders in their wisdom discussed and drafted the University Grants Commission 1953-56 on the lines of

University Grants Committee of UK.

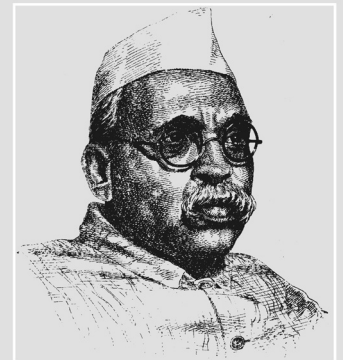
The broad objective of creating a secular socialist republic guided the policy makers in designing our education and institutions like UGC in 1956. Commercialisation, private profit and supply of cheap labour to outsiders were not the consideration of higher education in the 1950s. All kinds of interests and the dominance of privatisation and liberalisation along with the injudicious theories like higher education as private good entered our academic discourse and policy making around 1990s. The 1986 World Bank document on 'Financing of Higher Education in Developing Countries' was considered by the policy makers as a bible and policies were pushed citing the report and the received wisdom.

The UGC Act as amended in 1972 and 1985, was aimed at "for the promotion and coordination of university education and of the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in universities"(Article 12). Chapter III of the Act contains the powers and functions of UGC seem to have been repeated in National Commission on Higher education and Research Bill (NCHER). The Bill was drafted as an omnipotent structure to appropriate functions of state, central and autonomous organisations of MHRD. In other terms, it was conscripted with a spirit to displace the Department of Higher Education in the MHRD and a possible Constitutional status to craft some post-retirement jobs to the influential with or without contacts with higher education (see the qualifications of Chairman, Members and structure). It seems, the usual working conditions of MHRD and the duties entrusted to some officers got disturbed and

the system suffered a great deal during the pending of the Bills. The regulatory bodies have been converted as points for private lobbying, corruption and decadence of university education.

The NCHER and other three complimentary Bills pending before the Parliament drafted to make higher education as a private good to be traded in the market and regulated by the state through these institutions are alleged to be ill-conceived. Under these circumstances and with indifference to higher education policy for two decades, the RUSA is drafted, now. It contains several sensible elements and it is hoped that they would ultimately converge and grow as an independent institution to compliment or substitute some of the discredited higher education regulatory bodies for the benefit of the future generations.

**Acharya Javadekar
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Superstition slayer

Suhas Palshikar

Narendra Dabholkar fell to the bullets of unidentified assassins in the early hours of Tuesday. At the time of writing this, it is not clear who the assassins were and what the motives could be. But in the death of Dabholkar, Marathi society has lost its conscience keeper. This loss will be felt for a long time to come because it looks probable that Dabholkar was killed because of the views he held and the work he did.

Trained as a medical doctor, Dabholkar came from a family of somewhat illustrious elder siblings from Satara in southern Maharashtra. Born just before Independence, he belonged to the first generation of post-independence hopefuls inspired enough to take their idealism seriously. After completing his medical education in 1970, he initially kept balancing his professional career with the urge to engage with social issues. Finally, in the 1980s, he gave up his profession and took full time to social work. In doing this, he was only joining an impressive tradition from Maharashtra. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many young professionals from Maharashtra had joined the “movement sector”. Those were the days of the first wave of disenchantment with parties and party politics.

Dabholkar joined that stream, but with a difference. Initially, he actively participated in the movement known as “ek gaon-ek panavatha” (movement for a common drinking water reservoir for the entire village). Clearly, the

intellectual influences on Dabholkar were not only socialism but also the anti-caste movement. He belonged to the larger universe of social reform. He is known by a huge network of young activists and followers across the state through his organisation Andhashraddha Nirmulan Samiti (committee to eradicate superstition). While he was not the first to employ a rationalist frame to understanding popular practices and rituals, he was surely among the few to have linked these to the exploitation of the masses. In this, he was a true follower of Jyotirao Phule, by far modern India’s first radical social thinker to attend to questions of caste and equality.

The social reform movement in Maharashtra has always had three strands: a more radical anti-caste strand, a strident and rationalist way of looking at life and religion, and a strand of robust critique of religion. Sometimes, these are separate and at odds with each other. Through the 1980s, Dabholkar charted his own path of social reform, which was rationalist but not averse to trying to understand the power of religiosity; rationalist, but putting social justice at the top of the agenda; and secular, in order to ensure a democratic coexistence of communities. He took a position that, in the name of god (and religion), many malpractices end up in the exploitation of the devotees, mostly from vulnerable social backgrounds. So he mobilised a band of activists all over the state, who would try to convince

ordinary men and women how some superstitions become exploitative. To begin with, there was definitely some amount of over-enthusiasm in the movement, in that it tended to “attack” the superstition. Gradually, Dabholkar’s work took a more nuanced turn. While he was busy fighting with a number of local godmen and swamis and babas (occasionally using empiricist strategies), Dabholkar realised that the real need was to ensure the idea of faith was not misused for commercial and exploitative purposes.

For the last decade, Dabholkar had been fighting for the passage of a legislation that would make certain exploitative practices illegal. Hence, forcing someone to follow those practices (by threat or allurements) would be a punishable offence. His tenacity, and the liberal atmosphere in the state, meant that successive state governments actually started drafting such a legislation - only to dither on its actual passage. Dabholkar’s secular stand also meant he was opposed to political Hindutva. But his steadfast criticism of exploitative practices earned him opponents not only from the political Hindu organisations but also from the more aggressive orthodox Hindu establishment in the state. He took this opposition in his stride. His argument was that he was not against religion and religious beliefs; rather, he was opposed to those practices that exploit women and the weaker sections of society by the hegemonic imposition of

certain practices.

But to label him only with this one-point agenda would be to miss the personality of this indefatigable social activist. In 1998, he became the editor of the Marathi weekly, Saadhana (established by Sane Guruji, the veteran socialist). At that point, the weekly was on its deathbed and everyone expected only a few years before it breathed its last. Except Dabholkar. He turned around the weekly into a financially healthy publication, and a far more readable one. Only last week, he had organised two programmes to mark the 65th anniversary of the weekly. Ordinarily, no one celebrates the 65th anniversary of a publication. But Dabholkar knew well that he had to find occasions to publicise the weekly, and through it reach a wider public, on a wider range of issues. To his credit, he did not make the weekly a mouthpiece of his anti-superstition work. Also, in recent months, he was actively organising and propagating against the rejuvenated caste panchayats and their highhandedness in parts of Maharashtra.

Dabholkar's death is not only the proverbial loss of a devoted social activist. Maharashtra has witnessed many bitter arguments in the past over social reform. It would be a tragic irony if, in this state, an activist had to die because his reform activity was not palatable to some. This suddenly opens up the dark possibility that Marathi society will be losing its self-confidence to argue and to tolerate differences of ideas.

—*The Indian Express*

He was not against God but fought exploitation

Priyanka Kakodkar

He took on godmen, temple trusts and even the State government. He was vilified, his events were disrupted and he was even physically attacked. Yet through it all, the diminutive Narendra Dabholkar (65) never lost his composure or sense of humour. He seemed to have a one-liner ready for any occasion. "People often ask me how I stay calm," he once said in an interview. "They should not forget that I was an international level kabaddi player. I can take a fall in my stride."

On Tuesday, Dabholkar took a fall he couldn't recover from. He was shot dead while on a morning walk in Pune by two gunmen.

The deceptively gentle activist - always dressed in a simple khadi shirt - was among Maharashtra's most prominent rationalists. Persuasive with those he wanted to convince and unrelenting in his campaign against superstition. In a country which celebrates godmen and obscurantists, Dabholkar succeeded in building a robust movement across villages, schools and colleges in Maharashtra.

Born into a socialist family in Satara district, Dabholkar qualified as a doctor and practised medicine for over a decade before being drawn into social work. Initially, he joined movements for social justice with Baba Adhav but found his calling by 1983. By 1989, he founded the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti, targeting exploitative godmen,

"miracle cures" and regressive religious practices.

"He always said he was not against God or religion. Just exploitation in the name of faith," recalls Ajit Abhyankar from the Centre for Indian Trade Unions, an old associate. His targets were often powerful and had a phalanx of supporters but that didn't deter him. One of his first clashes was with a godman who claimed to have a miracle cure for blindness.

"He challenged him to an open debate in the village. The godman arrived with a large number of his followers but that did not deter Dabholkar," says Rajiv Deshpande, co-editor of the movement's magazine. The gritty resolve served him well as his targets grew bigger and more powerful. His agitations against Nirmala Devi and Narendra Maharaj sparked clashes with their supporters. By 2000, he led perhaps his largest campaign - demanding entry for women into the Shani Shingnapur temple in Ahmednagar. It prompted a backlash from right-wing political groups and finally ended in court.

In fact, Dabholkar routinely had his press conferences disrupted by right-wing groups, say his supporters. But he was well aware of the risks. "In this movement, even expressing a thought is sometimes a fight," he used to say. His dream of changing the law by introducing a Bill against superstitions and black magic in the Maharashtra Assembly

remains unfulfilled, dogged by political opposition.

Yet Dabholkar's killing is no anomaly. Indian rationalists have long trodden a dangerous and vulnerable path. This, even though the Indian Constitution obliges citizens to "develop a scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform."

In 2011, Kerala Yuktivadi Sangham president U. Kalanathan was assaulted, even as he was participating in a TV channel discussion on utilisation of the wealth at the Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram. A few years earlier when CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat clashed with Baba Ramdev, the BJP jumped to his defence.

Ironically, in many cases the government becomes the adversary. Like the case of eminent rationalist thinker Sanal Edamaruku, who debunked a "miracle" at the Our Lady of Velankanni Church in Mumbai in 2012. He found that the tears dripping from the statue of Jesus could be traced to a blocked drain. The result? The police have filed cases against him for inciting religious hatred.

In a country where godmen and tantriks are lionised not just by the public but also by the media and politicians, rationalists have the odds stacked against them. From Chandraswami to Dharendra Brahmachari, godmen and their cults have peddled political influence and rarely been subjected to public scrutiny. Dabholkar was one of those rare individuals who did subject godmen, cults and miracle-makers and superstitions to unrelenting scrutiny.

—*The Hindu*

Murder In Pune

Dabholkar's slaying is a blot on Maharashtra's reputation as a crucible of social reform

The murder of Narendra Dabholkar, a crusader against superstition and blind faith, in Pune on Tuesday, is the latest pointer to Maharashtra's transformation from a crucible of social reform into a playground of regressive forces. An heir to traditions of advanced thinking initiated and carried forward by stalwarts of the calibre of Phule, Agarkar and Ambedkar, Dabholkar endeavoured to expose perverse practices cloaked in the garb of religiosity: black magic, witchcraft, animal sacrifices and bizarre rituals.

Activists of the Maharashtra Anhashraddha Nirmulan Samiti, an NGO he founded in 1989, would invite astrologers and self-styled miracle makers to prove their claims in a public forum. None availed of the invitation. On the contrary, they launched a vicious campaign of hatred against Dabholkar to paint him, quite erroneously, as an opponent of religion itself. Leaders across the political spectrum, as well as Hindu extremist outfits, have condemned the killing of Dabholkar. But that is neither here nor there.

The murder is an extreme example of the recent tendency to curb freedom of speech because it might hurt entrenched beliefs and interests. This intolerance of dissent in Maharashtra was manifest, for instance, in the arrest and hounding of two girls last year – because one of them put up a Facebook post questioning the rationale for a bandh imposed on Mumbai by the Shiv Sena, and the other merely 'liked' the post. The only possible recompense for Dabholkar's murder can come if his killers, as well as those behind them, are hunted down and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. And politicians need to speak out against the culture of intolerance which encourages such crimes. Democracy without freedom of speech is meaningless.

editorial in The Times of India

The silencing of a voice of reason

In a society where netas seek the blessings of godmen, can we hope for justice for Dabholkar

Barely 30 hours after rationalist and anti-superstition campaigner Narendra Dabholkar was gunned down in Pune, the Maharashtra cabinet passed an Ordinance to make black magic and superstitious rituals illegal. It's a sad reflection of our democracy that reformists are being silenced with bullets and that it took his murder for the government to react. The anti-superstition Bill has been hanging fire for nearly 15 years. It's also a tribute to Dabholkar's relentless campaign to rid society of superstitious beliefs and black magic rituals and to instill a scientific temper.

Dabholkar, a doctor from Satara, brought logic and reason to matters of belief and faith - a difficult task in any society, but more so in ours riddled as it is with superstitious rituals, blind devotion to caste-and-clan-determined practices, and god-men and women. His detractors flayed him for being against religiosity but Dabholkar was not anti-religion. He raised a flag against

blind belief and exhorted people to question and criticise such beliefs, hold out against caste panchayats, and challenge tantriks and quacks. His reasoned critiques attracted a large following, evident in the 200 branches of the anti-superstition organisation, Andhashraddha Nirmulan Samiti, that he chaired for decades across Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka. It not only made status quoists uncomfortable but also prompted a steady stream of attacks on him from followers of various babas and right-wing Hindu extremist groups such as the Sanatan Sanstha. He refused to seek police protection on two grounds: if he was protected, his colleagues would be attacked, and that his work was within the ambit of the Constitution. Dabholkar worked with colleagues to distil his vision into the Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and Other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Bill first in the late 1990s and campaigned for passage in the assembly. The Bill was vehemently opposed by the BJP and Shiv Sena. This Act, he argued, would become a template for the rest of the country. In this, his work epitomised the robust reformist and progressive traditions of Maharashtra articulated by Jyotiba Phule, Dhondo Keshav Karve, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Ramabai Ranade and BR Ambedkar.

Pune, the intellectual capital of the Maharashtra, has been the theatre in which extremist tendencies found themselves challenged by reformist and modern thought. It is no coincidence that Dabholkar's adversaries called for him to be hit here. The mandatory investigative procedures are underway but what's the guarantee that, in a society where political leaders, bureaucrats and business barons openly seek the blessings of godmen, the masterminds of Dabholkar's murder will be identified and punished?

Editorial in *Hindustan Times*

(Continued from Page 2)

like Maratha Mahasangh, Patit Pawan Sanghatana and Sambhaji Brigade openly engage themselves in strong arm tactics to terrorise their opponents and intimidate them into silence and inaction. The miscreants who vandalized the Bhandarkar Research Institute few years ago not only went scot free but were rewarded with important posts by the ruling Congress/ NCP coalition government. The Sanatan Sanstha which was constantly heaping vilest abuse on Narendra Dabhokar and his reformist activities demonized him as the destroyer of religion. Dabholkar took pains to clarify his position which was against superstition and malpractices and not against any religion but they continued to poison the minds of

the people and make provocative statements and issuing threats.

Dabholkar was the architect of the anti-superstition bill which has been pending before the state legislature for over ten years. The original provisions of the bill have been toned down considerably in order to secure the consent of the believers among whom institutions like Sanatan Sanstha propagated hatred. The murder was completely pre-meditated and had a certain method about it. Even after the murder, the Sanatan Sanstha handouts had the cheek to state that it was better for Dabhokar to exit this world in the way he did than to die lying on a hospital bed. The sheer brazenness of the perpetrators of the crime should have prompted the state

into a tough action which is yet to be seen. The situation is similar to the one in Pakistan where Salman Taseer, the former Governor of the Punjab province was murdered by an Islamic fanatic for speaking up for Christian nuns who were harassed by obscurantists. Even as we go to the press, a formal condemnation of the ghastly murder is yet to come from Shiv Sena, the main opposition party in Maharashtra. This is hardly surprising since it is the Shiv Sena which started the culture of political murders way back in 1970 with the killing of Krishna Desai, the sitting MLA of the CPI.

Dabhokar was never a hardliner in his approach. He was firm in his convictions but his manner of expression was mild, compassionate and persuasive. That is precisely the reason that he was able to build up a sizable following among the young all over Maharashtra. By killing such a soft spoken and committed progressive activist, his enemies have not only committed the most heinous offence but also compelled progressive elements to close ranks and put up a united front in order to brave and fight further assaults on reason and rational thinking.

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(Continued from Page 2)

cigarettes to be manufactured, but with a warning that said they were injurious to health. Predictably, the suggestion was not accepted.

How then were the people of this State to fulfill the aspiration inscribed in the Constitution, calling on all Indian citizens to develop “a scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform”? Dr Dabholkar saw that school children were a promising pool from which such a spirit might rise and take shape. His organisation held camps for teachers and programmes for school children all over Maharashtra, to instil in them a rational approach to life, so that they would grow up sighted, rather than blind.

Dr Dabholkar who was himself a man of peace - his serene, unlined face bore witness to that - knew fully well the violence that resided in the forces he was confronting. He had been threatened from a public platform once with maiming and death. The police had asked him then to register a case against the concerned individuals, or to accept police protection, or to carry a revolver at least. He had laughed off all these suggestions as being totally out of keeping with his work and beliefs.

Dr Dabholkar began his life's work around the time that divisive forces were regrouping and moving aggressively into our public spaces, bent on having their way and endorsing violence as a justifiable means of getting it. On Tuesday they did, without compunction or guilt, what their belief system prompted them to do. They organised and executed the murder of humanism, social progress and peace.

Murder of a rationalist

In death, rationalist Narendra Dabholkar draws public attention to the pernicious practice of black magic. But was he murdered to silence a voice of reason?

The murder of anti-superstition campaigner Narendra Dabholkar in the early morning hours of Monday is a wake-up call to society and politicians. Though police investigations are proceeding, what is undeniable are the threats of violence and physical extermination that Dabholkar received from right-wing organisations in his lifetime. If it was intolerance and hatred of the ideas that 65-year-old Dabholkar preached that led to his murder, then the state must respond with an iron hand against those who ordered and planned the crime, not just the assassins. Dabholkar edited the Marathi weekly, *Sadhana*, and devoted much time and energy, intellect and leadership, to various social causes. But what earned him enemies was the Maharashtra (Eradication of Blind Faith) Bill that outlaws black magic and other dubious ritualistic practices.

Dabholkar was a vehement supporter of this draft legislation first introduced in 1995. The legislation targets tantriks and godmen who claim to possess powers to cure illnesses and promote human sacrifice and black magic. But the legislation upset some religious groups who complained that it has provisions violating their religious freedoms. When the bill was deferred in the past session, Dabholkar criticised Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan. Acting with unparalleled haste to contain the fallout, the state government is now piloting the bill through an ordinance.

The chief minister has alleged that “those who killed Mahatma Gandhi have killed Narendra Dabholkar” and that this was a “well-planned murder”. Like Gandhi, Dabholkar was never against religion but had enemies in the Hindu-right. Dabholkar, again like Gandhi, was also a multi-faceted social activist. The similarity between their deaths aside, the fate of those who take on the religious orthodoxy, even sixty years hence, is a cause for concern. Whether male or female, young or old, reformists live and work under great peril. If a religious killing angle emerges in this case, Indians who shuddered when the Pakistani Taliban shot 15-year-old Malala Yousufzai in the Swat Valley must realise the dangers closer to home.

Until Dabholkar's murder, modern Indian rationalists had to contend with a torrent of frivolous criminal cases slapped on them. They also risked the occasional physical assault and faced disruption of press conferences. Dabholkar's murder will certainly disturb this spunky class of activists who have gone to great lengths to disprove religious miracles and the powers that godmen profess to claim. The state has done them no good either. In 2012, leading Indian rationalist Sanal Edamaruku was booked by Mumbai police for inciting religious hatred after he debunked a “miracle” in a Christian shrine.

So the state's haste to bring the ordinance is rather unconvincing. The government must discuss the bill threadbare in the assembly and iron out any grey areas that criminalise legitimate religious practices. Once a law, the state through its various arms must ensure that the thriving superstition industry does not abuse gullible citizens any longer. But legislation has its limits in curbing an entrenched social practice like black magic. Without conviction and a socio-political reform campaign, curbing black magic can go the child marriage way; illegal but prevalent.

A 2-day national executive meeting of the Socialist Party was held in Delhi on 10-11 August 2013. Bhai Vaidya, national president of the party, chaired the meeting. National and state office bearers, national executive members, attending the meeting from several states were, welcomed by Justice Rajindar Sachar, senior member of the party.

It was decided at the meeting that a nation-wide agitation 'Defeat capitalism – Bring socialism' should be organized on 8 October (death anniversary of JP) to create public opinion against capitalism. The party will organize dharnas, demonstrations and protest marches distributing a 10-point pamphlet against capitalist economic policies. To spread awareness against communal forces a nation-wide agitation 'Save secularism – Shed communalism' will be held all over the country on 31 October (birth anniversary of Acharya Narendra Dev). As a part of this agitation, special programs will be organized to promote faith in secularism, a value enshrined in the Constitution. The party's youth wing Socialist Yuvjan Sabha (SYS) will bear the main responsibility of this agitation by holding discussions and cultural programs in colleges and universities. The national executive expressed its firm view that political parties should come under the purview of and abide by the RTI.

The national executive welcomed the formation of Telangana state and congratulated its people. Nevertheless it cautioned the prospective leadership and political parties of the resource-rich Telangana that the valuable natural

(Continued on Page 15)

Draft Election Manifesto

Socialist Party (India) appeals Seventy crore Indian voters to Defeat Capitalism and Bring in Socialism In 2014 Lok Sabha Elections.

Prices of daily use commodities are rising. Unemployment is increasing. Gap between the rich and the poor is widening; as also between cities and villages, and between the metro centers and vast rural areas. Environment is being polluted contributing to Global warming. Violence of the state as of the criminals and the terrorists is escalating. Women's lives and honor are not safe. Tension persists on the pretext of caste or communal disputes. Culture is being vulgarized by the corporate controlled media and young minds are being corrupted.

Unbridled capitalism is the root cause of all this malady.

To end this all-round misery and exploitation, the voters of India should take courage in both hands and elect representatives who are committed to usher in era of socialism, an era of equality and plenty.

Living concept of India

Socialist Party (India), a party with a proud heritage stretching back to establishment of the all India socialist movement in 1934, in the midst of national liberation struggle with which it is privileged to have been associated, would like to reaffirm its positive faith in the living concept of India and in the goal of socialism. The socialist party believes that nationalism and swaraj are words bereft of meaning unless they entail primacy to the welfare of the last child, the last woman and the

last man as envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi and the recognition of equal citizenship of all Indian people as conceived by the makers of Indian Constitution led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

In keeping with the traditions of its early founders, the Socialist Party will be a party of all the Indian people and not merely of sections of it. The Socialist Party will treat as its special trust the need to attend to the problems of the deprived sections of the society, including the dalits, tribals and the nomadic tribes and religious and linguistic minorities. The party will strive to eliminate gender discrimination and will support affirmative action in favour of women in all legislative and other institutions.

Annihilation of Caste

The Socialist Party believes in the annihilation of caste, an institution which Acharya Narendra Dev, the doyen of Indian socialists, held as anti-democratic. The party believes that such destruction of caste will come about through multiple revolutions that the great socialist ideologue, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, envisaged in his pioneering work, *Saptakranti*, and by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his book, namely 'Annihilation of Caste.'

The party will amend the Constitution so that the opening sentence of the preamble would read as "We, the people of India, resolve

to establish Sovereign, Secular, Socialist, Casteless, Democratic Republic of India.....”

The Socialist Party will combat efforts by certain groups to divide the Indian people on religious-sectarian lines and will uphold the secular concept of Indian nation as fostered by our freedom movement.

Agro-industrial model of development

The socialist Party will accord priority to the eradication of hunger and establish proper facilities for storage of food grains in every district of the country and strengthen the public distribution mechanism.

The party will discard the western capitalist model of development and evolve Indian model with Full Employment as its objective. As two-thirds of our people are dependent on agriculture and allied occupations, high-speed program of expanding infrastructure of communication, irrigation, electricity, credit supply and marketing in the rural and coastal areas will be undertaken. Remunerative prices will be assured to their produce. Cooperative management will be promoted in credit supply and marketing.

Agricultural lands will not be allowed to be taken over for industrial purposes. New ventures be located in barren and hilly areas so that regional imbalance is minimized.

Equitable distribution of agricultural lands will be undertaken. Lands of tribals that had been taken away from them will be restored to them.

All-out development plans for forestry, fishery, dairy, poultry will

be prepared and implemented with their active participation.

Rights of the Gram Sabha, as enshrined in the Constitution, to decide about the utilization of natural resources like land, water, minerals, flora and fauna falling in their jurisdiction will be scrupulously safeguarded from encroachment by the Central and State Governments and the profit-hungry enterprisers.

Cottage and small scale industries, with adoption of optimum technology, will be allowed to be developed in the rural areas.

Heavy and large scale industries will be run in the public sector. The party will stop work on Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.

The party will work towards complete road connectivity for all villages and their electrification. The party will discourage use of fossil fuel and encourage eco-friendly sources like solar and wind power.

Primary needs of the people

The party will formulate comprehensive and time-bound plan for provision of safe drinking water, latrines, housing, etc. It will ensure equitable distribution of water resources.

Natural disasters and their mitigation will be treated as a common burden on all the Indian people and expenses on this account and for relief and rehabilitation will be met mainly through central funds.

The party will work towards making India less dependent on vagaries of the monsoon. It will work towards the establishment of scientific drainage and irrigation

canal systems and development of watersheds for conservation of soil and water.

The party will strive to improve India's urban and rural environment and lay stress on proper sanitation and provision of well-maintained public conveniences with due importance being given to the needs of the individuals and families. Both towns and villages will be greened. The needs of India's cities will be examined from this point of view and provision made for walking areas with construction of foot-paths so that pedestrians have the first priority on the public streets. The party will improve inter-city and intra-city bus systems. Private cars will not be allowed to enter busy areas.

Legitimate rights of the working classes to be safeguarded

Legitimate rights like guarantee and timely payment of minimum wages, safe working conditions, collective bargaining and peaceful agitations be safeguarded in all industries and industrial zones. The tendency of the employers to dispense with the services of permanent workers and use casual/contract labourers be dealt with sternly. All such measures be made applicable to those engaged in construction, transport and other similar activities.

Social security measures like life and medical insurance and old age pension for all men and women workers above 60 years of age, engaged in unorganized sector, will be provided.

Better banking facilities in rural areas -

The party will expand and strengthen banking network in the

rural areas and enable women to have easy access to the banking services. Deposits from the rural areas will not be allowed to be transferred to urban areas.

Draconian laws to be repealed

The Socialist Party would take strong measures to instill confidence among the citizens that they would be treated fairly by state institutions including the administration, the police, and the judiciary and that such fair and equitable treatment is a right accruing from citizenship.

Repressive laws like Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), sections in IPC regarding sedition, etc. will be repealed.

The party would like to take stern steps towards eradication of corruption from public life. The party views this objective as part of need to ensure greater accountability not only of the state, including police authorities, but also of the political parties and non-government institutions. The party stands for responsible politics and will take steps to ensure that the parliamentarians and legislators do not subvert the institutions to which they are elected. Right to Information act will be made applicable to the political parties. The party will take steps to prevent extra-judicial killings on the part of the police and army and self-styled Khap Panchayats.

The party will amend election laws to prevent politicisation of the criminals.

Defence

Colonial practice of treating trained jawans as menial servants attached to officers will be discontinued. Junior officers and

jawans of all ranks will be treated with due respect.

Purchases of military hardware and equipment from foreign countries will be discontinued. Their production will be made in public sector.

The country will not enter into arms race, let alone of nuclear arsenal, and try to keep defence expenses to the minimum. Friendly relations with the neighbor countries on honorable terms and vigilant population in the border areas are the best defence garrisons.

Foreign Policy

Maintenance of world peace and honouring the human rights of the citizens everywhere should be the guiding principles of our foreign policy. The party will strive to convert the UNO into a truly representative World Government.

Friendly relations with countries in the south and east Asia, Africa and south America will be built up and maintained.

Agenda for immediate action

India should discard western capitalist model of development and evolve agro-industrial based model with full employment as the objective.

Rupee is falling in the world market because we are importing much more than what we export. To correct this imbalance, import of gold be barred and import and consumption of oil be cut by half. Number of cars allotted to officers of the central and state governments be reduced drastically. All four-wheeler cars be put off the roads once in a week. Public transport be buttressed.

With a view not to increase unemployment and to prevent flow of Indian wealth to foreign countries, FDI in Retail, Defence production, Banking, Insurance and Pension be banned.

Lands under cultivation should not be taken over for industrial purposes. Rights of gram sabha, as enshrined in the Constitution, to decide use of land, water, forest, minerals should not be encroached upon by the Central and State governments. The project of Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor be dropped. All new ventures to be located in barren and hilly areas. Network of communications, irrigation, electricity, credit supply and marketing be expanded in the rural areas. Interest charged to agricultural loans should not exceed 4 percent. Remunerative prices be assured to agricultural produce.

No corporatization of education. The state should shoulder responsibility to provide common, free, qualitative education to all.

No privatization of public health services. There should be adequate supply of equipment and medicines in the PHCs and public hospitals.

Women should be protected from violence and injustice. Commercialisation of female body be stopped. Women's Reservation Bill be passed without delay.

All youths put in jails without trial be released immediately. Recommendations of Sachar Committee be implemented honestly and with speed.

With a view to protect children and women from malnutrition and to provide food security to all citizens,

PDS must be run efficiently and pilferage be plugged.

Citizens' right to time-bound service in government offices must be assured. The corrupt politicians and government employees be punished severely.

Give pension of Rs 2,000 p.m. to all female and male workers above 60 years of age in unorganized sector.

Socialist Party (India) Zindabad.

(Continued from Page 12)

resources should not be open to loot by corporate houses. Rather the resources should be used for the upliftment of the hard working masses. The political leadership should ensure that all citizens get education, health, employment and good governance in the new state.

The national executive further decided that the party would contest the coming state legislative assembly and general elections. The process of identification of constituencies and candidates is speedily under way. The party will make electoral alliance with the like-minded political parties who are totally opposed to capitalism and support socialism. The draft election manifesto was accepted after deliberations and suggestions for the purpose of elections.

Party literature, available on Blog, Facebook, Twitter and You Tube, was launched by the party's national vice president and veteran socialist leader Akhai Achumi.

**Dr. Prem Singh,
General Secretary,
Socialist Party (India)**

Uttarakhand

Yusuf Meherally Cente has set up Uttarakhand Relief Committee, and started collecting money, material, etc.

We have a small but good unit in Uttarakhand and a group of workers. Jabar Singh Verma is one of the convener of our youth wing, Yusuf Meherally Yuva Biradari, and is a noted journalist. He is the person who is looking after our relief activities there and Guddi, national convener of the Biradari, has almost shifted there.

After a survey of 12 villages we have identified five villages for intensive intervention. While we have distributed relief material in all the surveyed villages and will continue to do so, we will be concentrating on rehabilitating five. We hope to build houses (114 houses have collapsed in these villages) with the help of other organisations, start giving education to the children, {the school buildings have collapsed} build one common shed in each village - this will double as school and Panchayat office, etc., repair two Panchakkis, make Rajais out of the surplus unusable clothes, organize self-help groups and mobilize trainees and give training and plan their future in a participatory manner - and will try to identify an eco-friendly development model. The last one is very ambitious, we are quite aware.

The Centre has considerable experience of relief work. In its very early period, it provided relief to the victims of flood in Orissa. It organized a student committee in Mumbai to help the draught affected students of Maharashtra. We provided relief in Raigad when there were flash floods. And, after the cyclone and earthquake, we worked in Kutch. Again after the earthquake in Kashmir, we undertook relief. The floods in Ladakh made us go there. And after the tsunami, in Nagapattinam, we did a lot of relief and rehabilitation work. The same after Koshi floods in Bihar.

You can participate in this effort by depositing your contribution in any of the following accounts of Yusuf Meherally Centre. Or you can send your contribution to the Centre's office.

**-Haresh Shah
Sudhir Gandbhir**

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Will hunger be history?

S. Viswam

The bane of India
Kuldip Nayar

North Andhra deprived
K. S. Chalam

Justice Reddy – a legend
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**Why do ‘they’ love
Narendra Modi ?**
Shankar Gopalakishnan

Amartya Sen making waves
Jawaharlal Jasthi

Insensitive city
GGP

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No one will go to bed hungry. Hunger will be history. In its claimed “10th year of reaching people and changing lives”, the government is doing a hard sell of its much touted Food Security Bill. The sloganising is on. For decades successive governments at the Centre have proclaimed that poverty will be history, and need and want will be things of the past. Yet, the poor are still with us, and in conditions far worse than when the “garibi hatao” slogans were the loudest in political chants. After five years in office, the NDA claimed that Bharat was “shining”. Bharat lay and still lies under darkness. Now, it is the turn of the UPA to claim that hunger will be history. It most certainly will not be, since at least 15 million new mouths have to be fed every year and the economy shows signs of not recovering but declining. Nonetheless, it is to be welcomed that at least one legislative measure was unanimously endorsed in the Lok Sabha last week. The Rajya Sabha is expected to endorse it next week. The Food Security Bill thus gets the distinction of being one of the few legislations to obtain support from all sections of Parliament. Even so, look at the hypocrisy

behind the Opposition’s support for the Food Security Bill. The government promulgated the National Food Security Ordinance on July 5 this year. The ordinance was necessary since a bill could not be introduced in Parliament which was not being allowed to function by the opposition on some ground or the other. However, since July, the opposition has had two months to educate itself on the measure and bring pressure on the government to improve the legislation’s contents at the Parliamentary Standing Committee to which it was referred. Besides, the opposition chose to support the measure not because it was worth supporting on merits but solely because it is a pro-poor, pro-welfare, and anti-poverty measure. In other words, the opposition did not want to be seen opposing a pro-poor aadmi measure lest votes be lost at the coming polls. So, it decided to support the bill and move as many amendments to the bill as possible. Yet, the opposition attacked the government on the floor of Parliament for enacting a measure clearly with an eye on the coming Lok Sabha polls. “It is a vote security bill, not a food security bill,” said Murli Manohar Joshi of the BJP. “Is this for

the elections or for the hungry?," asked Mulayam Singh Yadav. "Since elections are knocking on the door of the Congress, the Minister is in a hurry to pass the bill," said Kalyan Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress. His colleague A Samphth wanted sugar, pulses and edible oil to be included in the bill along with rice, wheat and coarse grains. Sharad Yadav of the JD(U) wanted universal coverage for all instead of only the selected few being the beneficiaries. The entire opposition thought that the bill was seriously flawed but they still supported it since it was pro-poor! Its logic seemed to be that it would tolerate a bad bill being enacted so long as it was claimed to be "pro-poor"! As against this, let us give credit where it is due as far as the food security bill is concerned. Sonia Gandhi's speech was noteworthy for many reasons, not the least of which was that she made no idle boasts, claimed no special credit for her party or for herself (she had been pushing for the measure for several months) but instead wanted the bill to be a "national" one with a common aim and a common target. She admitted that the bill would not end hunger overnight, but it was a beginning in that direction. She claimed that the measure was a part of the entitlement/empowerment revolution that was being ushered into the country. A tall claim, but she buttressed it by citing the fact that the UPA had enacted four measures as part of "the revolution process". These measures were: Right to Information, Right to Work (MGNREGA), Forest Rights Act empowering the tribals and Right to Education. While the Congress is entitled to claim credit for these measures, the fact remains that all these

(Continued on Page 3)

The bane of India

Kuldip Nayar

A dalit was killed. His house was destroyed and his family, including a 10-year-old, was thrown out. The upper caste members did not like his audacity to hoist the national flag on the Independence Day at a disputed property which they had appropriated forcibly.

The discrimination is the bane of India where the caste prejudiced Hindus constitute 80 per cent of the population. The story of this dalit came to light because one TV channel highlighted it. Otherwise, thousands of dalits undergo similar rigours every day. They face the arrogance and zulum of upper castes. And there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

More than sixty years ago, the Constitution banned untouchability. The freedom struggle had promised to break the shackles of the caste system after independence. First Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru even deleted the column of caste from applications, registers and forms for admission to schools and entrance examinations. Yet the caste considerations have not lessened. Mahatama Gandhi, father of the nation, named the dalit, Harijan (son of God). But the dalits found the nomenclature too patronizing and preferred to be called dalits.

A social evil or whatever the explanation, the feeling of discrimination in the Hindu society has not abated. Even today a dalit bridegroom cannot ride a horse while taking the barat (wedding procession) to the bride's place. Roads at many places are closed to the dalits. As for their habitation,

they continue to live in slums in the urban areas and on outskirts of villages in the rural areas. Some who claim to speak on behalf of Hindus seldom endeavour to eliminate the discrimination against the dalits who are also Hindus. I have not seen the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) criticizing the caste system although the party is all for the Hindu Rashtriya (state). The party's attention is focused on politics, not on social reforms. Its problem may well be the dictation by RSS, a group of Brahmins, the uppermost caste.

Unfortunately, the caste has penetrated the thinking of Muslims and Christians. The religion of both the communities forbids discrimination. They preach equality. But when it comes to practice, they are not different from Hindus. Both of them treat with contempt the dalits, who embrace Islam or Christianity to escape the caste hatred of Hindus.

However, there is a case for concessions to such dalits which former UP chief minister Mayawati, a dalit has suggested. But her fault is that she has gone beyond. She wants a quota in promotion of public servants. The demand has justifiably raised an uproar in the country.

I think that whatever reservations, they should be given at the time of recruitment. Any reservation during the career would affect the morale of other caste civil servants, who have come through a tough competitive examination. The dalits wanting to join civil services also take the examination but the reservations give them an edge.

The two main political parties, the Congress and the BJP, are supporting Mayawati's amendment because they have their eyes set on votes in the 2014 elections. The quantum of reservations has gone up because the quota has been extended to the Other Backward Classes (OBC). They too want reservation in promotions. Many others are also want reservations. This is not possible because of a Supreme Court judgment. It has fixed 49.5 percent as the maximum limit for reservations. Even if Mayawati's amendment is passed by parliament, the court may consider it unconstitutional.

A constitutional amendment to introduce reservations in promotions is sought to be passed in the Lok Sabha. The Rajya Sabha has already passed it despite the opposition by the Mulayam Singh's Samajwadi Party from the OBC.

It appears that the political parties in the opposition had their way when the ruling Congress party, after putting up a brave fight against the quota in promotions, caved in. True, the Congress did not have a majority in the Lok Sabha. But it could have mustered the numbers if it had stood firm.

The reservations have been spelled out in the Constitution for the dalits and the tribals. But as the Supreme Court has pointed out that the benefits have been cornered by the creamy layer among the dalits.

So is in the case of OBC. The dalits and the OBC members should allow the advantage from reservations to go below. The problem is that the leaders, vocal as they are, manipulate to appropriate the maximum concessions.

My knowledge of law, however limited, tells me that the column

of caste in the form that the census enumerators ask to fill in violates the basic structure of the Constitution. They inquire about the caste. On basis of such information the economic benefits are distributed. This makes a mockery of the Constitution. Its preamble says that the people resolve to constitute India into a "sovereign socialist democratic republic." Democracy and discrimination do not go together.

My objection is also on another point. In the Keshvanand Bharti case, the Supreme Court has said that the objectives in the preamble constitute the basic structure of the Constitution. It means that Parliament, although elected directly by the people, cannot alter the basic structure.

Surprisingly, the government does not realize the effect the introduction of quota in promotions will have on the bureaucracy, the sheet anchor of the administration. Divide and rule was the dictum of the British who held India in bondage for 150 years. The nation needs to be integrated however strong are the forces to stratify it.

The introduction of quota in services is an important policy decision. The government should have called a meeting of the National Integration Council which is meant to discuss such problems. Caste is something that affects the nation on the whole. The country cannot be pushed back to the dark ages. Affirmative action which America follows to give benefits to the black is far better than the reservations which see no end of expiry. But that is a different story, although Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a dalit, who outlined the constitution, agreed unwillingly to reservation for 10 years only.

(Continued from Page 2)

enactments while being well-meant have suffered from the want of proper, efficient, honest and corruption-free implementation. Good laws are welcome, but good laws which do not get translated into benefits for those targeted, become a burden on society. This is why we expressed skepticism at the outset of this article whether the claim to end hunger was sustainable. The opposition's charge that the food security bill is poll-oriented is nonsense. All governments in a parliamentary democracy perform with an eye on votes and polls. This is no crime. The question is whether the present and succeeding governments will make the measure work in earnest and hit at the target. The implementation of the measure which targets 67 per cent of the population and is estimated to cost Rs. 5000 crores is a mind-boggling exercise. The administration is entitled to public support and sympathy in the discharge of its new responsibility of attacking hunger and want.

If the Food Security Bill is bad news as the BJP and some media claim, why do they also yell that BJP states already have such schemes?

Use the economic crisis to focus on basic needs; health, education, water ; clean up; make drains & footpaths; go solar; construct irrigation canal networks; brick roads where there are none; foodgrains storage in every village panchayat or group of panchayats.

None of this needs forex.

—Anil Nauriya

North Andhra deprived of riparian rights in Polavaram

K S Chalam

Uttarandhra has teeming natural resources to emerge as Kashmir (along with Araku valley) of South India with beautiful coast being the pride of Telugu people

The Telugu-speaking people are under great stress for the imminent parting. There is anguish among different categories of people, each clinching a particular problem, be it irrigation water, jobs, security of employment, family, real estate in Hyderabad or simply the pain of emotional longing for a cultural identity.

Though we had four distinguished regions in the State in terms of parameters used to classify a region either in India or Andhra Pradesh, Uttarandhra or North Andhra has not figured anywhere except in passing remarks. In fact, we have such episodes from all the five borders of the united State, except Coastal Andhra that was protected by other Telugu border regions with an international border, coast.

As I was born in the united Visakhapatnam district, (northern part named as Srikakulam in 1950), I am obliged to express at least anxiety over the impending outcome.

I had the opportunity to traverse the entire region and know something about the origin and unique characters of our river systems. The peninsular rivers originate either in the East and confluence with the Arabian Sea or begin in the West and join the Bay of Bengal. But the rivers in North Andhra originate in the Eastern Ghats and join the Bay of Bengal

on the East. This is exceptional and the Sabari river that joins Godavari at Kunavaram not only brings water but also contributes to its title. The tributaries of Sabari, Sileru (silaeru) and Machkund (fish mound in Oriya) originate in Vizianagaram and Srikakulam border and were responsible for the huge runoff at the downstream Polavaram. The data provided by various agencies, including the CWC (not party), amply demonstrate this. W. Francis, in his Visakhapatnam Gazetteer (1907), mentioned that the water supplied to the second crop in Godavari delta originates in North Andhra.

The Polavaram, aka Ramapadasagar Project (of Sonti Ramamurthy of Vizag), was conceived and projected as a boon to the farmers of the region during Tanguturi Prakasam regime. American expert Dunne estimated the cost at Rs 100 crores which was considered prohibitive for a State budget of a few hundred crores. However, farmers and people of the region longed for it as they believed that it was their legitimate right to claim over 644tmc surplus in the Godavari.

Rajasekhara Reddy took a bold decision to take up the project and it is still a victim of legal, economic and political squabbles to reach the logical end. The political aftermath of the present situation might result in a package including Polavaram as a national project. It is here one can reason out the share of North Andhra not only in the contribution of its run-off but also its share in

the proposed distribution through the left canal (it should go up to Bahuda).

The geography of Krishna and Godavari delta is precarious as the region lies at the river's mouth (tail end) with little contributions to the run-off due to its location. We know the fate of Kolleru. Therefore, farmers are very sensitive as they recollect how the out-migration in times of famines took place while the unharnessed rivers merged in the Bay of Bengal before Cotton. They had also experienced the pinch when there was scarcity in the major source in recent years.

Arthur Cotton took irrigation works as a challenge to prove that transport through canals was cheaper than railways and proposed linking of Karachi to Kolkata and barrages on the Krishna and the Godavari. Telugus of coastal Andhra were benefitted. He did not anticipate the consequences.

There seems to be a flaw in the enterprise as the irrigation needs of the riparian regions of the Godavari have not been considered nor the farmers told about the restrictions. Was it due to the limitations of sovereign powers of Cotton as some parts of the present State were under another dispensation? Nonetheless, North Andhra was very much part of the Madras Presidency and had rights on the Godavari waters. Why did he neglect this aspect? Or was it due to the persuasive skills and manoeuvres of the then ruling classes which overpowered him to limit his vision to a very limited area,

is a subject of academic study. Yet, there seems to be some weakness (colonial mindset to maximise return and not equity) in the whole design of agricultural development based on subsidised water without any legitimately dependable source?

North Andhra had limited experience of continuous droughts as the rainfall here is found to be above State average according to Jagannadha Sarma, a hydrogeologist. The design of irrigation water was also based on small tanks with low investment and linking the geddas, rivulets to some large storage tanks.

North Andhra was a region of small zamindars and from non-traditional castes, unlike the Nizam or someone in other parts who could afford huge projects. However, the economic status of the region was comparable to that of advanced districts of coastal Andhra like West Godavari as late as in 1961 when the per capita income in North Andhra was Rs 1250 against State average of Rs 1184.

Now the region suffers low income and high poverty while the waters of its rivers either join the sea or are diverted for others leaving limited prospects for agricultural development. There is distress migration. It is estimated that GHMC alone has about 2 million construction workers, petty jobholders, etc, from North Andhra (lost 3 MLA seats). They live like nomads without a cover to conceal their bodies. Is it due to lack of resources in the region? Uttarandhra has teeming natural resources to emerge as Kashmir (along with Araku valley) of South India with beautiful coast being the pride of Telugu people. It was undermined

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Insensitive city

A rape, a planned murder of a rationalist (the best that the socialist movement, influenced by Sane Guruji, socialist stalwarts, Gandhiji, social reformers and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar produced in the state) and the skyrocketing prices have not stirred Mumbai as it should have, going by its past history, and as compared to what happened in Delhi after the rape which shocked not just Delhi but the entire country. Is Mumbai becoming insensitive is the question that is being asked in many circles, in the same manner as the question: Is Mumbai safe as believed till now for women? Is it Mehfooz? These questions need pondering.

The rape took place in the compound of an abandoned mill standing defiantly to remind the city of its past and also the decay that has taken place. A photojournalist was the victim, we are told the more politically correct word would be survivor. She was accompanied by a colleague and they had gone on an assignment. In Delhi, the rape took place in a moving vehicle, she was not alone and the time was only a bit later. But both were victims of the male lust gone berserk. If the youngsters and the citizens rocked the city for days in Delhi, in Mumbai, youngsters, though protested, what they did did not compare well with what happened in Delhi. The press did its job fairly well and the state and the ministers in Mumbai were certainly more sensitive. Though the demands of the protesters were similar, the sensitivity of the rulers was not wanting in Mumbai. And yet the question should remain, 'why the citizens did not take to streets in a big way?' Yes, there was a call for

sending bangles to the minister and, to the utter shame of the city, a leader blamed the migrants for the crime.

Take the murder, the press and the politicians, barring those of a certain political bend, reacted as expected and well, and yet a feeling is there, enough to make most uneasy, the reaction was subdued. Yes, within two hours of the news, there was a meeting in Mumbai where 500 (not one hundred as a section of press reported) assembled to condemn the act, to pay their homage and to demand quick action on the bill that was pending for more than a decade. And after a day or two a large enough group of youngsters sat at the feet of Gandhiji's statue in South Mumbai, more to introspect and ask the question: are we not responsible for what happened? Some more protests too followed, and yet the unease is there – was it enough? Could not the city have done much more?

And take the skyrocketing prices of vegetables, and food grains. They say the price rise of onions can result in regime change. The press did its job reasonably well and even the state went beyond blaming the hoarders and opened vegetable stalls. But the housewives were not on the streets. The city has seen massive demonstrations by women in past when the price rise took place. But nothing of that type happened. The same question: what is happening to the city? This is the city which almost closed down in 1942 after the leaders were arrested. This is the city where the students kept the freedom movement going and also functioned as if they were the Indian National Congress when the leaders were in

jail. This is also the city which saw massive protests by the labour, not just to secure their demands but also for progressive causes. What has happened to that spirit of yore needs serious investigations.

But it must be added that the city exploded after the Babri demolition, it went berserk for three or four days when Bala Saheb Thackeray was behind bars. And yet, once the city saw bomb explosions in eleven places in a row, those very elements which had taken over the city showed a surprising restraint. The restraint was certainly healthy, but why did it happen has not been understood and needs investigating. And, let's also remember, when the terrorists attacked the city, the middle classes came out in numbers, and there were candle marches, protests. Even if some people read in it some sort of identification of the elite with the Taj, what they did was commendable. But it should also be remembered that this city effectively killed the Anna movement. It could be because of the wrong choice of the venue, but the fact remains that the city did not react to the cancer of corruption as it should have.

Let us hope that some bright students of prestigious educational institutions in Mumbai will undertake research to find out why the city has lost its sensitivity, but without waiting for their findings, let's hazard a simple guess. Going back in history, we find that there was a period when the city was sensitive, hummed with a desire to contribute to the freedom movement and support progressive causes. And that period was when the Left was active, under the influence of Marx on the one hand and Gandhiji on the other. The city can do with the reclaiming of that period when

communists and socialists vied with each other for supremacy. The city's progressive causes were taken up by the communists and socialists during the freedom movement days. The communists, however, lost their appeal in 1942 when they turned pro-British and anti-freedom movement and even became informers. But the socialists' popularity soared and they retained it for a couple of decades after Independence. And their thinking found a receptive ground in Maharashtra sensitized by the long tradition of reform movements. There is no cause of the poor and deprived that did not attract the attraction of the progressives in the city. And they wanted to make the life of the citizens less miserable. They worked hard to make the city less congested, more comfortable and safe and even worked hard to give new ideas for the city's future. They promoted cooperatives, consumer and housing, and organized chawl dwellers to rebuild their chawls and give themselves better and affordable houses through formation of genuine cooperatives. And they agitated against price rise, propagated slum improvement and not their demolition, and even saw the solution of the city's problems in the development of its hinterland. They retained in their lives the Gandhian simplicity which they had acquired during the freedom movement and their integrity was remarkable. If they reorganize, forget their split dominated past, they can give back to the city its lost sensitivity. They still have some presence in the city. And if the communists can give up their end justifies the means philosophy and decide to work with socialists as also the activists, the task will be easy. The trade union movement, despite the in-roads by the Shiv Sena and the BJP, is still largely with the two.

If this happens, Dabholkars will have a larger following in the city. The misleading talk of inclusive growth of the Congress would get exposed and begin to mean inclusive housing which would see the end of gated colonies of the rich, and the rich and the poor living together. The ghettoisation of the poor, the Dalits and Muslims will stop. And the half-hearted RTE will get redefined to mean compulsory and equal education and the children of the rich and the poor would study together. And the youngsters who stand at the street corners because they have little to do, will have gainful employment and the criminals who recruit them will not get much response. And there will not be two cities but only one. The problem of slum areas will get more attention than the areas which are occupied by the rich. One rural social worker said that there were few crimes and no political riots during the agricultural season. This is a statement which is pregnant with possibilities. If people have work, the crime will go down. Socialists alone can ensure that. Let's work for a socialist utopia. Did we not read some time ago that a neo-liberal said after the 2007-08 crisis in US, 'we are all socialists now'.

Let's remember it's Medha Patkar who and her group which rushes to prevent demolition of slums. She certainly grew up in the socialist movement. Let's also remember that the most ambitious programme of providing affordable housing was led by Mrinal Gore and by Baburao Samant, products of socialist movement. And the consumer cooperatives in Mumbai were mostly organized by the socialists.

*Book Review***Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy-A Legend!****R. J. Kochar**

Tarimela Nagireddy Memorial Trust has done a great service to all those who loved Justice Chinnappa Reddy as a great socialist jurist of this country, by handing over to them this collection of his speeches delivered during the tenure as a Judge of the Supreme Court of India. His speeches unequivocally reflect that he was a socialist personified. He spoke and wrote throughout his life on and about constitutional socialism. Like a democratic socialist he never advocated violence and unconstitutional methods to achieve the goal of socialism which was very dear to him. Not only in his speeches but also in every judgment rendered by him he fearlessly spoke and wrote in the interest of the poor and the downtrodden of India in his ceaseless efforts to wipe out "every tear from every eye." He had expanded the horizons of the chapters III and IV of the Constitution towards the goal of welfare of the people. It is our good fortune that our Constitution was nursed and nurtured by eminent jurists who had always cherished in their hearts the highest aim of social justice incarnated in the Constitution. It was Justice P. B. Gajendragadkar who dared to initiate to talk about social justice, its theory and practice, through his bold, lucid and very learned judgments from the Apex Court to spin the philosophy of constitutional socialism and plough them judicially. He was followed by far more outspoken Marxist judges like Justice Krishna Iyer, Justice D. A. Desai and Justice Chinnappa Reddy. They have virtually brought

the Directive Principles on par with the Fundamental Rights which were sacrosanct for those who were traditionally wedded to the letter of the law and were never willing to depart from the known lanes of the law and never dared to look beyond. These eminent Marxist Judges have woven a very fine fabric of constitutional socialism judicially to avert a "Red Revolution". Our apparatus, however, has failed to reap the fruits!

Anyone who wants to study the subject of constitutional socialism must read this book to learn various facets of socialism. Justice Reddy as a judge had progressed towards his aim of new jurisprudence in the context of law and social change through constitutional methods. He has lucidly explained how humanism and socialism are the integral parts of our Constitution. Justice Reddy has specifically mentioned that, "Legislators, lawyers and judges are showing an increased awareness of law as an instrument of social change." He has further candidly noted that the Fundamental Rights are primarily meant to protect individuals against arbitrary State action intended to foster the ideal of a political democracy and to prevent authoritarian rule. The learned Judge, however, was also conscious of the hard reality in our society. Once he noted that "... several of these Fundamental Rights are ordinarily capable of enjoyment only by persons who are already free from want and necessity. They

are of little practical value and have no meaning to the hungry and the homeless". Throughout his career as a judge he had placed the chapter IV "The Directive Principles of State Policy" on the highest pedestal of the Constitution on par with the chapter III. Though constitutionally not justiciable, Justice Reddy indirectly made them justiciable through his judgments, wisdom of which was never questioned but, to the contrary they have become precedents to be followed forever!

This collection has 22 chapters and each of the speeches of the learned judge is so illuminative for a student of law. It is an extraordinarily analytical and intellectually unparalleled volume. Justice Reddy has expounded in his own uniquely original style the New Jurisprudence Law and Social change, Judicial process and Social change and the Socialism under the Constitution: Promise and performance. There are many other speeches dealing with the subjects with great insight. No better tribute can be given to Justice Reddy than in the words of his brother Judge, Justice Krishna Iyer whom I regard as a Bhishmacharya in the field of law and justice, who says as under: "I have yet to see a greater leftist on the Bench of the Supreme Court who truly represented de facto, not verbally, a Socialist Secular Democratic Republic of India. "I wish this book is read, studied and followed in its true spirit by every judge of the High Court and the Supreme Court of India. It

must become a text book for every law student.

Speeches of Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy: A Legend

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(Continued from Page 5)

and exploited over a period of time after 1956. One important reason for its backwardness appears to be sidelining of irrigation needs of the region. CRM Patnaik, the Cotton of North Andhra, designed projects keeping the aspirations of the region in view, which were later diverted to industrial use for Visakhapatnam city. Farmers agitated without any effect. The rare Yeleru canal scam is part of this diversion process. New projects are being diverted for industrial use.

It is difficult to know how the water requirements of a region were evaluated beyond their legitimate share. Were the needs of farmers and the people of North Andhra who have riparian rights over the run-off considered in diverting 80 TMC water from the proposed Polavaram? Why is it the left canal is not extended beyond Visakhapatnam city to sparsely irrigated areas in Chidikada, Devarapalli, Narsipatnam in Vizag district and the most backward parts of Vizianagaram and Srikakulam? If gravity is an issue, are they not pumping for others? Has the leadership of the region ever brought the issues before the administration or are they overpowered by migrants (mis/un) representing the demands of local people?

Why Do 'They' Love Narendra Modi ?

Shankar Gopalakrishnan

On August 14th, Narendra Modi declared that his Independence Day speech would attract as much attention as that of the Prime Minister. He appears to have been right. The fact that this is hardly unexpected should not obscure the deeper puzzle that it hides. It is a rare occurrence for a state level leader to suddenly get so much prominence in the media, and that too for such a long period. Why, then, have powerful forces in our society – including most of the media – chosen to endorse Modi? Why the sudden promotion of this particular leader at this particular time? What is it that he and his regime are offering?

Each of the standard explanations offered can easily be disposed of. There's the claimed "Gujarat development model." But even the staunchest BJP advocates have to scrounge and dig to find a single indicator in which Gujarat stands out. In most respects, Gujarat actually falls in the middle. Corporates themselves seem to prefer other States. Maharashtra and Karnataka (out of large States) have received more FDI; and a report by the "Institute for Competitiveness" reportedly also ranks Maharashtra higher than Gujarat. With respect to the oft-touted "success" of electrification, the 2011 Census reports that fifteen other States have a higher rate of electrified households than Gujarat – including Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala and Punjab. In terms of "clean and effective administration", the CAG has twice indicted the Gujarat government for providing

favours (a fact that has received little media coverage), and the move to render the State Lokayukta toothless demonstrate that Gujarat is no different from other major States in the country. In GDP growth rates from 2002 – 2011, Gujarat comes fourth. This is apart from the fact that the 2011 Human Development Report placed Gujarat at the eleventh position in human development, behind Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Maharashtra and Punjab.

There's the fact that the Modi regime has won three consecutive elections. But he is hardly the first CM to do so; 12 others have, including, among serving CMs of large states, Naveen Patnaik and Tarun Gogoi (aside from, in the smaller States, Sheila Dikshit, Manik Sarkar, Ikram Obobi Singh and Pawan Chamling). Then there's talk of his "new ideas" and "fresh thinking." Yet even a cursory glance shows that Modi's rhetoric is remarkably stale. Practically every statement made by this supposedly "remarkable administrator" is a rehash of ideas that date from twenty years ago. His statements on economic policy could have been taken from Manmohan Singh's speeches in 1991. His statements on "secularism" are standard saffron rhetoric which we have heard since the 1980s. On anything other than 'development' and Hindutva, he has nothing to say at all.

So what exactly is the appeal of the Modi brand? Of course, there is one (and indeed only one) point that does distinguish the Modi

regime: the 2002 massacres. No other leader so openly represents the politics of pogrom and killing. Hence some suspect that all this talk of development is just a smokescreen for promoting fascist politics. There is no doubt that those who support Modi, at the very least, do not particularly object to 2002. Nowhere was this clearer than in the reactions to his “puppy” remark; after this equation of organised slaughter with roadkill, two major English newspapers (The Times of India, July 15; Indian Express, July 16) ran lead editorials advising Modi to improve his “communications strategy,” making it clear that they not only have no problem with his attitude to mass murder, but that they regard themselves as part of his campaign team.

But it is also clear that Modi’s support from the powerful extends beyond those who identify with the Sangh. Several mainstream commentators have deliberately tried to claim that Modi is “moving away” from Hindutva, and he draws support from a whole spectrum of forces not known for any strong allegiance to anti-minority hate politics. The Modi phenomenon, in this sense, goes well beyond hatred alone. To understand where this originates, we need to look beyond Modi as an individual and understand the background of the forces that have seen fit to make him their face.

After 1991, the Indian polity has been characterised by a curious contradiction. On the one hand, every political party in government has, to a greater or lesser extent, implemented policies that have favoured big business and the financial sector. Yet, at the same time, these policies have had no consistent support

or endorsement from any major political force. Indeed, most such “reforms” have been implemented by ‘stealth’ – complex notifications outside the public eye, efforts to bypass Parliament, MoUs signed with bureaucrats, or quiet policy changes whose implications only come to light later. This is in sharp contrast to many other countries that have followed this pathway, such as the Latin American countries in the 1980s and 1990s, Britain under Thatcher or the United States under Reagan. In India, in most cases where the reformists have had to confront an organised group, they have lost the open confrontation. Examples include the dilution of labour laws, withdrawing the PDS, etc., all of which have – for them – only been partly achieved (as compared to the open demolition that they desire). One of the few exceptions was the recent liberalisation of FDI in retail, but in a sense it is the exception that proves the rule – such FDI was barred in 1997, after the start of “reforms”, and it has taken sixteen years for the reformists to reverse that decision.

This political weakness has had two consequences. Firstly, it has lent Indian “reforms” a particularly avaricious and corrupt quality, especially over the past ten years, when their weakness became more clear. Whether the SEZ Act, the liberalisation of mining regulations, the changes in gas prices, or the dilution of environment and forest clearances, most of the recent “reforms” have been aimed at little more than making it easier for certain corporates to grab more natural resources and/or pre-existing value (often by simply making it easier to evade the law). Broader “policy reforms” have been rare.

Secondly, this weakness has led to a continual search by the “reformist” forces – and their real backers, finance and big capital – to find a political force that could guarantee them enough popular support to confront their opponents. Both before and after 1991, one such effort led to an increasing alliance with the saffron forces, culminating in the NDA’s rise to power in 1998. Notwithstanding their occasional rhetorical hostility, big capital and its reformist allies have a lot of common ground with the Hindutva forces. Both believe in a “strong state” and are keen supporters of the police and the military; both believe that society needs to be “depoliticised”, which in practice means that all forms of protest against power should be crushed; both are inherently hostile to collective politics, especially class and caste politics. In historical terms, this is not surprising – around the world, “reforms” have always been undertaken under such regimes. The 2002 pogrom worried these forces insofar as it damaged India’s international image (hence the continued obsession with any and every international visitor to Modi); but as long as such open violence and “vulgar expressions” of Hindutva were combined with lip service to secularism, they were quite happy to support the NDA, and expected that Hindu chauvinism (with accompanying authoritarianism) would provide the stable popular support base that they had so long lacked. In turn, the Hindutva brigade toned down some of their rhetoric in the English speaking sphere and embraced “reforms” wholeheartedly, culminating in the “India Shining” slogan (these issues are discussed in more detail here).

But then came the 2004 election defeat – which shocked many of

the same media outlets who are today promoting Modi. The NDA experiment had failed to deliver what it promised. The Congress-led UPA then attempted another experiment, “liberalisation with a human face”, in which they tried to address a few issues of social conflict while trying to ensure that such measures did not threaten the core interests of the corporates and the financiers. The presence of the Left also restrained the government, in the process saving the Congress from itself. Thus we had a government that simultaneously passed the Employment Guarantee Act and the SEZ Act; that carried out the coal scam and a skyrocketing rate of forest and land grabbing even as it passed the Forest Rights Act; that granted loan waivers to farmers even as it continued with policies that made farming unviable. This precarious Janus-faced policy secured the 2009 election, but by then the UPA had already had the rug pulled from under it by the 2008 global financial crisis.

Now, desperate to maintain their profits after the collapse of international finance and capital inflows, the big capitalists became intolerant of even the slightest gesture that did not directly cater to their own interests. As the Mint newspaper editorialised, “India does not need democracy that does not deliver growth” (April 1, 2013). The second UPA term has been characterised by corporate scam after corporate scam, howls of “policy paralysis”, and the undercutting of the UPA’s own political selling points. Indeed, after five years in power, the only things the UPA has to advertise are a Food Security Act that provides less than what several major States have already guaranteed, and ‘direct benefit transfer’, which is

not a social measure at all but an attempt to destroy public provision through the back door (and in any case is practically certain to be an implementation disaster). Meanwhile, the UPA faces a growing wave of popular anger and resistance, ranging from struggles against resource grabbing to wildcat strikes by industrial workers and riots over power cuts and inflation. In a classic sign of a government facing a crisis of legitimacy, practically the only response it is now capable of deploying is repression.

As a result, the UPA’s defeat in 2014 now appears quite likely, and in any case it is unable to do what its corporate sponsors want it to do. It hence represents another failed experiment. This presents the corporates and financiers with a dilemma. With no alternative politics in sight, and with their heavy influence over the media, they continue to dictate the political agenda. But they are now morally and intellectually bankrupt. After seeking saviours in everyone from Vajpayee to Manmohan Singh to (even) Anna Hazare, they have run out of ideas. They have nothing to offer to the majority of India, and in this time of financial crisis, they are not even willing to try; even by the historically low standards of Indian business, their myopia and venality is extreme. The only thing left for them is to seek a repeat of the NDA formula, while imagining that for some reason, this time, it will work.

And there is only one regime in India which still speaks the language of the NDA at all. Practically every other leader/government, including Modi’s BJP rivals, has adopted the UPA’s formula – appease the big capitalists while providing some kind of social welfare scheme too. This

is the model that the “reformists” no longer want. Hence the fact that practically every “reformist” intellectual – from Bibek Debroy to Jagdish Bhagwati – has embraced the non-existent ‘Gujarat model.’ Modi’s appeal is one of default; he brings nothing new to the table, but there’s no one else left. It is this bankruptcy which comes through in the vacuity of the Modi rhetoric.

An NDA / Modi victory, one should note, is not the sole point of this campaign. The promotion of the NDA formula, through the praise for Modi, is already working in terms of setting the terms of the debate and continually discrediting and lambasting the ‘UPA model.’ The rightward shift of the UPA, now a daily affair, shows that whatever little political space existed is being closed. In this sense these forces are already achieving their goals. This is not a contest over Modi vs Rahul or BJP vs Congress – it is a contest over political discourse, which they are currently winning.

There is of course a good chance that the NDA may actually come back, either in 2014 or following the collapse of an interim regime. Ironically, though, Rahul Gandhi is right about one point – it is extremely unlikely that a new NDA, or indeed any regime, will be able to fulfill the hopes of corporate India. For the pre 2008 heyday of global finance is not coming back, and hence the short-sightedness of big capitalists will continue, preventing the new government from doing anything concrete socially. But no regime can hope to win long term popular support unless it does so. The political vacuum of Gujarat and its long history of social domination do not exist at the national level, and

(Continued on Page 15)

Amartya Sen Making Waves

Jawaharlal Jasthi

It is not necessary to remind that Amartya Sen is an outstanding economist with original contributions as it is already acknowledged in the form of a Nobel Prize. In addition, he is also a proud Indian and rightly a Bharat Ratna. Recently he came to India to launch his new book “An Uncertain Glory : India and its Contradictions”. While in India, he made some political statements that made waves and started controversy.

In his interviews he made categorical statements that “despite great success in many areas over the last two decades, the fact is that India is in a dreadful state.” Perhaps, that may be the theme of his new book as well. It is a fact that the government of India is harping too much on economic growth as an indicator of economic health and success of their policies. Even when the rate of growth is falling they are trying to maintain that the economy is strong enough not to worry. Still they continue to insist that the rate is quite crucial and it will improve in the near future. At the same time Amartya Sen states that “There seems to be a basic lack of involvement about how growth happens.” It means that the government is harping on economic growth without proper understanding of the mechanics of growth. This is a comment from the renowned economist who is overtly friendly to the government and personally to the head of the government. Naturally, he refuses to hold the government responsible for it. On the other hand he apologizes on their behalf.

Amartya Sen cites examples of so many third world countries –

Brazil, Mexico, Thailand, Taiwan and Korea along with developed countries like Singapore and also China – which have adopted his way of development and succeeded. Those states began with “education and health care right away without waiting for you to become rich and then on top of that, strengthen those investments further by later ploughing in the resources that rapid growth generated.” Obviously, it is the model suggested by Amartya Sen. India failed to adopt it and failed in development. But Amartya Sen refuses to say that clearly and offers excuses on behalf of his revered friend.

In the 1990s Manmohan had an excuse – supplied by Amartya Sen – for his failure to do what he wanted to do. He might not have got clearance from his Prime Minister, he said. That, in spite of P.V.’s reputation to have given free hand to his finance minister. But in 2004 Manmohan Singh has himself become the Prime Minister. Still he failed to do what he claims he wanted to do. Amartya Sen offers an explanation: “Manmohan is not a politician and he is surrounded by coalition partners in government and I have often wondered, since he is such an old and close friend, how I would have behaved if I was surrounded by people whose support is essential to my survival in office. So, on one side everyone is criticizing you for not doing enough and you have become an object of vilification. And on the other you try to carry on.” Sen did not say that he might have kicked off his job in such a situation. On the other hand, he expresses sympathy for Manmohan, his ‘old and close friend’, as he

had to carry on with all that. Is the ‘survival in office’ so vital for him? What could be the reaction of an honest man in such a situation?

Amartya Sen admits that, when India is compared with other BRIC and other emerging economies, the differences are glaring. “China may have more inequality, but you don’t have a situation where children don’t have a school to go to, where people don’t have descent healthcare or a toilet near their homes or greatly undernourished rural children.” By saying so, Sen has indirectly admitted that all those situations are now prevailing in India in spite of a decade of rule by his ‘old and close friend’. But, he refuses to put the blame on him even if he happens to be the head of government.

At the same time he is anxious to find fault with Narendra Modi and brands him as a divisive force and not fit to be the Prime Minister of a democratic country like India. It is true. NaMo is divisive, aggressive and self-aggrandizing. He is also adamant, which is a vice but his supporters say he is decisive, which is a virtue absent in the present rulers. Amartya Sen, who has so beautifully analyzed the course of events over the last decades, fails to notice that the divisive tendency has started way back with the practice of vote bank politics, which is divisive and discriminatory. It helped those in power to stay in power without any strain as they could do it at the cost of exchequer, claiming full credit for themselves. The entire machinery of government was directed to catch vote banks with policies that have no economic justification. Narendra Modi is a product of those policies.

He did not fall from heaven or hell.

Those who are privileged to call him divisive, hesitate to call the head of government indecisive and dishonest. It is during his regime that the credibility of the renowned Indian Institutes of Technology is damaged. Private engineering colleges were allowed to flourish uncontrolled to such an extent that they acquired status to dictate policy of technical education. They are offered reimbursement of fees on behalf of the students, so that they need not depend on students and their parents. Needless to say that they are making hay while the government shines. That is what they have done to higher education. For elementary education, the lesser we say is better. More than 70 per cent of elementary schools have no buildings. 90 per cent of the schools have no benches for the students to sit. On many occasions, even secondary schools students were made to sit on floor to write examinations. There are no drinking water facilities in schools and no toilets. That is the state of elementary education. Attention to education is one of the fundamental requirements of economic progress according to Amartya Sen. Still he did not say anything about it in his comments.

Obviously, the Prime Minister wants to repay the debt of the party in power by being loyal at any cost as they offered him the Chair even when he was not a member of the party. He allowed himself to be used by the politicians to stay in power using him as a cloak. He also tried to explain his inability by blaming the partners in coalition. For him, reform means opening of gates for foreign investments in defense as well as in retail shops. He expects us to believe that it is reforming of economy. There are reports that the fall in capital market is because of the

foreign investors withdrawing their funds. It could happen in any sector in which they made investments. Indigenous innovation is killed just to keep doors open for corruption through compulsory purchases from outside sources. We cannot blame the government for all this as they are surrounded by coalition partners. Isn't it? Every democratic institution is ruined. Every process of decision making is damaged. We don't have the integrity to call the spade a spade.

That is the bankruptcy of Indian intellectuals.

Amartya Sen says that Narendra Modi is not a person fit to be the Prime Minister of this country. But where is a person with better credentials? Is the renowned economist, Amartya Sen, the Nobel Laureate and a Bharat Ratna, willing to take up that position to save the country?

Citizens Conference on Purification of Politics Jodhapur, 29th September 29-08-2013

It was unbelievable. But it happened. BJP-led NDA alongwith CPM-CPI and other left parties cooperated with the Congress-led UPA for getting two pieces of legislation passed in the Parliament unanimously.

They were not about reining in price-rise of essential commodities or preventing rapes in the capital. They are -1. To amend Right to Information Act to make it inapplicable to political parties and 2. To amend Representation of Peoples Act to neutralise the decision of the Supreme Court terminating membership of the representatives who are convicted by a law court and awarded more than two years' imprisonment and disallowing them to contest election from the jail. The parties are not cooperating over any issue concerning the hardships faced by the people. They agree only to keep all affairs of their respective parties secret from the voters/citizens and to allow criminals belonging to them to enjoy all perks and extort illegitimate largesse from

the public coffers. It is saddening to see how low the parties can stoop to cheat the people and continue to safeguard their selfish interests. But it is no use shedding tears of helplessness. It is the duty of the people to take initiative and build up pressure of public opinion so that the parties would be forced to undo their unholy acts.

Socialist Party(India) has decided to convene a citizens' conference at Jodhapur (Rajsthan) on 29th September 2013 to deliberate over these and other related topics and adopt resolutions for further action.

Shri Ravikiran Jain, PUCL leader and leading advocate of Allahabad, Sandip Pandey, Jayantibhai Panchal, Ahemadabad, social activist engaged in literacy and rural upliftment, Qurban Ali, renowned journalist of New Delhi, Vishnu Dhobale, advocate and peasant leader, Aurangabad and a few other leading lights will participate in the Conference. All are invited to attend and participate in this initiative.

Convenors

O.P.Jaipal, President

**Pannalal Surana, Chairman
Central Parliamentary Board**

**Kousar Ali Sayyad, Secretary,
Gujarat state Committee**

Socialist Party(India)

Unlimited Freebies

Though I have tons of reservations about UPA's concern for the poor, classes who have been consistently enjoying unlimited freebies from the state are least qualified to question this food subsidy.

If it is a subsidy for the have-nots, condemn that as a drain on the national exchequer. If it is an undeserving dole to me, it is incentive for nation building. What a perverse logic!

An illustrative but not an exhaustive list of freebies enjoyed by the parasites:

(1) During the financial year 2012-13, the revenue foregone (corporate IT+ excise duty+ customs duty+ personal IT) in favour companies and affluent sections has been estimated at a whopping total of Rs 5.74 lakh crore. All this is for ushering in a jobless growth.

(2) The subsidy for diesel given in the name of poor has been benefiting diesel car owners, telecom towers, diesel generators and others who do not merit. Or look at the hue and cry raised by us, when the government

proposed to limit the subsidised LPG gas cylinders to six. Subsidised fuel on credit for aviation sector is another cruel joke.

(3) The revenue foregone by the government on 'diamond and gold' stands at Rs 66,000 crore.

(4) As taxpayers, all of us are familiar with an animal called 80C, which is the tax deduction we get if we invest in certain products like mutual funds and insurance policies. All told, that revenue forgone adds up to more than Rs 30,000 crore. Add all the other implicit subsidies like health insurance or interest on loans taken for higher education, and the figure rises to almost Rs 37,000 crore. A subsidy for those earning Rs 20 lakh a year.

(5) As much as Rs 70,000 crore is lost to the exchequer in the name of fertiliser subsidy for poor farmers. Most of this money, however, goes into the coffers of fertiliser companies and wealthy farmers.

(6) How many of us paid market rates to get our degrees and doctorates? We go abroad, pay Rs 1 crore for our degrees – and get the

government to forgo revenue of Rs 316 crore (deduction on account of interest on loan taken for higher education, under Section 80E). An "all-route pass" given to students by state transport corporations allow them to travel on any bus going anywhere for free or at a paltry sum.

(7) About Rs 20000 crore subsidy for domestic connections each year is provided by state electricity boards.

(8) Subsidies to the Education Sellers (Gurukuls) & Corporate Health Sellers.

(9) Unduly subsidised education from high end institutions like IIT, AIMS, IISc and IIMs.

(10) Subsidised/free land, water, power, fuel and road/rail links and humongous tax concessions to SEZ and SIZ.

(11) Subsidy to city clubs, cigar clubs, golf clubs, BCCI, IPL, Formula racing etc.

(12) Tax/duty concessions to ultra-luxurious SUVs for tourism industry that are grabbed by the super rich.

–Sankara Narayanan

NGOs' proxy war against Lokayukta

Kapil Dave

Amid the startling charge by Justice (Retd) R A Mehta that the Narendra Modi government spent Rs 45 crore of tax-payers' money to block his appointment as Lokayukta, it now emerges that the government not only spent on

its own legal eagles, it also bore huge legal expenses of NGOs who became co-petitioners in Supreme Court.

"Forty-five crores of public money is said to have been spent by the

Gujarat government in this litigation. Humongously disproportionate figure by any standard," Mehta wrote in his letter to the governor on Wednesday conveying his withdrawal of consent for his appointment as Lokayukta, given the hostility

of the state government. A query under the Right to Information has revealed that the government paid legal fees of top lawyers hired by Ahmedabad-based National Council of Civil Liberties and Dhrangadhra Prakruti Mandal, Surendranagar, to support the government in the Lokayukta case. The two NGOs became co-petitioners when the state government moved the SC after losing the battle in the Gujarat high court.

“The documents clearly show that it is the Gujarat tax-payers’ money which funded the battle fought by the two NGOs,” said Ramesh Joshi of Kutch Ladayak Manch, who got the information

under RTI from the department of law. Records show that the Gujarat government paid senior counsels Soli Sorabjee, K K Venugopal, Mihir Thaker and Bina Madhavan who were hired by NCCL. However, V K Saxena of NCCL said, “Sorabjee and other lawyers didn’t charge us any money because they were fighting for a public cause.”

Similarly, fees of Sanjay Hegde, Rajiv Dhawan, Amit Panchal and Gopal Subramaniam, who were roped in by the Dhrangadhra Prakruti Mandal, were also paid by the government. TOI couldn’t contact representatives of the NGO for their comment.

Besides, the Gujarat government also hired senior counsels Harish Salve, Mukul Rohatgi, Mahesh Agarwal, Kamal B Trivedi, Prakash Jani and Sangita Vishen. The government hasn’t yet disclosed the total payouts to advocates appointed by it and the two NGOs. It has also not disclosed the overall money spent from the state exchequer for fighting the Lokayukta case in Gujarat HC and the SC.

Talking to TOI, Pradipsinh Jadeja, minister of state for law, claimed that the two NGOs paid their advocates on their own. But when asked about the information provided by his department under RTI, he said, “Let me check first if this is true.”

- Times of India

On the murder of Narendra Dabholkar

We condemn the murder of Narendra Dabholkar, rationalist activist, in Pune on August 20. While the motive for the murder is not known, he had reportedly received death threats from extremist elements opposed to his campaign against superstition. Other rationalist activists such as Sanal Edamaruku have reported receiving death threats.

We demand that this crime be thoroughly investigated and the

perpetrators brought to justice. We also demand that threats of this kind to activists in future are investigated promptly before another tragedy occurs. We ask that those whose religious beliefs are offended by rationalists should express their views in words, and should take the lead in condemning violence from extremist elements in their religion.

Finally, we note that an ordinance on superstitious

practices, along the lines of the bill proposed by Dabholkar, has been passed by the Maharashtra cabinet on August 22. We hope that this ordinance, after adequate debate of its provisions, will become law in Maharashtra, and that similar legislation will be pursued in other states — particularly in Tamil Nadu, where the rationalist movement has a long and respected history.

Ramesh Anishetty, A.B. Belliappa, Madhushree Basu, Saikat Chatterjee, T.R. Govindarajan, Nirmalya Kajuri, Romesh Kaul, Ravi Kunjwal, Kamalakshya Mahatab, S.M. Meesum, Gautam Menon, Amritanshu Prasad, R. Ramanujam, P. Sankaran, Bala Sathiapalan, R. Shankar, Rahul Siddharthan, Sitabhra Sinha, K. Srinivas, V.S. Sunder, T. Vinod Kumar.

(The signatories are from The Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai. These are their personal views.)

You are among the top

The National Sample Survey Organisation's newest set of consumption expenditure data for 2011-12 gives an insight into how those across the spectrum, from the poorest to the richest, live in different parts of India.

For one it's clear that we are not talking about a rich country. An individual who spends over Rs. 2,886 per month in a rural area or Rs. 6,383 per month in an urban area is in the top 5% of the country (and this is using the modified mixed reference period, which gives the most generous expenditure estimates). This translates to spending Rs. 96.2

and Rs. 212.77 per day. The top 10% of the country includes anyone who spends over Rs. 2296 per month in a rural area and Rs. 4610 per month in an urban area.

Moreover, even though poverty rates are converging, massive inter-State differences remain. A person spending over Rs. 1995 per head would be well into the top 5% of rural Bihar, but more than half of Kerala is spending at that level. Similarly, spending Rs. 1710 per month would put a person in rural Jharkhand into the top 5% of her State, but over 60% of Punjab is spending at that level.

In urban India, spending Rs. 3400 per month in urban Bihar would put a person into the top 5% of that State, but only the top 30% of Delhi. Conversely, 30% of urban Chhattisgarh lives on a monthly per capita expenditure of Rs. 1046, while less than 5% of Kerala lives at that level of expenditure.

Then there is the question of what the rich and poor are spending their money on; absolute spending on food rises as one climbs the income ladder in both rural and urban India, even as its proportion in total expenditure falls.

—The Hindu

(Continued from Page 10)

corporate fantasies aside, such things cannot be created overnight.

It's an old truism of politics that hysteria is a symptom of weakness, not strength. The sheer shrillness of the Modi campaign reflects the reformists' sense that this might be their last chance, at least in this form. In order to survive, any new NDA under their control will have to rely on whipping up hatred and fascist politics, necessarily combined with intense repression. But such politics cannot last very long; history says it will collapse under its own contradictions, though it may well extract a human cost that is disproportionate to its time in power.

It is too early to say what will follow it. That will depend on whether a genuine progressive or revolutionary alternative emerges. If it does, this may be a watershed in Indian politics. If not, the descent into barbarism and conflict will continue.

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The growing lobby of Narendra Modi supporters must have been jolted by the harsh indictment of their leader by an erstwhile admirer who sees in him a “god that has failed”. Indeed, the indictment comes as a shock to the Bharatiya Janata Party which has been building up Modi’s image as a god that will deliver all the goods for India. The country was taken aback when reports appeared about the alleged involvement of two Rajya Sabha MPs of that party in trying to subvert the judicial processes in the Tulsiram Prajapati fake encounter case in Gujarat. But that allegation pales into insignificance against the latest anti-Modi bombshell that exploded on Tuesday, September 3, in Ahmedabad. On that day, the suspended and imprisoned former DIG of Gujarat Police D. G. Vanzara resigned from the IPS and made some disclosures in a 10-page letter which is anything but flattering of Modi. It indirectly substantiates many of the allegations of commission and omission against Modi, his bureaucracy and his anti-terrorism policy. Modi’s supporters and the BJP and indeed, the entire saffron lobby maintain that the government’s hands are clean and innocents are not dubbed terrorists

and killed. Vanzara himself is in prison for alleged involvement in a chain of fake encounter cases. He has spent seven years in a Mumbai jail. He was arrested in 2007 in the Sohrabuddin fake encounter case and later in the Tulsiram Partajapati and the Ishrat Jahan cases. He says in his letter that the Gujarat police have been staging fake encounters and targeting so-called and alleged anti-Modi innocents as a matter of “conscious policy of this government” which, he adds, “was inspiring, guiding, and monitoring our actions at very close quarters.” He alleges that the government has failed to protect the police officers who loyally and faithfully implemented the conscious policy. Vanzara blames Guajart’s former junior minister and Modi’s close associate, for implementing government policy. Shah is a general secretary of the BJP and is now in charge of the party’s electoral campaign in Uttar Pradesh. Vanzara says in effect that Shah has influenced the government policy in such a way that the cause of the police officers has remained neglected and ignored. Shah’s actions have been so “nauseating”, he says, that they may take this government to the

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Between the lines

Is India's story over?

Kuldip Nayar

That India is an economic mess is known all over the world. What is not yet public is that the malaise was because of the wrong decisions which President Pranab Mukherjee took when he was the Union Finance Minister from January 2009 to mid-2012. The current Minister P. Chidambaram was heading the ministry nearly till the end of 2008 and even earlier.

Mukherjee lives in the luxuries of Rashtrapati Bhavan and Chidambaram shields himself behind tall promises he still makes to mend the economy. Both of them are accountable. They should tell why they took the steps which disturbed the rhythm of progress. Because of lack of transparency in the affairs of government, only a handful of people know about the blunders the two committed.

One of the decisions taken by Mukherjee was to impose the Rs. 1200-crore tax with retrospective effect on a foreign mobile company. After having lost the case in the Supreme Court on September 8, 2010, the government promulgated an ordinance before amending the Finance Act 2012. The retrospective clause in the act has scared away foreign investment which India badly needs. A bagful of concessions has not brought the Walmart yet to the Indian soil. Foreign investors have withdrawn a large sum of money which they had invested. In a few weeks, as much \$200 billion have reportedly gone out. The outflow has not stopped yet.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh did not anticipate the repercussions. In fact, after seeing the mess Chidambaram had created in 2008, the Prime Minister should have taken over the finance ministry himself because of his expertise in economic matters. Unfortunately, his own record as Coal Minister does not hold promise but the Prime Minister would have done better in finance.

India should have been exporting coal, as it did, instead of importing it. Manmohan Singh may not be personally responsible for the corruption in the allotment of coal blocks. But the bungling runs into thousands of crores of rupees. The full story may not yet come out because some files are missing. The government has admitted this before the Supreme Court. The government uses the word "so-called files".

According to the CBI as many as 157 files are missing. The missing files reportedly have some letters and notings on the allotment of coal blocks. The Prime minister cannot absolve himself of the responsibility saying that he was not the custodian of the files. He was in charge of the coal portfolio. A top CBI official, who is probing into the scandal, has said that there may be a need to "examine" Prime Minister, who was in charge of the ministry from 2006 to 2009. Could the Prime Minister have connived at what the ministry had been doing because his personal integrity is beyond reproach?

The Prime Minister could have done something to bring the culprits

to book but he could not because he is politically weak. His other fault was that he depended too much on Mukherjee and put him as the chairman of several committees of Group of Ministers, entrusted with the task of finding solutions to intractable problems. Unfortunately, Mukherjee had no time for his own ministry and the situation began deteriorating.

The crisis has been aggravated by the galloping inflation (10 per cent). An average person's income has remained what it was even as his expense has gone up because of the ever-increasing price of essential commodities. His cost of living would have been still higher if the government was not subsidizing petrol, diesel, cooking gas and the like. According to IMF, the 20 per cent of the top in India enjoys more subsidies than the 20 per cent below.

The elite are too powerful to be touched. Top business houses finance many MPs who see to it that no harm comes to their houses. Lok Sabha elections are due in 10 months' time. On an average, a Lok Sabha seat requires an expenditure of Rs. 10 crore. The political parties are already in touch with the business houses for funds. How can they challenge them for their malpractices? This is confirmed by the unanimity among all parties in staving off the Chief Information Commissioner's ruling that the RTI (right to information) will be applicable to the working of political parties.

Yet the immediate problem is how to get over the present financial crisis. The Prime Minister has himself admitted in Parliament that “the country is facing a difficult time”. It can justifiably be argued that the bungling is because of the government. There is no governance, no leadership and no guidance. I do not know what reforms the Prime Minister has in mind. He has to reformulate economic policies so that there are employment opportunities, essential goods are cheap and the growth rate, now back to the Hindu growth rate of 4 per cent in the '50s and '60s, picks up. Manufacturing is stuck at a mere 3 per cent and a bit of increase is not even a flash in the pan.

I wish there had been fresh elections, as I had argued three months ago. The uncertainty which puts off investors would have been over by now and the people would also have settled down to a new elected government. But MPs of most political parties, particularly those of the Congress, want to enjoy the full tenure of five years. Many of them know that they may not be reelected.

The anxiety over political scene is casting a shadow on the future. Unless there is a sweep by one party, which does not seem likely, the next government will also be a coalition. It may not be in a position to take hard decisions which India needs to overcome the deepening crisis. That the political parties should have the consensus on basics goes without saying. But this may not be possible before elections. But that is what the country needs whether it happens now or later. May be, I am on the wrong track. Probably, the story of India looks like over, at least for years to come.

Spiritual unity among Telugu people

K. S. Chalam

Spirituality as a transcendental dimension of human experience is precursor of organised religion. It was recorded or carried on as an oral tradition in different societies till very recently. However, there are still groups and individuals who consider their understanding of spirituality to be superior over others'. On the other hand, the concept of spirit is used in ordinary parlance to signify the essence of thought or metaphysically refer to soul or occult experience. Keeping the spirit of the matter, I wanted to cultivate the concept of Telugu spirituality and mooted the idea with a friend. He immediately retorted saying that I was not qualified to do so as I am a teetotaler and do not believe in spirits!

There is no harm in hypothesising that Telugus are the original people of India and in all probability due to its vastness (from Brahui/Sindhu-Ganges and Kaveri), the language might be the proto-Dravidian language (linguists may differ). A hypothetical statement is a precondition for any enquiry on scientific basis to falsify. The above is only a protocol statement that can be revised once proved contrary to another based on facts and evidence. But, it is unusual to find that every dominant caste in the state claims (in its caste chronicles) that it has migrated from somewhere in the North or Rajasthan or UP or extreme South and none from the Telugu soil. It seems the stigma is carried from generation to generation and at the time of outmigration, this

unconsciously dents the character of the youngsters to make them be comfortable in the foreign language rather than in Telugu. The recent upsurge of so-called Telugu cultural extravaganza can be contrasted with the Bengali or Tamil or Sindhi assemblages which are more secular and essentially distinct culture-specific. For, the present geographical location of Telugu state is unique in the entire country perhaps indicating the ubiquitous nature of a vast Telugu land unlike our brethren who have limited territory. It is our narrow mind-set that limited our immensity by withdrawing from our claims over our expansive Telugu history and culture beyond the borders of our country in the past and also in the contemporary world. However, it is time that an effort is made to bring the distinctive Telugu culture as a universal category and not to be bothered about narrow specifics. This may be possible by attempting to bring out the spiritual unity among the Telugu people. We have witnessed the spirit (religious) recently in the queues before temples in all parts of the state; seeking blessings (of the same gods) to keep the state united or bifurcated.

Different tongues close to Telugu are spoken in the East from Gangetic plains, Tamralipti, Mahanadi, Khandamaland and in other places that have not been studied so far according to Balasubrahmanyam (Odisha civil servant). It may be due to the prejudice of some scholars/pundits that Telugu does not exist

beyond Godavari (restricting it to three districts). It is surmised that the aliens after reaching Ganga found that it was formidable to cross Dandaka where most of the so-called Dravidian languages were spoken. They approached the South through the East Coast crossing Mahendragiri and built Arasavilli in Srikakulam district (2nd century BCE and rebuilt by Devendra Varma), the first Sun temple to record their entry in to dakshinapath. The lord Narasimha of Simhachalam (much senior to Tirupati) later crossed Godavari and entered Dhramapuri in Telangana and helped the cult of Yadagiri. Without entering into the controversy of how Vaishnavism became popular in the South through Telugu country, one could see the contribution of Telugu Alvars, pundits and poets influencing the religious world view of common man.

The transition from Buddhism to Vaishnavism (marginalising Shaivism) seemed to be total by the time Krishna Devaraya ushered in Telugu (Tulu) land. The elite of the Telugus with the support of the British India officers established systematic and uniform methods of worship (with compromises between pancharatra and vaikhanasa) in all parts of the state. Bhadrachalam built by Kancharla Gopanna in 1630AD was regularised by the Muslim Tanisha later. Similarly, all the regions of Telugu country were brought under the sway of Sri Venkateswara or his modern avatars in different forms. In fact, Maharashtrians used to jeer the Telugu folk for converting Saibu (Muslim) as Saibaba in Shirdi and his avatar as Satya Sai Baba which is a creative skill of our own people. It is said that the astute Malayalee who found the popularity of our

lord Venkateswara attracting more devotees and Anantpadmanabha becoming obsolete, initiated Ayyappa to get more Telugu biddas around. We have now branches in Delhi, Mumbai and places wherever our Telugus moved out. Thus, Telugu culture and pride are intimately twined with our spirituality or patronage of a particular branch of dominant Hindu faith. The Muslim and Christian minority communities are internally differentiated, but externally appear to be identical in the Telugu land. There are different categories of heretics from the time of Ajvikas, Tantriks, Lokayatas, etc. who seemed to have lost their support base. The materialist world view popularised by the Left is uniformly spread in the state. The rationalist movement in Andhra spread during the time of Tripuraneni, Gora, Royists and Lohiaites but now has taken a backseat due to the younger generation evincing more interest in dollars than in Telugu identity. It is noted with dismay that none of the prominent leaders in the state condemned the heinous murder of the rationalist movement leader Dr Dhabolkar in Maharashtra. It shows that Andhra and Telugu people are not interested in mundane issues but only in spiritual activities like chardham yatra.

The spirituality thus obtained appears to be very constricted compared to the size of the Telugu speakers in the world. What is projected and explained here is only of the elite and the literate who have traditions of going to temple or places of worship at regular intervals. But, majority of the non-traditional communities like the Adivasis who gather at Sammakka and Saralamma (mostly Telugu speakers) once in two or

three years is equal to the total number of devotees assembling at (with all the comforts of travel and accommodation) our national deity in a year. Interestingly, there is a parallel system of spirituality among the ordinary people called as little tradition (mischievously by the missionaries with the support of local clerics) that is uniform and universal in all parts of Telugu country. They are the local or village deities as Gangamma in Rayalaseema, Mysamma, Yellamma, Pochamma in Telangana, Pydithalli, Neelamani, Nookalu in North Andhra, Durga, Kanyakaparameswari in coastal Andhra. Remarkably, there seems to be no competition among the peoples' Goddesses and they do not bother about huge and elaborate rituals and are happy with the local low caste person officiating as a Priest till it gets sufficient income to attract others. This is unique to Telugu people and seems to be not found in our neighbouring states where VeeraShivism, Muruga and Subrahmanya cults adopted to the dominant faith. We have as a particular language speakers with uniform culture remained uninterrupted and enriched our common traditions of spirituality.

The exuberance of Telugu spirituality endured similar rituals and practices all over with marginal differences. Interestingly, there are around 500 temples (mostly Vaishnava and no village deities) in USA with Telugu speaking Tamilians or Tamil speaking Telugus conducting rituals. Thus, we have our Telugu pride carried far and wide through the notion of spiritual unity. Is Telugu spirituality not adequate to fix all the Telugu speakers under one shade of unity with administrative diversity?

India's Security Environment Today*

B. Vivekanandan

Key determinants of India's security environment are the nature of relationship New Delhi maintains with its immediate seven neighbouring countries, with which India shares its 15,000 Kms land border, and the state of affairs in the Indian ocean, which washes India's 5,600 Kms long coast line. Of these seven countries six constitute the Indian sub-continent, which otherwise is called South Asia. In South Asia, and in the Indian Ocean, geo-politics has placed India in a pivotal position. The six countries of South Asia have many common features, a common culture and heritage, and during the British rule, they together constituted a single national entity and had enjoyed the lofty position of the "brightest jewel of the British empire". They now remain divided by somewhat porous international boundaries.

The China Factor

The only neighbour of India with which India has no commonality of any kind, but with which India shares 4000 kms of its borders since 1954, is People's Republic of China. China's geo-political and geo-strategic positions in Asia, cultural traditions, and expansionist psyche, places it in an adversary position with India in Asia. That basic dichotomy between them keeps surfacing and asserting again and again in their bilateral relationship. It drives China to indulge in playing a very active negative role, with impunity, to vitiate India's relations with its immediate neighbours, like Pakistan,

Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Now, of late, that role is getting extended to some of the strategically located Indian Ocean Islands too.

Keeping in view the expansionist trait of the Chinese psyche, through out the British rule in India, Britain never allowed China to have a common border with India, and kept the independent Tibet as a buffer state between India and China. After Tibet's declaration of independence in 1911, Tibet's position as an autonomous state between China and India was recognized under the Simla conference of 1914, in which India, China and Tibet participated as equal participants. Although Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was also recognized, Tibet was declared autonomous and totally free of the control of the Chinese government in both civil and military matters. Notably, the Chinese delegate at the Simla conference initialled the map showing the agreed boundary line, now known as the McMahon Line, demarcating the border between India and Tibet, though the Chinese Government had not ratified the agreement. However, since 1911, Britain preserved Tibet as the buffer state between India and China and kept the British India – the present South Asia – insulated from the expansionist track of China. As the Royal Indian Navy also maintained its dominance in the Indian Ocean, India's security was never challenged either from its land border or from the Indian Ocean.

Initial Critical Follies

After India gained independence in 1947, the thoughtful policies which Britain had pursued to ensure India's security, were conspicuous by their absence. During the first decade of India's independence, the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had taken a few thoughtless personal decisions, after ignoring the considered views and advises given to him by his able colleagues and advisers, which had put India into an insecure track since then. As a result, futile and costly wars were fought, without solving any of the issues involved. Costly diplomatic exercises are still going on to undo the damages done by those thoughtless decisions of the first Prime Minister. Those costly personal decisions of Jawaharlal Nehru were:

1. When the 'tribesmen' from the North-West of Pakistan invaded Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) in October 1947, followed by J&K's accession to the Indian Union on 26 October 1947, on a request from Maharaja Hari Singh of J&K the Indian army, under the command of Major General Kalwant Singh, started operations against the tribal invaders in Kashmir. At a critical stage in May 1948, when the Indian army was successfully engaged in clearing off all intruders from the whole of Kashmir, including from the present Azad Kashmir, Nehru personally intervened and stopped the Indian army from completing their task and created a cease-

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fire line with in Kashmir. Nehru's intervention came at a time when the Indian army was just 18 miles away from Muzaffarabad and without facing any opposition from the other side. Indeed, by seeing the Indian army, the Pakistani irregulars ran out from Kashmir to the other side of Pakistan's international border. Drawing attention to this ground reality Major Gen Kalwant Singh requested Jawaharlal Nehru to allow him to continue the operation for five more days so that the Indian army would scale up the difficult terrain in the rest of Kashmir and reach Pakistan's international boundary. But, Nehru rejected Kalwant Singh's request and, to the big surprise of Pakistani intruders, the Indian army voluntarily stopped the operation and stood on a line in the middle of Kashmir. On seeing this unexpected development, the Pakistani intruders, who earlier ran out to the other side of the international border with Pakistan, re-entered Kashmir and formed a parallel line and created a cease-fire line, or the present line of control (LOC), in Kashmir. If Nehru gave five more days to Kalwant Singh to continue his operation in the valley, there would have been no Kashmir problem at all today to bedevil India's security relationship with Pakistan.

2. Jawaharlal Nehru overlooked the implications of the Chinese occupation of Tibet, in 1950, to India's national security, and thoughtlessly conceded China's sovereignty on Tibet, without even asking the Chinese to clarify Peking's position regarding the status of the McMahon Line as the border between India and Tibet. It may be recalled that following the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950, talks were held between India and China over Tibet between 1951 and 1954. Reportedly, in-

between, in a communication to China drafted by an Indian official, who did not know the difference between the words 'Suzerainty' and 'Sovereignty' in international law, used the term 'Sovereignty' instead of 'Suzerainty', of China over Tibet. China quoted that communication later to iterate that India had already accepted China's sovereignty over Tibet. It meant that, for India, the hither to 4000 kms Indo-Tibetan border, based on the McMahon Line, would instantly become the Sino-Indian border – a border sharing with an expansionist country. Jawaharlal Nehru and senior officials of the Government of India were aware that, although at the Simla Conference in 1914 China's representative had signed the map showing the McMahon Line as the Indo-Tibetan border, the Chinese government had not ratified that agreement signed its own representative at the Conference. So, senior Indian officials, like Girija Shankar Bajpai, K.P.S Menon and T.N. Kaul, wanted that the recognition of the McMahon Line by China should be made part of the general settlement between India and China on Tibet, and that India should not withdraw its military personnel from Gyantse and Yatung without securing that recognition. But Nehru rejected all these advises and refused permission to put the status of McMahon Line, as the border between India and China, as an item on the agenda of discussion between the two countries, which went on for 3 years. He contented that the borders between India and China were "wellknown" and beyond dispute. This unilateral assertion of Nehru, without verifying what the new Communist regime in China thought about it, was a crucial folly, which proved very costly for India since then. The future status

of McMahon Line should have been part of the Treaty between India and China on Tibet signed in 1954. After all, in the ultimate analysis, for India the prime issue to be settled in the relationship between India and China was the question of India's northern borders, which, with the movement of China into Tibet, became a 4000 km long border between India and China. Therefore, it was imperative that during the negotiations on Tibet between India and China, India should have sought fresh acceptance of India's border with China as part of a general settlement in the treaty. This was not done due to Nehru's personal insistence. Thus, he sowed the seed of a very costly territorial dispute between India and China. It also redefined India's security environment.

Subsequently, when the Chinese Prime Minister Chou-en-Lai, came to Delhi in 1960 to discuss the border question, during their meeting Nehru, who did not do his homework, bungled and the Chinese Prime minister was given the impression that the Indian Prime Minister was unsure about India's border in the Ladakh region. It encouraged Chou-en-lai to send the Chinese troops later to occupy Aksai Chin in Jammu and Kashmir.

3. In 1955, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, United States proposed that India should take the permanent Asian seat in the UN Security Council, which was then occupied by Taiwan. That proposal provided India with a golden opportunity to occupy a pivotal position in the world body. But to the surprise of everybody, including of the United States, in an act of self-denial, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru rejected that offer

infavour of the People's Republic of China, which was not even a member of the UN at that time. He wanted that the permanent seat in the UN Security Council should be reserved for China when it would become a member of the world body. This personal decision of Nehru again had tremendous adverse implications for India's future security and diplomatic leverage in the world. China became a UN member only in 1971, sixteen years later, and instantly it became a permanent member of the UN Security Council, with all privileges attached to it. It had suddenly enhanced China's diplomatic leverage in world politics and in Asian politics. It is pathetic to see India today knocking at the door of China seeking its support to join the UN Security Council as a permanent member. But, China firmly opposes India's move. If a question is asked, who had gifted this prowess to China, in a platter, for using it today against India, the answer is: none other than Jawaharlal Nehru. Thanks to Nehru's generosity, braving firm oppositional from China, India is still moving from pillar to post to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. This inequality of status between India and China has put India in a permanently disadvantageous position vis-a-vis China on security matters.

4. In 1957, India's nuclear scientist Homi J Bhabha sought Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's permission to conduct India's first nuclear test, for which Bhabha was ready. He was also ready to make Hiroshima type atom bombs at the cost of Rs 5 lakhs per bomb. But, here again, Nehru refused to give permission to Bhabha. If Bhabha was given the permission to do the nuclear test at that time, India would have been the 4th nuclear

power – after the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union, to have nuclear weapons long before France and China, which conducted their first nuclear tests in 1960 and 1964 respectively. Therefore, when the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) was finalised in 1968, the treaty gave legal nuclear weapon state status only to those countries which had conducted nuclear tests before April 1968. As a result, while China got recognition as a nuclear weapon state, with the right to make, refine and stockpile nuclear weapons, India remained in the anteroom with the status of a non-nuclear weapon state. The reason for India's lower status vis-a-vis China, under the NPT, is again due to Jawaharlal Nehru's decision not to permit Homi J Bhabha to conduct India's first nuclear test in 1957.

“Buddha smiled” in Pokhran only in May 1974. But so far India has not been recognized as a nuclear weapon state. That recognition would require an amendment to the NPT, shifting the cut-off date of nuclear testing from April 1968 to a date after May 1974. But China and US are opposing any amendment to that effect, and want India to sign the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state, and roll back its nuclear programme, which will be disastrous for India. Such an action would tantamount the coronation of China as the hegemon of Asia', which India can never accept.

Taken together, all these personal decisions of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in the first decade of India's independence have put India's long-term security interests in jeopardy. The country has paid a heavy price, in terms of human lives and resources, for all these follies of Jawaharlal Nehru. It makes one to conclude that while Jawaharlal

Nehru could be called an architect of modern India, he could also be called the architect of India's insecurity. All subsequent efforts to rectify those architectural defect have been futile.

Indian Ocean Dimension

India's security environment is partly defined by the security situation in the Indian Ocean. During the British colonial rule in India, the Indian Ocean was made virtually a British lake. Barring a minor passage through the Indonesian archipelago, the Royal Indian Navy controlled all entry points of the Indian Ocean – the Suez Canal, the Cape of Goodhope, Singapore and the passages around Australia. The only occasion in which this British supremacy was challenged occurred in 1942 when Britain temporarily lost Singapore to Japan during the Second World War.

India's independence in 1947 did not bring much change in the British dominance of the Indian Ocean. Britain maintained its dominance with a reduced size of the Royal Navy, until, in a bid to reduce public expenditure, the British Government came out with an announcement in January 1968, that Britain would withdraw its forces from the East of Suez by the end of 1971.

Although the Indian Ocean is rightly named after India, independent India did not pay much attention to build up a strong naval force to safeguard its long-term security interests. More attention was paid to build up its Army and Air force. But, in early 1970s, India was provided with a great opportunity to start building a world class blue-water navy. But the Indian leadership had wasted it.

The British Offer

The opportunity came to India when, in the after math of Britain's

decision to withdraw its forces from the East of Suez, the Americans put pressure on Britain to permit the United States to build a naval base in Diego Garcia. But, Britain was not willing to oblige the United States. Britain thought that it would be better to have a security arrangement for the Indian Ocean, involving the littoral states under India's leadership. To explore that possibility Britain's foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, came to New Delhi in February 1972, and met Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Foreign Minister Swaran Singh, and discussed the matter.

During their discussions, Douglas-Home told Indira Gandhi and Swaran Singh that if India was willing to play a larger role in the Indian Ocean, including the maintenance of the safety and security of Sea-lanes in the Indian Ocean, Britain would help India to build a strong navy for the purpose. The British perception was that if India emerged as a strong naval power between South Africa and Australia, and played a strategic role of a sea-power, that would not only guarantee free navigation through the Indian Ocean, but also would provide an incentive for super powers to refrain from sending their strong naval fleets to the Indian Ocean. Moreover, Douglas-Home's proposal had clearly implied Britain's acceptance of India as its true successor in the Indian Ocean. But, Indira Gandhi and Swaran Singh declined Sir Alec Douglas-Home's offer. These details of discussions were told me by Sir Alec Douglas-Home himself when I met him in London later.

From a long-term perspective, Indira Gandhi's rejection of the British offer was a grave mistake. If India had seized that opportunity and

accepted the British offer in 1972, the Indian navy today would have been a world class navy. However, India missed that opportunity. It was after India's rejection of the British offer that Britain allowed the United States to build a naval base in Diego Garcia.

Although the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s saw the presence of super power navies and navies of other big powers like Britain, France and Germany, in the Indian Ocean, India did not feel any threat to its security from them mainly because none of these powers had entertained any basic hostility towards India.

The Defining Factors

The defining factors of India's security environment are its territorial disputes with Pakistan and China which are legacies of Jawaharlal Nehru. For amicably settling India's territorial problem with Pakistan – i.e. the Kashmir problem – India got two opportunities in 1970s. The first serious opportunity India got for it was immediately after the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war on the liberation of Bangladesh, when Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to India and met the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at Simla and negotiated the release of 96,000 Pakistani Prisoners of War in India. Though an amicable solution to the Kashmir issue was discussed at that time, which revolved around the conversion of the Line of Control in Kashmir into India's international border with Pakistan, the negotiations led to a deadlock. A formal statement of the failure of talks between the two Prime Ministers was also made. It was indicated that there would be one more round of meeting between the two Prime Ministers after Bhutto went back home to consult his colleagues in Islamabad on the

solution of the Kashmir issue. But, in an unexpected way, at an one-to-one meeting prior to their departure from Simla, Indira Gandhi gave in to a bluff of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and suddenly agreed to release 96,000 Pakistani prisoners of war without solving the Kashmir issue. Another round of negotiations with Bhutto later, while keeping the Pakistani POWs in the Indian custody, would have solved the Kashmir problem amicably for ever. But, Indira Gandhi wasted that opportunity.

Morarji Desai and Zia-ul-Haq

The second serious opportunity came during the Janata Party government, led by Prime Minister Morarji Desai. Atal Behari Vajpayee was the Foreign Minister. Morarji Desai once narrated to me an inside story. He said that once he got a report from the Indian intelligence sources that the Pakistani President, General Zia-ul-Haq, was planning to increase the size of the Pakistan Army. He did not leave the matter to the diplomatic channels to deal with. He picked up the telephone and dialled to Zia-ul-Haq and asked him directly: "General, why you want a large army for Pakistan? It Pakistan is in trouble, you tell me. My army will be at your disposal". Zia was thrilled and stunned. He could not believe that he was listening to the voice of the Indian Prime Minister who was promising him the Indian Army's support to defend Pakistan ! That day, the Pakistani president became a great admirer of Morarji Desai. He trusted Morarji Desai's words and gave up his plan to expand the Pakistan army.

This episode also gives an indication to why Zia-ul-Haq conferred "Nishan – e – Pakistan", the highest honour in Pakistan, equivalent to Bharat Ratna in

India, on Morarji Desai. It is my conviction that if Morarji Desai government continued in power for the expected 5 years, the Kashmir problem would have been amicably settled for ever. But that process was not allowed to mature since the Desai government was pulled down by Indira Gandhi prematurely, when that government was only half-way through its tenure.

Pakistan – a Potential Friend

Despite these missed opportunities to amicably solve the Kashmir problem, I am optimistic about the close friendship, and even closer partnership, between India and Pakistan. If we make a hard assessment of the future course of Indo–Pak relationship, despite its present nuclear missile development and the Chinese meddling in its affairs, it would be a grave mistake to treat Pakistan, or consider Pakistan, as India’s enemy or potential enemy. On the other hand, a hard assessment would show that Pakistan is India’s potential friend, and should be treated accordingly. It may be remembered that in 1962, during the Chinese attack on India, Pakistan adopted a stand helpful to India. Indeed, Pakistan’s security should also be a matter of India’s concern. It is my conviction that before long India and Pakistan would pool their destinies together, and march forward hand-in-hand by giving more content to their symbiotic existence. The subterranean warmth and affection that permeate the relationship between the peoples of India and Pakistan, which often becomes exuberant when people visit their brethren on the other side of the border, or when they meet abroad, in a third country, which I have experienced myself on many occasions, is a pointer to the new relationship that beckon the two countries in the coming years.

Therefore, despite their occasional unpleasant posturings, India and Pakistan do not pose any serious long-term security threat to each other. If India follows the Gujral Doctrine, or the “pooling of destinies” framework which I have proposed, in the nurturing of our relationship with all our neighbours in the sub-continent, including Pakistan, it will yield rich dividends for India, including their distancing from any outside power, like China for example, which tries to use them as pawns against India.

China’s Border Dispute with India

But China’s territorial dispute with India comes under an entirely different category, which has a dangerous potential since this dispute is an extension of China’s expansionist trait. In the present day world, China is the only country which still shows an insatiable appetite for expansionism. Its leadership refuses to learn any lesson from history, that all imperial buildups – from the Roman Empire down to the USSR – which had pursued expansionism for some time, had become victims of the same policy, and collapsed under their own weight after some time. China will be no exception. Future will show. Yet, it contrives and manipulates alibis for expansion with territories of neighbouring countries.

Expansionism is an integral part of China’s priorities. The first thing China did after the revolution in 1949 was to put its expansionist agenda into action; and within a year, in 1950, launched an attack on the neighbouring Tibet and occupied that country, and forced the Dalai Lama in 1959 to flee from Tibet. At that time itself, in 1950, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel had marked China as India’s ‘potential enemy’.

After a few years, China raised territorial disputes with all its other neighbouring countries like India, Japan, Vietnam, and Russia and had launched a defence modernisation programme to build up its army, navy, air force and missile systems to realise its expansionist ambitions.

With India, China refused to accept the McMahon Line as India’s border with Tibet, disputed its 4000 km border with India, and fought a war with India in 1962 and annexed about 38,000 sq kms of Indian territory. In addition, it has made a ridiculous claim over another 1,000 sq kms of oil rich areas of the Indian State Arunachal Pradesh, and refuses Chinese Visas to the people living there. It has raised objections to the visits of the Indian Prime Minister and other Ministers to Arunachal Pradesh. China has occupied the Aksai–Chin area in Ladakh and has refused to recognise Jammu and Kashmir as part of India. For the people of Jammu and Kashmir, China issues only stapled visas. It distributes Indian maps without showing Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh in it.

In recent years China has built up a huge logistic infrastructure in Tibet, including roads, rail-roads, airfields, missile–launching sites, etc, to make Tibet as a safe launching pad of attack on India, and gained a capacity to deploy its troops and military hardware right upto India’s border regions at short-notice. Adjacent to Tibet, in Delingha, in the Quinghai province of China, China has built up more than 60 nuclear missile launching pads, for launching medium range nuclear ballistic missiles against India. In Delingha, China has positioned its DF–21 medium–range nuclear ballistic missiles which have a range of 2150 kms. All north Indian cities come within the firing range of these

medium-range nuclear ballistic missiles positioned in Delingha.

China in the Indian Ocean

These land-based Chinese military preparations against India in the North – in Tibet and in Quinghai province of China – is complemented by its gaining foothold and port facilities for the Chinese Navy in several littoral states of the Indian Ocean, in the South, in an attempt to sandwich India and intimidate New Delhi to accept China's territorial claims on India. Politically, China has cultivated several Indian Ocean littoral states like Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Seychelles and Pakistan in India's neighbourhood, and infused considerable anti-India feelings in them. It has bolstered up Pakistan against India, even by clandestinely helping Pakistan to become a nuclear Weapon State, and often uses Pakistani leaderships as its pawns to checkmate India everywhere in the international arena. It has built up a highway connecting Xinjiang with the Gwadar Port in Pakistan, there by has made a direct opening to the Arabian Sea. Similarly, China is trying to make another direct opening to the Bay of Bengal through the Chittagong Port in Bangladesh.

India cannot and should not remain complacent over these systematic unfriendly moves of China. But, it seems that India did not do much, diplomatically or strategically, to counter these anti-Indian activities of China. New Delhi did not do much even when China did the gravest anti-Indian act of clandestinely assisting Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme, to prop up Pakistan against India in the nuclear field.

Reportedly, even border roads building on the Indian side of the

Indo-Tibetan border has suffered a grievous neglect since 1962, on the basis of an obviously foolish, unstated, strategy that if India built border roads right up to the front-line, it would help the Chinese to easily come down to the South and occupy more Indian territory! Whether such an approach is in vogue or not, someone knowledgeable from the government of India should explain. However, it is reported that because of this approach, some of our 'border roads' end 60 to 80 kms away from the border, making it impossible for India to take its troops to the border instantly in short notice. That is not a satisfactory situation for India.

Phoney Border Talks

Simultaneously, China has engaged India, since 1981, in phoney talks on the border question, in a boomerang style, without conceding anything. It is a highly deceptive exercise to hoodwink India. No wonder, that after 15 rounds of border talks between senior officials of both countries, the negotiators have not yet touched the core issue – the demarcation of the border. However, it seems that the on-going boomerang game China plays with the Indian negotiators on the border issue, along with the intermittent Chinese acrobatics, in the form of LAC violations here and there, to test the water, may culminate in another serious border conflict, at a time of the Chinese choice, for which China seems to be clandestinely preparing, to force the border issue, and settle it on Chinese terms. The present Chinese moves in the Indian Ocean littoral States, seem to be part of that preparation. The Chinese involvement in the port constructions in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the military base China is seeking in Seychelles, etc, are parts of that

scheme. Therefore, the real serious security threat to India is from China, and not from any other country, including Pakistan.

Proposals

The question is how to meet this challenge to India's Security. The military response to it is a matter for the military planners and strategic experts in India's Defence Ministry to ponder over. At the same time, certain policy changes at the political level are also called for. 30 years ago, in 1984, at an International Conference on Indian Ocean Studies, held in Perth in Australia, I made a proposal that, instead of following a narrowly defined objective of the Indian diplomacy for "improving" India's bilateral relations with South Asian countries, India, and other countries of South Asia – including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan – should strive to pool their destinies together – i.e. 'a sink or sail together' approach – and free themselves from a suspicion based bilateral relationships. Of course, it requires a more generous, humanist approach, anchored in solidarity, on the part of India, while dealing with people's problems in the Indian Sub-continent. The dynamism embedded in such a policy, would release a lot of new resources for people's welfare and, at the same time, would naturally deny space for interlopers to meddle with, and vitiate, the bilateral relationships between countries of South Asia. It would result in a new resurgent and more cohesive Indian sub-continent, which can match any power centre in the world, and, at the same time, achieve a high rank in the scale of human development Index.

The scheme I have in mind, in this context, is the example of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik, pursued

in West Germany from 1966, with a higher level of humanitarian content in dealing with countries in the immediate neighbourhood, which fructified in 1990 and erased the barriers between the two Germanies, and also changed the perception of international relationship in the whole Europe. India's policy makers often talk about "going an extra-mile" in India's dealings with our neighbours in South Asia. To my mind, this is an inadequate framework. The right frame work is : "pooling the destinies" of countries of South Asia. Pakistan should be an integral part of this framework.

There are two other China specific policy changes which New Delhi should bring about with immediate effect.: 1) India should extend moral support to the ongoing freedom struggle in Tibet; and 2) India should stop supporting People's Republic of China's 'One China' policy.

Maharashtra Cabinet on Wednesday approved a Rs. 10-crore scheme to enable upgrade of the infrastructure of madrasas in the state, which provide education to nearly two lakh Muslim children. The BJP and Shiv Sena have, however, opposed the scheme, calling it another instance of minority appeasement....Madrasas, which are mostly funded through community initiatives, generally impart some form of basic and religious education. Under the new scheme, madrasas registered with the Charity Commissioner or the Waqf Board will be eligible to seek a fund of up to Rs. 5 lakh every year.

-The Indian Express,

The Arithmetic of Infinite Appeasement

Abdul Khaliq

The ordinary Muslim dreads the period just prior to the announcement of elections because that is when his community is pulled out from the margins and brought centre stage to become the plaything for the cynical opportunism, power games and vote calculations of the two competing camps - the right wing Hindutva nationalists on the one hand and the so-called secular formations on the other. That is also when the genie of sops and screams of appeasement rend the air. Creating a permanent rift between communities and isolating the Muslim has been the barely disguised policy of the BJP camp. What is disturbing is that the central government which allegedly represents the secular forces is also tacitly abetting polarisation of communities in the hope of garnering minority support.

Last fortnight the government announced that it proposes to provide legal assistance to those who have been jailed on grounds of prima facie 'doubtful' charges in terror cases. Predictably, the BJP has termed this as appeasement of Muslims, even those who are terrorists. The government decision not only begs the real issues but is also a dishonest, cynical ploy to fracture relations between the two communities and reap unholy dividends. Instead of taking measures to ensure that the investigating agencies do not wrongfully implicate innocent citizens, the government has shown its phony concern for Muslims with this meaningless but dangerous gesture; meaningless because the law in any case provides that every

accused should be given legal aid and dangerous because it has provided fodder to the BJP to drive a wedge between communities.

Not to be outdone in the murky game of vote bank politics that gives the veneer of substantial help to a particular group but actually dispenses no special privilege, the UP government last week announced earmarking of 20 per cent of welfare scheme funds for Muslims. The fact that the welfare schemes such as NREGA, National Rural Health Mission, Indira Awaas Yojana, etc. are nowhere linked to caste or community but are based essentially on economic criteria makes the proposal an exercise in sheer duplicity. It may be recalled that the Samajwadi Party, earlier on, in its manifesto had promised a reservation of 18 per cent in government jobs for Muslims. We are yet to see or hear any progress in the matter. One only hopes that Muslims see through the arrant absurdities and wicked motives that inform these proposals

There are other examples of the Central government using Muslims in the guise of helping them. Its opportunistic decision to provide 4.5 per cent specific quota for Minorities within the overall 27 per cent quota for OBCs in government jobs and IITs coincided with the UP elections last year. The notification remained frozen as an unimplemented pious intention as it was struck down the by the Supreme Court. Clearly a charade, it was known all along that without legislative endorsement the

executive order was bad in law. In any case, with certain categories of Muslims already treated as OBCs, this decision would have made little difference to the job prospects of Muslims. But the unhappy upshot is that it has poisoned relations between Muslims and other OBCs.

The ruling party's hypocrisy and tokenism is apparent from the fact that it sought to fiddle with aspects of reservation that have already factored in Muslims, but has been dragging its feet on the unacceptable discrimination against Dalit Christians and Muslims. This is an issue in which the lofty principle enunciated in Article 15 of the Constitution prohibiting any discrimination on grounds of religion has been blatantly abused by the law makers themselves. The denial of Scheduled Caste (SC) status to SC Christians and Muslims constitutes the worst form of discrimination. The only argument against giving this status to them is that SCs who convert to these religions no longer face any social stigma. Nothing can be more untrue. The great Mahatma who knew this country and its people better than anyone else had this to say on the subject: "Whether the Harijan is nominally a Christian, Hindu, and Muslim or Sikh, he is still a Harijan. He can't change his spots from Hinduism. He may change his garb and call himself a Catholic harijan or a Muslim harijan or a Neo-Sikh, his untouchability will haunt him in his lifetime". Can the Constitution of this great land be tainted by endorsing this blatant discrimination? The Constitutional amendments, as interpreted by our lawmakers, bear an uncanny resemblance to the philosophy of our home-grown right-wing Hindutva fundamentalists. A key concept propagated by one of the leading

ideologues of the fundamentalists explicitly distinguishes between followers of indigenous religions from those that originated elsewhere. Muslims and Christians are foreigners in India which rightly belongs to the adherents of religions born here. Tragically, a similar mindset is evident in the denial of SC status to SC Muslims and Christians while granting this concession to SC Buddhists and Sikhs.

The Congress has time and again been guilty of playing footsie with 'soft' Hindutva. It will be recalled that in the 1980s, the Rajiv Gandhi government, having catered to Muslim 'appeasement' in the Shah Bano case, sought to rectify the balance by throwing open the doors of the Babri Masjid to the Hindus for worship of Lord Ram, whose idol was installed inside the mosque in 1949. That was the starting point of a chain of events that ultimately destroyed the Babri Masjid. In the same amoral cynical manner, the present government surreptitiously hanged Afzal Guru earlier this year with the clear intent of taking the wind out of the sails of the BJP's persistent refrain of minority appeasement in not executing him. That he was hanged before the Supreme Court delivered its judgement on executing prisoners, including Guru, who had served inordinately long prison sentences; that he was not one of the attackers of Parliament; that he did not kill anybody; that he was held guilty of being an accomplice not on the basis of direct proof but on 'circumstantial evidence', are critical issues of justice that were considered subordinate to satisfying 'the collective conscience of the nation'. However, the mass conscience is not similarly outraged by the fact that Rajiv Gandhi's Hindu assassins continue to escape

the gallows. Owaisi is sent to jail for his hate-filled speech but the archetypal apostle of hate, Praveen Togadia roams free to spew venom against the Muslim community. More hurtful than anything else, the fight against terrorism is deeply tainted with religious overtones. Scores of innocent Muslims have been arrested and tortured only because of their religious affiliations. Such colossal injustice has become routine in the life of the nation and is seen as normal 'collateral damage' in the fight against terrorism. Can you blame Muslims if they harbour the thought that all men are equal but some are more equal? They are distraught at the selective application of the law.

For decades the BJP's theme song is that Muslims are a pampered favoured community who have embraced group privilege at the expense of the majority. The absolute hollowness of this vicious myth is poignantly reflected in the socio-economic plight of the community. Muslims languish on the margins of society at the bottom of the ladder, almost at par with the Dalits. A recent government survey conducted by the NSSO has noted that among various religious groups, Muslims have the lowest living standard with an average per capita expenditure of a mere Rs. 32.66 per day as compared to Rs.37.5 for Hindus, Rs. 51.43 for Christians and Rs. 53.30 for Sikhs. Accused of being government's 'damads' (sons-in-law), Muslims constitute less than 6 per cent of the staff strength in the Central Government. In fact a recent NSSO study reveals that the recruitment of minorities in government jobs including PSUs, paramilitary forces and public sector banks has actually dropped from 7.25 per cent in 2009-10 to 6.24

per cent in 2011-12. The most recent report of the National Monitoring Committee for Minorities Education (NMCME 2013) shows that Muslims have the lowest literacy rate among communities at 59 per cent against the national average of 65 per cent. In urban areas, the illiterate percentage of Muslims is 42.9 per cent for males and 50.5 per cent for females against the national average of 27.7 per cent and 36.5 per cent respectively. There is damning evidence to show that the State has failed to foster an effective, unbiased and inclusive system that could facilitate an adequate presence of Muslims in educational, professional and vocational institutions. On account of communalisation of the public space, Muslims are not able to access all the opportunities available, leading to their continuing isolation and ghettoisation.

Muslims want to bridge the distance between communities, not exacerbate it. They are heartily sick of the politics that uses secularism as a cloak of convenience. Like their fellow countrymen they know that for a united, equal and just society, they need to cross the religious divide and care for one another as brothers. As a troubled, besieged community, they are painfully aware that the communalism of one group feeds on the communalism of the other. Rather than being given nominal group privileges, they want a level playing field in education, in the job market, when looking for accommodation or when an act of terrorism takes place. To modify what Martin Luther King said in the American context, the Muslims hope that they will not be unfairly judged by their religious identity but truly judged by the content of their character.

A Macroeconomic View of the National Food Security Bill

Arun Kumar

The National Food Security Bill (NFSB) has been contentious. Economic arguments have been presented against it confusing the public. The rich farmers are worried that farm prices would fall because cheap food would find its way into the markets. Businessmen argue that the economy would further slow down with an increase in the burden on the Budget. The elite say that subsidies and inflation would rise sharply due to profligacy. Unfortunately, most of these arguments are based on a partial economic perspective which ignores the full impact of the economic processes that the scheme would set into motion.

There is legitimate concern about corruption, diversion of food and the problems associated with the implementation of the provisions of the Bill. No doubt, given the state of governance in large parts of the country, the full implementation of the provisions of the Bill would take many years. Given that the Congress party may lose politically by bringing in the scheme so close to the next general elections, those whose expectations would remain unfulfilled by the time the elections are held would be disappointed. The moot question is: should corruption be the reason for not implementing what may be a good policy? Should the allotment of spectrum or of coal mines be stopped because there has been corruption in these cases? Can the baby be thrown out with the bathwater?

The case for the NFSB is a macroeconomic one. The nation

has the responsibility to feed its citizens. However, due to a lack of incomes and the choices sometimes made by the individuals because of the social pressures, many are unable to buy enough food for their family and that is why there is hunger and malnourishment. Thus, hunger is not an individual problem but has its roots in the country's macroeconomics. For instance, it depends on the nature of employment generation, the distribution of incomes, investment policies, global factors in an increasingly open economy (including consumerism), production technology encouraged by policies, position of agriculture in the economy and the related issue of terms of trade between agriculture and the other sectors. None of these factors can be changed by individual efforts.

The government, through its policies, determines these macroeconomic factors. Since the launch of the New Economic Policies in 1991, the problem of unemployment, distribution of incomes and so on has got aggravated and worsened the situation of the marginalised in society. Hence in spite of growth, hunger persists. The government is the only entity that can provide the correctives and ameliorate hunger. In this sense, the NFSB is only a corrective to the market-oriented policies currently being pursued and does not resolve the fundamental economic problem of lack of adequate incomes of the poor.

Those who would benefit from the cheap foodgrain provided under the NFSB will get an additional income since they will buy a given amount of food for less. This would leave some money for buying other goods and services including more protein and vegetables. This amount could be substantial since 50 per cent-60 per cent of the budget of the poor is spent on food. If it is assumed that 50 crore people were already benefiting from various State level schemes under which they were getting cheap food, an additional 30 crore people would get the cheaper food and buy not only more food but more of other items of consumption. This would help reduce poverty in the country.

In the present situation of a demand slow-down and a falling rate of economic growth, there would be a stimulus to the economy. This boost would be strong since little of the additional demand would leak out of the economy as happens with the additional incomes of the well-off. Further, there could be additional requirements of infrastructure for storage and distribution of the additional food and this would result in more investment and, therefore, spur growth.

The implication also would be that the rate of inflation for the poor would fall. The total consumption of food would rise leading to an increase in the free market price of foodgrains. That would hurt those not covered by the NFSB and for them the rate of inflation would rise. The lower middle classes would be hurt but the others with inflation indexation can adjust to it. However, the immediate rise in inflation would be small since the government already has huge stocks of foodgrains which, when released in the market, would moderate the price rise. As of March 1, the food

stocks were 62.8 million tonnes and with the procurement in the new season these would have increased to above 80 million tonnes while the buffer stock norm for July 1 is only 27 million tonnes. Thus, there is a lot of cushion to keep prices in check. But, as the extra stocks above the statutory requirement get exhausted in a few years, the prices would rise. To check this, the government would have to pursue policies to encourage an increase in output rather than resort to fire-fighting later on.

The higher free market price would lead to a higher price for the farmers and this could lead to an increase in supply. This would also mean that the government would have to give a higher support price to the farmers to be able to procure additional amount for expanded distribution. This would further incentivise the farmers to produce more.

Some argue that the poor do not need more foodgrains but require other items of food. This is only partially correct. Foodgrain availability (proxy for consumption) in India peaked in 1991 at 510 gm per person per day and declined after that (in 2001 by 18 per cent). This has been attributed to a shift in the consumption pattern. However, whenever the monsoons have been bountiful and food prices have dropped, consumption has gone back to around 500 gm.

This suggests that the consumption pattern may have shifted some but a lot of people are unable to buy adequate amount of foodgrains when the prices rise. The well-off consume more of foodgrains indirectly through consumption of animal protein but their consumption is hardly sensitive to prices since they have enough income. Thus, the fall in availability

of foodgrains when the prices rise is a reflection of the squeeze of the consumption of the poor. The NFSB would help the poor by making their consumption independent of inflation. The implication also is that the current high foodgrain stocks are not an indication of food self-sufficiency in the country but of inadequate purchasing power of the poor. Further, as the NFSB gets implemented, India may have to import foodgrains unless the production rises.

It is estimated that the subsidy bill on food would rise to more than Rs 1,24,000 crores (around one per cent of the GDP). The additional amount over and above what is being currently spent may be around Rs 35,000 crores. This is insignificant compared to the Rs 5.5 lakh crores of tax expenditures (a kind of subsidy) given to the well-off in society or the revenue loss of Rs 20 lakh crores due to the black economy. The question then is: who should be subsidised? The choice should clearly be in favour of the poor. There will be additional expenditures on storage and other infrastructure. But, the total requirement of storage could decline since foodgrains would be distributed rather than held in the open where they rot adding to the subsidy burden. The losses of the FCI should decline since the food distributed would get some revenue, even if small, as opposed to its complete write-off when it rots and correspondingly the subsidy element could fall.

The real problem would be corruption and identification and delivery to the additional families to be covered. That is why some suggest cash transfer using the UIDAI cards. Examples of Brazil

(Continued on Page 16)

Dr Raghuvansh (1921-2013)

Noted Hindi critic and litterateur, a disciple of Acharya Narendra Deva and a close associate of Dr Rammanohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Raghuvansh passed away on 23rd August 2013 after a prolonged illness in New Delhi.

Dr Raghuvansh was born on 30th June 1921 at Gopamau village in Hardoi district of Uttar Pradesh. His father Ram Sahai was known for his expertise in Persian and Urdu languages and traditional *shairi* sessions.

Raghuvansh received his initiation in socialist ideology from none other than Acharya Narendra Deva at the age of 15. That got him into the thick of the freedom movement. By the 1940s, Raghuvansh was writing political pieces for various publications.

Allahabad-based Dr Raghuvansh was celebrated lexicographer, critic, and litterateur, sharing prestigious Hindi literary honours with stalwarts like Mahadevi Verma, Vijay Dev Narain Sahi, Laxmikant Verma and Dharamveer Bharti. Born with deformities in both arms and hands, a sudden flash of intuition told him that he could write with his toes. He hasn't stopped since.

A former head of department of Hindi at Allahabad University, he was credited with pioneering new trends in Hindi criticism besides delving deep into the culture of humanity. A staunch Lohiaite, Raghuvansh was also lauded for his articles on India's language policy.

Co-editor of Hindi Sahitya Kosh, the monumental and only encyclopedia of Hindi literature, the creative instinct in Dr

Raghuvansh has taken him from ancient dramaturgy to political analyses, human relationships, travelogues and critiques of modern Hindi poetry. He was of the view that modernity is a continuous process in creative writing, which informed his work "Adhunikta aur Srijanshilata", a collection of 16 essays, comments on modernity, creativity, poetic sensibility and individual freedom. But what was closest to his heart was his doctoral thesis "Manaviya Sanskritika Rachnatmak Ayaam" (The Creative Dimension of Human Culture)—a complex thread that weaves itself through the entire conversation, eluding comprehension at times. Is he speaking of Humanism? No - he detested the word. "There is no 'ism' involved here," he asserts. "Humanity has its intrinsic culture and I believe in the individual value system rather than the individual."

His disillusionment with politics began when political workers proceeded towards an era of power politics. By 1950 he was totally divorced from politics, preferring to engage himself in a kind of intellectual catharsis by a spate of furious writing aided by his close friendship with the matriarch of Hindi literature, Mahadevi Verma.

The range and depth of his work is stunning. It was easier to engage him on his fiction. "Tantujal", written in 1958, went into three editions. The plot reveals yet another facet of the litterateur's mind - his belief that a man and woman can share pure friendship without the element of sex entering into it. It is an attempt to demolish popular theories that a very thin line divides the platonic

from the sexual. Did this thinking spring from dormant youthful fears of rejection by women? He throws his wife Savitri a bashful look and admits: "I was initially totally against marriage. Today I do analyse it as fear of rejection. But when the proposal came, I told Savitri if I was in her place I wouldn't have married me." It's curious that barring his wife and daughter, he and his three sons seem to use just one name each. He had renounced his surname a long time ago because it denoted caste and status.

He received the Sahitya Bhushan, the K.K. Birla Foundation's Shankar Award for the greatest contribution in the field of culture and the first Jan Nayak award instituted by the Bihar state government. His projects include an analysis of Gandhi's social thinking.

A memorial meeting was held in his honour in New Delhi on 30th August at the Speaker hall of Constitution Club where speakers after speakers paid rich tribute to him, most of them being Hindi writers like Vishwnath Tripathi, Nityanad Tiwari, Prof. Ajit Kumar, Ganga Prasad Vimal, and Prof. Rajkumar Jain.

Prof. Devi Prasad Tripathi of Nationalist Congress Party, a Member of Rajya Sabha, who organized and conducted the memorial meeting described Dr Raghuvansh as a great Hindi litterateur, committed to the socialist ideology and human values. Former Union Minister and senior BJP leader and his colleague at Allahabad University, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi also paid him tribute.

(Continued from Page 1)

crematoria grounds sooner or later. The Vanzara exposure comes at a bad time for the BJP and the Gujarat government. What he did to counter the jihadi menace, he says in his defence, was done with the explicit sanction and encouragement of the Gujarat government. The Gujarat model of development was possible only because of the sacrifices of Vanzara and his officers in thwarting the onslaught of initial disorder in the state. Vanzara once adored Modi like a god. But the god failed since he did not rise to the occasion but fell under the evil influence of Amit Shah. Whatever the merit of this sentiment, the fact remains that the Gujarat government's credibility stands eroded. Its claims that the fake encounters were real encounters targeting terrorists has no basis. The courts trying the fake encounter cases will no doubt take serious note of Vanzara's disclosure that staging encounters was part of official policy. The truth or falsehood of this claim has to be established. Thanks to Vanzara's breaking his long "graceful" silence, the world has a new insight into the games Modi plays. Stories of fake encounters in Gujarat will be taken with a pinch of salt in future and the public will no more be expected to be as gullible as before.

(Continued from Page 14)

and other countries are mentioned but the recent public demonstrations in Brazil point to the prevailing corruption there. It is not obvious that the UIDAI would be free of corruption. Ingenuity of the Indian elite has fostered corruption in

whatever scheme is launched. There is much corruption in transfer of money through banks and post offices. Already corruption cases are surfacing with regard to fictitious cards, etc. even when the scheme is not yet operational. Further, cash transfer may not lead to expenditure on food but diversion to other wasteful expenditures. That danger exists even when cheap food is given but it would be less than with cash transfer.

[This is an enlarged version of the article on the subject in Hindustan Times on August 21, 2013. —A.K.]

Opposition to the Jaitapur Nuclear Power project continues

Some individual members of Janahit Seva Samiti and others have met the industry minister Shri Narayan Rane today and submitted a letter saying they are willing to accept the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project. We wish to clarify unequivocally that Janahit Seva Samiti is not party to this decision.

The people of Madban, Jaitapur and Sakhari Nate and other project-affected villages and the other organizations were not involved nor consulted by the concerned individuals regarding this development at any point.

The Fukushima Nuclear disaster has now been declared as a permanent level 3 nuclear disaster. The radiation released

is continuing uncontrollably and indefinitely into ground water and surrounding ocean. We are determined that another Fukushima will not be allowed to threaten or happen in the biodiversity-rich Konkan region. The NPCIL or the state government have never been able to justify this project, or answer satisfactorily any of the scientific objections related to environmental, technical, and economic aspects raised by us from time to time.

The mass opposition to the Jaitapur Nuclear Power project based on sound scientific points will continue on various fronts with more rigour in the coming days, unaffected by this development.

*Janhit Seva Samiti Shyamsundar Narvekar
Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti, Ratnagiri Amjad Borkar
Konkan Bachao Samiti, Dr. Vivek Monteiro, Adwait Pednekar,
Arun Velaskar, Ravi Joshi, Madhu Mohite, Mangesh Chavan
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Development Strategy**
Arun Kumar

Call it crime, not superstition
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There is much cause for satisfaction in the relatively speedy trial and conviction in what has come to be known as the Nirbhaya rape case. The conviction on all counts by a Delhi fast track court last week of the four adult rapists of the 23-year-old physiotherapy student in the national capital in December last year will come as a relief to the family of the victim. It took nine months for the judgment to come; but for the establishment of a fast track court the proceedings may have lasted years if not decades. Thousands of criminal assault and attacks against women are awaiting trial in various courts of the country. It is

doubtful if a fast track court would have been set up at all if the rape episode had not stirred up the nation's conscience and goaded the authorities to act fast. Nothing in the past evoked nation-wide anger and resentment as the attack on a helpless woman and her friend, both of whom were victims of a brutally executed crime. The verdict will be widely welcomed, not only by the victims' families but by all those who have waged a relentless battle for making India a safer place for its women and children, as a fitting punishment for a brutal crime.

A positive outcome of the arousal of national conscience in the Nirbhaya case was the enactment of amendments to existing laws aimed at bringing justice to victims. The amended law is aimed at ensuring capital punishment for heinous crimes. Of course, tightening laws can at best act as a deterrent but even with the toughest laws in force there is no guarantee that women and children will lead a safer life. Capital punishment does act as a deterrence, but the adoption of death penalty as a State policy is enmeshed in a wider debate that has polarized public opinion. Many countries provide for death penalty for heinous crimes, but equally, many countries regard life imprisonment as an adequate punishment. India has stopped short of providing for death penalty by its recent tightening of laws, providing for maximum punishment in rarest of rare cases and hastening trials and verdicts.

The larger question whether the death penalty and stiff punishments deter criminals and reduce the incidence of rapes and attacks on women remains. There can be no definitive answer. Even after the Nirbhaya case evoked monumental anger, rape cases continue to be

Between the lines

The problem of Kashmir

Kuldip Nayar

reported from the national capital and other parts of the country. For every reported case, there must be many unreported cases. Most incidents of rape in rural areas go unreported. Besides, criminals and felons benefit a great deal from police apathy and corruption. In other words, the law does not strike terror into the hearts of criminals. The police-criminal nexus is often too strong to be broken in villages.

Additionally, and especially in rural areas, the belief is widely prevalent that it is easy to escape prosecution and punishment if the perpetrator has enough influence and/or political clout. It is against this background that one would like to understand the findings of the just-released UN study of the reasons why men commit rape. The study covered 10,000 men in South and East Asia for the first time. Nearly one out of four men in Asia admitted to having committed a rape. Marital rape was by far the most common type. An important finding relevant

to the common beliefs among perpetrating criminals says: "To prevent violence from occurring in the first place it is equally vital to address social norms that make violence against women acceptable, including men's belief that they have the right to sex within marriage, and promote nonviolent and caring ways to be a man."

Zubin Mehta, before leaving for Srinagar to conduct his orchestra, said: "There will be no violence." German Ambassador Michael Steiner, who facilitated the concert, said at Srinagar that the world was watching Kashmir. Both observations have a ring of truth. The success of concert has proved that.

If New Delhi has been able to put across a message, the Hurriyat leaders have to blame themselves. They, also known as the separatists, unnecessarily made the concert an issue by playing up their boycott. If they had ignored the event, it would have passed without much notice. This was not the first concert. The late Jagajit Singh gave a gazal programme in the heart of Srinagar.

A band from Pakistan played at Srinagar the other day. New Delhi was wise enough to treat it as a routine matter and gave the musicians visas. Nobody took any notice of it. The media too paid no heed. The Hurriyat, still equivocal about its demand for *azaadi*, voiced no protest against the Pakistan band. This only underlined the impression that the Hurriyat tended to tilt towards Pakistan.

The Hurriyat is a divided house. Some, led by Syed Shah Gillani, want the state to 'join' Pakistan. And the others, led by Yasin Malik, demand *azaadi*. Then there are those who are confused. Not long ago, when most Kashmiris, alienated from India as they are, favoured the integration with Pakistan, the

Kashmiris would have voted for Pakistan if there had been a plebiscite. Today, a preponderant majority of Kashmiris, want *azaadi*. Yasin Malik has been able to veer them round from being pro-Pakistan elements to making them accept the demand for an independent, sovereign state.

Yet what the Hurriyat does not realize is that *azaadi* is an ideal, not a feasible proposition. When the British left India in August 1947, they gave the princely states an option to stay independent if they did not want to join either India or Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh, the then Jammu and Kashmir ruler, declared that he would stay independent. The land-locked state had to have the support of both India and Pakistan for access to the outside world. He did not want to depend on one.

With the Muslims in a majority in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan expected its accession. When it did not take place, Pakistan sent its irregulars, backed by the regular troops. The Maharaja sought the help of India which insisted on accession before sending its troops. He had to sign the Instrument of Accession Act.

The task of the Hurriyat is more difficult than that of the Maharaja. The two parts of the states are against *azaadi*. Jammu, the Hindu majority part, would like to join India. The Buddhist majority Ladakh, the other part, want to be a union territory of India. Therefore

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the demand for *azaadi* is essentially that of the valley which has nearly 98 percent of Muslims of the state.

When India is in the midst of endeavour for polarization and when a political party is playing a Hindu card, it is difficult to imagine that the ruling Congress or any other political party, including the Communists, would support the Hurriyat. Even otherwise, all political parties are opposed to the demand for independence, although some may go to the farthest in giving powers to the state.

After 66 years of partition, the wounds inflicted because of the division have not healed yet. How does the Hurriyat expect the people in India to reconcile to another partition, however genuine and strong are the sentiments of the Kashmiris? If partition is again on the basis of religion, the secular state may not survive as it is. True, the 15 crore Muslims in India are equal citizens and they cannot be treated as hostages. But the valley's secession may have such repercussions that are dreadful to imagine. The constitution, guaranteeing equality to all Indian citizens, may be of no avail.

India and Pakistan have fought two regular wars on Kashmir, apart from a mini misadventure in Kargil. The valley continues to remain part of the Jammu and Kashmir state. Several thousand Kashmiris have died for the cause of *azaadi*. For India, they were insurgents. They were crushed by the security forces which too lost thousands. Even now some militants from across the border attack some places but are rebuffed. For example, on the day of Zubin Mehta's concert, a post of Central Reserve Police Force in

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Judicial Danger

Bapu Heddurshetti

I am surprised to read the article 'Convicted MPs should quit' by Kuldip Nayar in this year's Independence Day number of Janata. There cannot be two opinions about cleaning the parliament of criminal elements. But the question is how it is to be accomplished. It would be dangerous to invite the Judiciary to come to the rescue since it is an undemocratic institution without any control by the people. Shri Nayar also misses another point. While the Supreme Court says that the Parliament cannot legislate to permit the convicted MPs and MLAs to continue as the representatives, it says that a Sessions Judge or a High Court judge can do so by staying the operation of the judgement. It means that what the Parliament cannot do, a Judge can do. Is the position acceptable to Shri Nayar?

If the case against Lalu Prasad Yadav is still dragging on, who is to blame? Is not the judiciary responsible? If only the Judiciary had decided the appeals of the convicted MPs and MLAs promptly and the decision had reached finality, then the present Judgement of the Supreme Court would not have been necessary as the MPs and MLAs would have quit in view of the conviction reaching finality. Judiciary cannot delay the proceedings and then find fault with the representatives of the people.

And then, if a convicted member has to quit as soon as he is convicted by a trial court, what would be the consequences? Since the appeal to the High Court and then to the Supreme Court take decades to be

decided, would the seat held by the convicted MP or MLA remain vacant till the appeal is decided or will a by-election be held? If a bye-election is held to fill the seat, what if the convicted MP's or MLA's appeal is allowed and the conviction is set aside after the bye-election is held? Will the person elected in his place have to resign or the convicted MP or MLA has to forego his seat for the mistake committed by the trial judge in convicting him? These questions will have to be seriously considered before responding to the Judgement of the Supreme Court. It would be worth while to remember that Shibu Soren was acquitted by the appeals court after 36 years in one case and a conviction in another cost him his berth in the Union Cabinet. Who should compensate for the loss he suffered due to the faulty judgement of the trial court convicting him? As there are many MPs and MLAs with charge sheets against them, we tend to brand them as criminals. We should not offer knee jerk reactions as the Supreme Court appears to have done in this case without seriously considering the pros and cons.

Shir Nayar is right that the Judiciary and the Parliament are on a war path. He says that the executive is not happy with the collegium system because "it gives little room for any patronage which the executive has in mind". But I would like to remind Shri Nayar of what Justice Ruma Pal, who was once a member of the said collegium said. She said "Consensus within the collegium is sometimes resolved through a trade-off resulting in dubious appointments

What Are Us Compulsions To Attack Syria?

Sandeep Pandey

with disastrous consequences for the litigants and the credibility of the judicial system. Besides institutional independence has also been compromised by growing sycophancy and 'lobbying', within the system" (*Janata*, November 20, 2011). While the collegium system gives little room to the executive for patronage, it has given ample room to the Judiciary to dispense patronage.

The Supreme Court went to the extent of declaring that Parliament had "exceeded its powers" while framing Section 8 (4) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. And this is what the editorial of the *Economic Times* has said: "The courts have banned iron ore mining, and are partly responsible for the weakness of the rupee, as non-export of ore and import of

steel have contributed to deterioration of the current account deficit. Rather than advancing the public good, judicial intervention in matters beyond its constitutional remit, as clarified by the court itself has caused immense harm to society at large. For judges of the court to presume to pronounce on policy is similar to priests deciding whether the sun goes around the earth or vice versa".

I am surprised that Shri Nayar is siding with an undemocratic institution like the judiciary which is not accountable to any one except its own conscience, which I am afraid it does not appear to have of late as its support to the Emergency proved, and not siding with a democratic institution like the parliament which, in spite of all its failures, is at least accountable to the people once in five years. However, the last paragraph of his article brings a sigh of relief to a reader like me.

The US President Barack Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009 for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy, cooperation between people, for promotion of nuclear nonproliferation and a new climate in international relations, especially in reaching out to the Muslim world and for his support to using established international bodies such as UN to pursue foreign policy goals.

Four years is too short a time for a person described above to undergo complete transformation. One important reason why people of the US elected him in the first place was because they had become tired of war policy of George Bush. They wanted peace. Barack Obama won approval of US people because he announced withdrawal of the US troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. He was seen as a man who would bring peace. And indeed he tried to reach out to the Muslim world.

But why is the same Obama now targeting a Muslim country and willing to ignore the UN decision making process like his predecessor did. Even his reason to attack is so similar to that of Bush. Bush lied to the world about presence of nuclear weapons in Iraq in spite of contrary reports from UN inspectors who went inside Iraq and IAEA. Now Obama wants the world to believe that Syrian government has used chemical weapons without waiting for confirmation from UN inspectors who have been sent to Syria. There are reports to the contrary that it is

the rebels who have used chemical weapons supplied by outsiders. And US is definitely supporting the fight of rebels. US wants to use the excuse of usage of chemical weapons in Syria to launch a military offensive. But the real objective is to bring about a regime change in that country. However, the Syrian President Bashar-Al-Assad is holding on for longer than the US had expected.

The impending US attack without a UN Security Council resolution would be illegal and morally indefensible. It'll be a demonstration of US authoritarianism and contempt for global opinion. The country which has yet to apologise for 1945 mass killings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki has apparently taken a position against weapons of mass destruction. US continues to possess the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons. The war in Iraq and Afghanistan has shown that even if weapons of mass destruction are not used there is heavy civilian casualty, which the US likes to call 'collateral' damage. The 'Cost of War project' of Brown University and Watson Institute estimates that out of 1,76,000-1,89,000 people killed in Iraq, 1,34,000 were civilians. In contrast, the number of US soldiers killed was roughly only 4,500. So, even if the US didn't use any weapons of mass destruction can there be any denying the fact that there was mass killing. The question that need to be asked is what right the US has got to take unilateral action against countries possessing weapons of mass destruction?

The Israeli testing of missiles in the midst of tension in West Asia is provocative, to say the least. In spite of Obama paying a lip service to the cause of Palestine, the US policy continues to protect the interests of Israeli state. The US and western forces have no right to meddle in the affairs of West Asia. The countries in this region should be given a chance to resolve their outstanding issues through dialogue. Or, it must be left to the people of these countries to decide what kind of rulers they would like to have. The revolution in a number of Arab countries has demonstrated that even people can bring about regime change if the government becomes unpopular. When people will be behind the regime change true democracy will prevail but if the regime change is artificially brought about by the US there would be no guarantee of the sustainability of the government as these governments will be perceived by people as puppets. In any case, Palestine must first be established as an independent country and Israel must be restrained. Why does the biggest champion of democracy not respect the wishes of people of Palestine? It also recently allowed the democratically elected government in Egypt to fall to a military coup. That the US has double standards is no secret now.

However, one must realise the US compulsions for going to war. The economy not very long back was in doldrums. The banks in a country which is the biggest champion of free market had to be bailed out by the government, which is unheard of. It is no secret that the health of military-industrial complex in the US is directly related to that of the economy. Hence, the best way to boost the US economy would be to cater to the military-industrial

Salute the survivor

Kalpna Sharma

As a journalist, a woman and a Mumbaikar, the dastardly rape by five men of a young woman journalist in Mumbai on August 22 was particularly jolting. Of course, every day rapes are reported; of young and old women and of little girls, of women in uniform, of women at work, of women at home, of women on their way to work, of women on their way home.

The day after this ghastly assault, a front-page story reported the gang rape of a policewoman in Jharkhand. And just in the vicinity of Mumbai, in Navi Mumbai, a 13-year-old boy was arrested for allegedly raping his five-year-old neighbour; in Mankhurd, a northeastern suburb of Mumbai, a 22-year-old man was charged with raping a 21-year-old woman; and in Pune, the body of an 11-year-old girl who had been raped and murdered was found.

Rapes are not a creation of the modern world. They have happened before. It is the tool men use to assert their power over women. It is a tool men use to assert their power over other men, by raping "their" women, especially in an arena of war and conflict, but even otherwise.

Today's rapes are no different. They have increased in number. They are reported. And a media, which has realised that readers have a vicarious interest in reading about crimes, is obliging by amplifying, selectively, a few of these crimes and acts of extreme violence against women. Pages and pages are devoted to detailed reports about one or two of these crimes, such as this recent incident.

What is different today is the way politics is being played out on the wounded bodies of women. One of the most distressing and distasteful aspects of the media's coverage of the Mumbai gang rape was the way it gave air time to politicians to hold forth, to score points against rivals, to demand resignations and to blame other communities. Maharashtra Navnirman Sena leader Raj Thackeray announced his absurd conclusion on prime time television that recent migrants to the city were responsible for the increase in crimes while also joining the chorus demanding the resignation of Maharashtra's Home Minister R. R. Patil.

The problem with this volume of hot air emanating from the talking heads on television talk shows is that it contributes to the pall of unreality that surrounds many issues in this country. It perpetuates the belief that there is a quick fix solution to every problem. One such quick fix is to insist that the home minister should resign. Of course, Maharashtra's Home Minister did not help his case by suggesting that every woman journalist on an assignment should take along some security. The suggestion was too absurd to even merit serious debate.

Every time there is a case like this which the media spotlights, we go over the same ground. We did it last December. We are doing it again. After some time, the news slips to the inside pages, and the questions that we should be asking are forgotten. Until the next time.

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The question that got asked before and needs to be addressed today is: How do we tackle the patriarchal mindset in this country that still views women as commodities? The men who raped the young journalist in Mumbai apparently called up their friends and used the word “maal” while referring to her.

It is this mindset that makes men pour acid and disfigure for life women who dare refuse their overtures. It is this mindset that compels even women to abort female foetuses rather than raise daughters. It is this mindset that views all women out in the public space as available, as targets, as women who must be taught a lesson.

The second issue is the culture of impunity that has come to prevail in this country. It begins at the top but has now permeated to every level. It is interesting that one of the men arrested for the Mumbai rape admitted that he never expected the survivor to report the rape.

It is this belief, that women will not report because of the shame society associates with their being sexually violated and, second, that even if they do nothing much will happen, that encourages those planning and contemplating such crimes. In this case, the young woman had her wits around her and gave a full statement to the police within hours of reaching the hospital. Also, she and her male colleague were able to describe their assailants in detail. Given the publicity around the crime, the government and the Mumbai police were compelled to move quickly and as a result the five alleged rapists have been arrested.

But we must remember that this is an exception; it is very far from

the norm. Until the systemic issues that prevent such crimes from being reported and investigated, and then prosecuted, are addressed, we will always only have exceptions. And if such crimes are only tackled in exceptional cases, then the culture of impunity will become even more embedded.

I write this when the Mumbai rape case is still on the front pages. What

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the southern Kashmir was targeted with rockets. There was a hartal at Srinagar. But this exercise has been gone over by many a time before.

Yet both countries signed an agreement in 1972 at Shimla to end hostilities. They pledged to sort out their disputes, including Kashmir, through bilateral talks. This has held the ground for the last 31 years. A few meetings between the two countries have been held since. By all means they should hold further talks on Kashmir. But they cannot fructify unless one of them changes its stance. New Delhi considers Kashmir as its integral part and Pakistan would like to have the valley to merge with it. The Hurriyat continues to expect a solution which does not seem possible. Six decades have gone by. There is yet nothing on the horizon. International opinion is mute, and it has left the matter for the two countries to settle.

The Hurriyat has to introspect and change its tactics. It has to prove that it counts. It should capture the state assembly if the Kashmiris are with it. It can have its own chief minister who could forcefully articulate the demand for *azaadi*. But does it have the following? It is easy to gather the crowd but difficult to convert it into votes.

stands out in the last few days since that brutal crime was committed is the attitude of the young journalist. It has been exemplary. She has declared that she wants to get back to work. She has not hesitated to recall every painful detail for the police. She has refused to see this as the end of her life. She is in an exception — of a kind that this country badly needs.

The Hurriyat, it seems, is riding too many horses at the same time. It wants to mean everything to everybody in the valley. And then it wants Jammu and Ladakh to stay with the valley. If it wants a sway over the entire state, it should win over Jammu and Ladakh which oppose the Hurriyat tooth and nail. To represent Kashmir, it has to have Jammu and Ladakh with it. Then the Azad Kashmir under Pakistan would also listen to the Hurriyat. The valley by itself has a weak case.

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complex. When war would be fought weapons manufacturing will receive a fillip. Moreover, the Iraq war has shown that there are rebuilding contracts up for grab after devastation of enemy country. The reconstruction economy is equally big.

The US economy will be thankful to any President who'll bring war. Barack Obama would not like to go down in history as a President who didn't do enough to help the economy. Where there is no war, one will have to be created. It is bad luck for Bashar-Al-Assad that it is now his turn to be targeted. It doesn't matter to the US that the rebels Al-Nusra may have links to Al-Qaeda, which till the last US war not very long back was its enemy number one. Can the US be so short sighted?

Appeal from Gujarat

Affected people of the proposed 6000 MW Mithi Viridi Nuclear Power Plant of Gujarat, India need your support and solidarity.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to set up a 6000 MW Nuclear Power plant in village Mithi Viridi, Bhavnagar district, Gujarat, was signed by the Government of Gujarat (GOG) with the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) – a Government of India company – in the Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors' summit in 2007. The exact location of the Nuclear Power Plant is just a few kms away from ALANG Shipbreaking Yard. Five villages – Jaspara, Mithi Viridi, Mandva, Khadarpar and Sosiya stand to lose 777 hectares of their fertile land to the proposed nuclear power plant.

The site selection committee for the Nuclear Power Plant constituted in 2005 had short listed Mithi Viridi and submitted its report on 28th June 2007. AP1000 is an untested reactor technology. USNRC had raised several technical doubts about the reactors, which were given a nod to by non-technical committee members of the NRC.

The villages of Mithi Viridi, Jaspara, Mandva, Khadarpar and Sosiya are blessed with fertile land. Of the five villages, three villages – Mithi Viridi, Jaspara and Sosiya are situated along the coastline. Most of the land proposed to be acquired falls under Jaspara village. There are total 152 villages in 30 Kms radius of the proposed nuclear power plant.

The main occupation of the villagers is agriculture. The rich alluvial soil here supports, crops like Ground Nut, Wheat, Bajra, Cotton, etc and fruits like Mangoes (Mangoes from Sosiya are very

famous across India and they are also exported), Chickoos, Coconut, etc. This area also grows and supplies vegetables like Onion, Brinjal, Gourd, Tomatoes, Drumsticks, etc. Also the agriculture department has found the climate and soil suitable for cashew nuts.

People of the area were blissfully unaware of the proposed nuclear project when Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti (a voluntary organisation) activists visited Mithi Viridi area. They had no idea of the impending threat to their land, livelihood and the environmental and health hazards of nuclear energy.

Since 2007 the Bhavnagar Jilla Gram Bachao Samiti, Anu Urja Abhyas Juth, Gujarat Anu-urja Mukti Andolan and Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti conducted awareness programmes. As a result the villagers with the support of a number of organisations in Gujarat and across India started agitation against the proposed 6000 MW Mithi Viridi Nuclear Power Plant. The slogan of the struggle today is "No Nuclear Power Plant in Mithi Viridi, not anywhere in the world".

Two years after the Fukushima disaster, its impact on the global nuclear industry has become increasingly visible. Global electricity generation from nuclear plants dropped by a historic 7 percent in 2012, adding to the record drop of 4 percent in 2011. This is according to World Nuclear Industry Status Report 2013 (WNISR) which provides a global overview of the history, the current status and the trends of nuclear power programs worldwide.

This report looks at nuclear reactor units in operation and under construction and provides 40 pages

of detailed country-by-country information. The 2013 edition also includes an update on nuclear economics as well as an overview of the status, on-site and off-site, of the challenges triggered by the Fukushima disaster. However, this report's emphasis on recent post-Fukushima developments should not obscure an important fact. The world nuclear industry had already faced daunting challenges long before Fukushima, just as the U.S. nuclear power industry had largely collapsed after the 1979 Three Mile Island accident. The nuclear promoters' invention that a global nuclear renaissance was flourishing until 3/11 is equally false. Fukushima only added to the already grave problems, starting with poor economics.

Let us look at what the report has to say about operations. There are 31 countries operating nuclear power plants in the world. A total of 427 reactors have a combined installed capacity of 364 GWe. These figures assume the final shutdown of the ten reactors at Fukushima-Daiichi and -Daini. It should be noted that as of 1 July 2013 only two (Ohi-3 and -4) of the 44 remaining Japanese reactors are operating and their future is highly uncertain. In fact, many observers believe that a large share of the suspended Japanese units will likely never restart.

The nuclear industry is also in decline. The 427 operating reactors are 17 lower than the peak in 2002, while, the total installed capacity peaked in 2010 at 375 GWe before declining to the current level of 364 GWe, which was last seen a decade ago. Annual nuclear electricity generation reached a maximum in 2006 at 2,660 TWh, then dropped to 2,346 TWh in 2012 (down 7

percent compared to 2011, down 12 percent from 2006). About three-quarters of this decline is due to the situation in Japan, but 16 other countries, including the top five nuclear generators, decreased their nuclear generation too.

The nuclear share in the world's power generation declined steadily from a historic peak of 17 percent in 1993 to about 10 percent in 2012. Nuclear power's share of global commercial primary energy production plunged to 4.5 percent, a level last seen in 1984. Only one country, the Czech Republic, reached its record nuclear contribution to the electricity mix in 2012.

The report also points out that two-thirds (44) of the units under construction are located in three countries: China, India and Russia. The Government of India is aggressively pursuing its nuclear programmes in spite of people from Koodankulam (Tamil Nadu), Jaitapur (Maharashtra), Mithi Viridi (Gujarat), Kovvada (Andhra Pradesh), Gorakhpur (Haryana),

Chutka (Madhya Pradesh) and Haripur (West Bengal) waging relentless struggles against these anti-people and unsafe nuclear power projects promoted by the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL). Their massive peaceful protests have mostly been met with callousness and brutal repression on the part of the governments. Communities near the existing nuclear facilities in Tarapur, Rawatbhata, Kalpakkam, Kaiga, Kakrapar and Hyderabad have also been raising voices against radiation leaks and their harmful effects, which are often hushed up by the authorities. Existing and proposed new uranium mines in Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Meghalaya have also met with massive protests.

The Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh is visiting USA from 20 to 28 September 2013. During the visit, there is a possibility of the meeting between Westinghouse and NPCIL to finalise the deal for the Mithi Viridi Nuclear Power Plant.

The affected people are planning to organise massive rally on 23 September 2013 from Mithi Viridi to Bhavnagar (40Kms) and meeting at Bhavnagar to register their protest.

To have some idea about the ongoing struggle against the proposed 6000 MW Mithi Viridi Nuclear Power Plant you can look at FACEBOOK PAGE - <https://www.facebook.com/GujaratAnuUrjaMuktiAndolan>; EPH VIDEO - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ny4uiz1njHI>; VILLAGE VIDEO - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4q4lh0Y4XA>.

We need your support. You can organize the meeting on or before 23 September 2013 in your group, city and pass a resolution in support of the struggle and if you are in USA then you may try to organize protest in New York during the meeting of Indian Prime Minister with the USA authorities to finalize the Mithi Viridi Nuclear Power Plant. Send us copy of resolution, meeting details, audio-video solidarity messages to rohit.prajapati@gmail.com, tokrishnakant@gmail.com, and swati43@gmail.com

Bhavnagar Jilla Gram Bachao Samiti, Gujarat Anu-urja Mukti Andolan, Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti

Us Hegemonic Designs

Once again the US is on the verge of attacking a sovereign nation on dubious and fraudulent evidence, which will only be an horrifying repeat of the lies on Iraq. The US is once again bypassing the UN and is in violation of all international structures and legal norms.

The world is yet to receive the report of the team of UN inspectors that are still determining the nature of the chemical weapons attack. Even prior to the UN report, the US-led coalition that now includes only France, are determined to attack

Syria. The Syrian Government has always called for a political solution to the civil war; the fact is that the US-led western powers, as well as the Gulf monarchies have sabotaged every attempt at a political dialogue between the government and the rebels.

The other worrying factor is that the rebellion is dominated by the hardcore extremist Jabhat al Nusra, which is an al-Qaeda affiliate. Thus here we have the spectacle of the US and Western powers arming these very forces, which they lampoon as

terrorists. Extremist ideologies such as these are a threat to the multi-cultural and secular character of Syria, where the religious and ethnic minorities live in peace.

Also once again it is evident that the battle is to control the Oil and Gas resources of the region as new and massive finds have been discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean. The control of the pipelines is a major and key factor as well.

The other US-Israeli objective is to destroy the "arch of the
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Indian Economy and the Crisis of Borrowed Development Strategy

Arun Kumar

The economic growth rate has been falling continuously while the consumer price inflation, current account deficit in the external sector and fiscal deficit in the Budget remain at high levels. The lack of confidence in the Indian economy is manifested by the sudden and sharp decline in the value of the rupee vis-a-vis the dollar in spite of the steps taken by the government and the Reserve Bank of India. The stock markets are also fluctuating wildly reflecting the uncertainty in the minds of the investors - both Indian and foreign. The policy-makers appear to be helpless.

The government has tried to talk the markets up but with little effect. The PM, Finance Minister, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and Economic Advisor to the PM have all made pronouncements that the economic recovery is around the corner. These predictions over the last two years have been belied as the data in the Table shows. The rate of growth has fallen quarter after quarter since the fourth quarter of 2010-11.

It is true that the rate of growth is still good compared both to that of most other countries in the world or to the projections by the IMF (and others) of the expected rate of growth of the world economy. This growth is also comparable to India's historical growth rate since independence. However, the current growth path is not comparable with that prior to 1991 because that was not creating inequality and unemployment which the current marginalising growth has been doing.

Post-1991, growth has been fuelled by the private corporate sector with highly capital intensive technology which does not generate much employment and also increases inequality in the economy. Most of the gains have been cornered by a few leaving little to trickle down to others. This is especially true for the marginalised sections like the unorganised sectors and especially the agricultural sector which still deploys more than half of the work force. The impact of the slowdown in the growth rate is that what trickles down becomes even less and those at the bottom of the pyramid suffer even more.

Coupled with the declining economic growth rate is a stubbornly high rate of inflation measured by consumer prices (roughly 10 per cent per annum). While the wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation has moderated, it does not reflect the burden of price rise on the consumer. The WPI-based inflation rate does not reflect the rise in prices of services, like school fees or rents or telephone calls and so on. The consumer price index has only a few services; so it also under-represents inflation. The price rise results in shifting purchasing power from the consumers to businesses and thereby reducing the trickle-down and accentuating disparities.

Add to this the rising black income generation in the economy with corruption spreading and growing in scale. Since the black economy is concentrated in the hands of three per cent of the population,

inequalities rise. By raising costs all round, the rate of inflation is raised. Further, the inefficiencies associated with the black economy result in wasteful use of capital and lower employment generation than is potentially possible. Through flight of capital it increases the shortage of capital and aggravates the current account deficit on the external sector and leads to BOP problems. Last but not the least, it results in the failure of policies so that targets are not achieved. It affects the collection of taxes and that raises the government's budgetary deficits which leads to a cut-back in essential expenditures, say, on health and education.

In brief, under the New Economic Policies (NEP) with their pro-corporate sector bias and with a rising black economy, the combination of low rates of economic growth and persisting high inflation results in poor employment generation and mounting inequality. This is a dangerous mix since it can only lead to growing social tensions and political strife in the country 66 years after we achieved political independence.

Consumerism and Environmental Decline

Sixty six years after independence, we have the largest number of poor people, illiterates and so on in the world. It is not that India has not made progress after independence but it is much less than what was expected. It is much less than what many other nations have achieved in a comparable time-span. India

appears to be a case of many missed opportunities.

Further, at a very low level of consumption, India has one of the most polluted environments in the world. The pollution of water in the rivers and underground aquifers is phenomenal leading to increased incidence of various diseases. The pollution of air is also very high compared to even the developed countries and this is also resulting in health problems. The tragedy is that this is at a very low level of per capita consumption. What would happen when with growth consumption rises?

The causes of this high level of pollution are: a) the strategy of 'growth at any cost' without taking the environmental factors into account; b) the rampant corruption which leads to cutting corners in every economic activity with environmental protection getting the least priority; c) international division of labour which is resulting in polluting industries getting located in the developing countries; and d) rapid increase in consumerism.

Recycling of ships, plastic waste, lead acid, computer waste and so on is taking place in India. Dirty production of heavy chemicals and metals is also occurring here. Massive denudation of forests is the result of open cast mining, large projects for producing power, setting up of airports, expansion of road and rail networks and so on. It is said that development requires all this. Is this true? Not quite since environmental destruction lowers the welfare gains of material growth. It is like digging holes and filling them where there is activity without productivity. One needs to question the development model which postpones the costs to the future generations.

Underlying consumerism is a political strategy of the Indian ruling elite to divert the attention of the population from the present problems by involving them in consumerism. Those who can afford to consume more are happy at the availability of goods in the markets. Those who cannot afford can dream of one day buying these goods. There are those in the middle who aspire to lay their hands on the more exotic ones while buying some of the less exotic ones. Everyone is happy to live in the moment and the future be damned—a very short-term strategy and one that is inimical to building a strong nation and creates atomisation and alienation amongst the people.

Internal and External Problems

The external environment for India's economic development has deteriorated since the global crisis began in 2007. Due to the ongoing indiscriminate globalisation initiated in 1991, Indian markets have become more closely integrated with the world markets. The ratio of our exports and imports to the GDP have risen dramatically. Movements in the financial markets (like the share market) are now governed by those in the international markets. Commodity prices move in tandem with international prices like in the case of petroleum products and foodgrains. The result is that a crisis in the global markets leads to a crisis in the Indian economy.

Since the recovery from the recession starting 2007 was tepid in the OECD countries, the Indian economy also faltered soon after the recovery stalled there. The green shoots in the US economy in 2009-10 withered after 2010. Unemployment there has remained high and so has underemployment. Eurozone has gone back into recession and so has

the British economy. The Japanese economy has been growing slowly and the Chinese economy has been slowing down recently. Thus, all the major economies of the world have been growing slowly or slowing down.

India's exports have consequently suffered. (See Table) Imports have remained high because of the high prices of energy and India's rising demand for energy. Further, due to uncertainty the demand for gold in India has remained high in a period when gold prices have risen globally. Thus, the gold and energy import bills have been high keeping the import bill high. This is the reason for the continuing high trade account and current account deficits. The problem has been aggravated by the high debt (\$ 365 billion in September 2012) in relation to the reserves (\$295 billion in January 2013) the country holds, and this prevents the RBI from intervening more aggressively. Further, the proportion of short-term debt in the total debt has increased since 2008 and this is the one that can evaporate quickly destabilising the position of the country's foreign exchange reserves.

With the slowing down of the Indian economy, high rate of inflation and fiscal problems, the international community has been losing confidence in the Indian economy. Thus, the credit rating agencies have been threatening to lower India's rating. This would lead to a higher cost of borrowing abroad and devaluation of the currency adding to the repayment burden. These would lead to an increase in the current account deficit. This sets up a vicious cycle of declining growth, higher current account deficit and lowered credit rating for India.

The rating agencies monitor the fiscal deficit of the country. So, the government has been trying to keep the fiscal deficit low. How is that being done? By cutting back on Plan expenditures (two years back by about Rs 1 lakh crore and in the last fiscal by more than that) and other essential expenditures. This is like chopping the nose to cure a cold. Cutbacks in a period of a slowing economy and demand shortage lead to further demand shortage and a further slowing down. Thus, the fiscal deficit target is being met by cutting back expenditures and not better management and in this sense the fiscal situation is out of control in spite of the fiscal deficit not rising dramatically. This strategy, which keeps the growth rate low, is bound to make the rating agencies lower India's rating.

The savings and investment rate

of the Indian economy fell after 2007. It has not recovered and, as the Table shows, it has fallen further in the previous two years. This is a cause of the slowdown in the economy. Both the private corporate sector and public sector companies are flush with funds but are not investing since the demand is limited. Thus, the government's strategy of dealing with the problem has become the cause of the problem.

The current problem facing the economy is the external orientation of the policy-makers. They are sensitive to the wishes of the discredited rating agencies and multilateral agencies. This outward orientation of the policy-maker has marginalised the Indian population at large. No wonder, economic experts being appointed in the government are being imported from the US.

The External Orientation: A Historical Perspective

India started in 1947 with a borrowed strategy of development which propagated the top-down approach. It was a mixed economy model based on the market economy in the West and the path of central planning from the Soviets. India's ingenuity lay in combining the two paths but both were copied and based on trickle-down. This is called the Nehruvian strategy of development. The indigenous path suggested by Gandhi based on a bottom-up approach was rejected because the Indian elite wanted to quickly copy Western modernity and join the Western elite. Consequently, while a small elite did well, the rest had to plod along with the little that trickled down. This strategy paid lip-service to the poor and poverty removal. It met with crisis after

Gandhi Katha

Dear Friends,

This is to invite you to a unique discourse on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti which falls on 2nd October. Narayanbhai Desai, senior Sarvodaya leader, a true Gandhian and the son of Mahadevbhai Desai who was Mahatma Gandhi's private secretary for two scores of years has been narrating 'Gandhi Katha' for the last eleven years. This discourse has taken place all over Gujarat and also in various places in the country and the U. S.

We in Mumbai will get a golden opportunity to listen to the unknown aspects of Gandhi's life and personality from the 88 years old veteran who has had a personal interaction with the Mahatma.

The venue is
Mahatma Gandhi Seva Mandir, opposite the Lake, S V Road, Bandra West and the time is
5.30 pm to 9 pm every day
from October 2 to October 6, 2013

Please do attend and also inform your friends.

It promises to be an experience of a lifetime

Yours sincerely,

*Neela Bhagwat, Pushpa Bhave, Vijaya Chauhan, Rajni Bakshi, Ramdas Bhatkal,
Daniel Mazgaonkar, Vinayak Pandit, Amarendra Dhaneshwar, Jayant Diwan, Simpreet Singh...*

crisis since the mid-1960s - failure of agriculture and consequent food insecurity, Naxalism, Emergency, rising strife, alienation and black economy and growing inefficiencies, repeated approach to the multi-lateral agencies for help/adjustment and support at high national cost and so on.

The path met its Waterloo in 1991 and the strategy was changed from the mixed economy to the market economy with the state retreating strategically in favour of the private sector. The trickle-down declined further. This was characterised by the World Bank (earlier) as the 'market friendly state intervention'. In the Indian context with its large black economy and high level of corruption this led to the strengthening of the 'crony capitalism' model of investment being followed in the country since independence. With the lowering of the priority to public sector the private sector became the dominant sector and it extracted huge concessions - like ownership of natural resources and cuts in taxes. The new strategy based on marketisation stopped paying even lip-service to the poor. We are embroiled in the numbers game of counting the poor without eliminating poverty which has constantly changed its face with growing consumerism and commercialisation of everything.

While the earlier strategy produced growth which was much faster than during the colonial period prior to 1947, it also kept the growing disparities in check (not that it reduced them). The post-1991 strategy does not even claim to reduce disparities because now

[Based on the author's new book, *The Indian Economy since Independence: Persisting Colonial Disruption*, published by Vision Books, New Delhi]

Table: Some Key Variables of the Indian Economy 2010-12

Indicator/Year	Unit	2010-11*				2011-12*				2012-13**			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Growth Rates													
Agricultural Sector	Per cent	3.1	4.9	11	7.5	3.7	3.1	2.8	1.7	2.9	1.2	1.1	1.4
Industrial Sector	Per cent	8.3	5.7	7.6	7	5.6	3.7	2.5	1.9	3.6	2.8	3.32	2.7
Service Sector	Per cent	10	9.1	7.7	10.6	10.2	8.8	8.9	7.9	6.9	7.2	6.06	6.6
GDP (factor cost)	Per cent	8.5	7.6	8.2	9.2	8	6.7	6.1	5.3	5.5	5.3	4.5	4.8
External Sector***													
Current A/c	Rs Billion	-610.0	-800.0	-504.0	-282.0	-784.0	-865.0	-1016.0	-1094.0	-924.8	-1166.7	-1720.3	-984.2
Exports#	Rs Billion	2561.3	2495.1	2918.1	3454.7	3422.5	3560.5	3992.9	3992.9	3978.8	3927.8	3942.1	4452.6
Imports	Rs Billion	4106.4	4011.4	4163.0	4553.9	5488.1	5530.0	6310.3	6310.3	6258.7	6560.5	7001.8	6904.9
Trade Balance	Rs Billion	-1545.1	-1516.2	-1245.0	-1099.2	-2065.6	-1969.5	-2317.4	-2317.4	-2279.9	-2632.8	-3059.6	-2452.3
					2010-11R2				2011-12R1				
*Gr Cap. Formation(Inv)	Rs Billion				36.8				35				
*Gr Domestic Saving	Rs Billion				34				30.8				
*Saving-Inv.	GapRs Billion				-2.8				-4.2				

Source: *Economic Survey 2012-13, Ministry of Finance, Gov.

** Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Gov.

*** Database-Reserve Bank of India

Note

R1: First Revised Estimate, R2: Second Revised Estimate.

Export and Import data calculated from monthly data published in Reserve Bank of India Database.

Data for 2012-13 are provisional and for 2011-12 data are revised.

Monthly data in some cases may not add up to annual total because of data revision.

growth is the key to development; distribution does not matter. The policy-makers recognise this factor and, therefore, have put into place policies to mitigate the ill-effects of the ongoing marginalising growth: MGNREGS to get some employment for the underemployed and for those who migrate from the poor areas to richer areas; mid-day meal scheme to get children into schools otherwise their parents will set them to work to supplement their family income; loan waiver scheme for farmers so that the indebted farmers can get relief and do not commit suicide in large numbers. Now there is the Food Security Bill which will hopefully provide more nutrition to the poor. Today 40 per cent of the women and children are malnourished and face disability and permanent poverty.

So, even after 66 years of independence, the government - dominated by the elite - remains insensitive to the problems of the people of India. It is continuing with the borrowed path of development which leads the nation from one crisis to the next without a solution - in fact, only non-solutions abound which result in the accumulation of more problems. To divert the attention of the people, the policy-makers have promoted consumerism in a big way leading to a huge environmental crisis and other problems. Thus, what the colonised mind of the Indian elite thinks is the solution has been the problem since independence and that is why the policy-makers currently appear to be helpless.

Call it crime, not superstition

Pratap Bhanu Mehta

Belief and ritual can, literally, be a matter of life and death. Narendra Dabholkar courageously spent his life combating superstition and irrationality. His violent death is a reminder of the depths to which discourses around culture have fallen in Maharashtra. We do not have a full handle on how society is changing. But the demands of law, morality and commonsense are increasingly immobilised in the face of absurd cultural claims. Don't prejudge guilt or innocence. But just think of the absurd way in which charges against Asaram Bapu have been handled by the state. Many aspects of Dabholkar's struggle, saving people from the horrendous consequences of harmful rituals, the promotion of science in public affairs, need to be continued with renewed vigour. But we also need to reflect more deeply on the way in which we have used the intersection of law and superstition to obscure deep moral issues. We may, unwittingly, be sending mixed moral messages.

Take the example of anti-witchcraft legislation in states like Jharkhand. Witchcraft has claimed dozens of lives over a decade. But is the moral purpose of the law better served by having separate laws to punish the harm done by witchcraft as witchcraft, or should it be governed as much as possible by existing laws and IPC? These practices often involve inflicting physical harm on an individual, subjecting them to psychological harassment and sometimes actions that lead to death. Most of these

harms are already covered by the IPC. Murder should be murder, whether it is done chasing witches or communal ghosts. Forcibly evicting someone from their property or doing anything to their bodies without consent is a crime, no matter what the cause. But the minute we represent law as regulating superstition rather than focusing on the harm in question, we give a misleading moral account of why an act is wrong. Many years ago, Lata Mani had pointed out in a brilliant work that in the debate over sati, neither the modernists nor the orthodox were particularly concerned about the agency and dignity of the women involved. Rather, women became sites upon which larger debates about tradition and modernity were carried out. There is a real risk that a lot of the witchcraft legislation is sending a similar signal. The signal is: we are more concerned about "superstition" versus "science" than about the autonomy and dignity of the victims. The signal we want to send is not primarily that these acts are wrong because they emanate from superstition. They are wrong because they cause harm. But the moral importance of the harm disappears when the object of the law becomes regulating superstition rather than the harm.

This legislation can sometimes have perverse consequences. Sometimes the multiplication of laws gives police more discretion over which charges to bring. As a brief prepared at Cornell University on India's witchcraft legislation

pointed out, the penalties are less for the "same offence" if tried under a prevention of witchcraft act than those prescribed for the same offence if tried under the IPC. It is as if, if you have inflicted harm under a superstition, you have committed a lesser crime. This assumption often pervades judging as well. Courts often commute sentences because a crime was committed under the spell of a "belief". In a famous case from Bihar, Santul Dhobi, a death sentence was commuted on these grounds.

But before we express our disquiet at this form of judging, we need to reflect more deeply on where this assumption comes from. Some legislation, like the recently enacted Maharashtra ordinance, has a strong dose of legal paternalism. Apart from preventing harms that are already crimes, the purpose of the legislation is to protect people from their own beliefs, beliefs in godmen or the power of amulets, etc. Whether law should regulate forms of enchantment if they do not cause independently identified harm to others is an open question. But for the argument here, the relevant point is this. If the law constructs citizens in a paternalistic way, odd legal consequences follow. For example, our absurd anti-conversion legislation is premised on the idea that people cannot judge religious claims on their own, they can be duped. But if we seriously believe this premise, can you really criticise the judge who has sympathy for the perpetrators of crimes committed

in the name of belief? He now sees them not as criminals, but victims of a sort; they have not committed a murder, they have carried out a cultural ritual, whether it is honour-killing or witchcraft. Enshrining paternalism in the law diminishes the moral importance of the harm committed, and, in a strange way, makes citizens less responsible.

In a brilliant article on the anthropology of witchcraft, Nandini Sundar had pointed out that, in the case of witchcraft, "accusations of occult practices are a way of coping with [the] uncertainties of human existence". One of her points was that a whole range of background conditions needs to be addressed if one is to come to terms with these practices. Can you blame someone for reposing faith in a traditional healer, given their lack of experience and trust in a medical practitioner? An ojha is more likely to be subject to "malpractice" than bad doctors. There is some evidence for Ashis Nandy's claim that many so-called superstitious practices are not our prehistory; they are sometimes products of an instrumentalist culture. Increase in incidence of "witchcraft" seems to be related to the desire to get hold of someone's property. But, more deeply, the point is that when it comes to dealing with human agents, superstition and science, tradition and modernity do not neatly map onto individuals. It is often a line running through, rather than between, them.

How the law does what it does is important. There is larger cultural work to be done over spreading science. But the focus of law should be squarely on bringing into view the moral harm done by certain acts. We have a strange debate, where some hesitate to take action because

some individual claims to be a godman. Others want to respond by legally proscribing claims to being a godman. All we need to say is: no matter who you are and what people think, you are not above the law if you have committed a crime. Name murder by its real name, murder.

(Continued from Page 8)

resistance", namely Syria, Iran, Lebanon and Palestine to enable Israel not only to dominate, but also expand its borders and be the sole hegemonic power in the region.

The US military strike will certainly lead to a worsening regional conflagration, with strong possibilities of a world war. This is due to the simple fact that the major world powers have taken clear sides in the crisis. Russia and China stand in determined opposition to the US strike.

Moreover across the world and especially in the western capitals, the overwhelming majority of the people are opposed to the war on Syria. Once again we are witness to the fact that the people of the world are opposed to war and violence. This has already ensured that Britain was forced to withdraw from the US-led war. Even the European Union has said that they all need to wait till the UN submits its final report. The Saudi-Qatar dominated Arab League, too has asked the US to seek clearance from the UN before proceeding with the strike.

But why is Obama now targeting another Arab country and willing to ignore the UN decision making process like his predecessor George Bush did. Even his reason to attack is so similar to that of Bush. Bush had lied to the world about presence of nuclear weapons in Iraq in spite of

Don't cover it in a complicated metaphysics of belief. Our laws are often ineffective because we acquire a superstitious faith in the power of law when drafting them. We may need new laws in some cases. But we need to be careful how they are drafted.

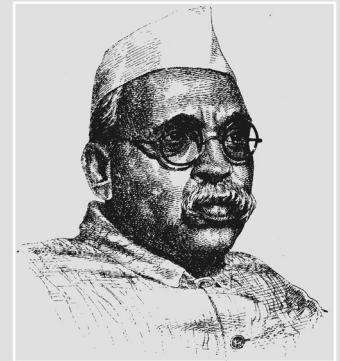
—The Indian Express

contrary reports from UN inspectors who had gone inside Iraq and IAEA. Now Obama wants the world to believe that Syrian government has used chemical weapons without waiting for confirmation from the UN inspectors who have been sent to Syria.

The Socialist Party appeals to the political and diplomatic agencies world over to ensure peace in violence-ridden Syria with immediate effect.

Prem Singh - Sandeep Pandey
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Disqualification

The news of the Ministry of Human Resource Development serving a show-cause notice to Prof. Yogendra Yadav, Member, University Grants Commission (UGC), to explain why he should not be removed from the UGC has shocked and dismayed the academic community. The notice mentions a conflict of interest, Prof. Yogendra Yadav being an active member of a newly registered political party, as the reason for such removal.

The UGC has a formal policy on Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct for Members of the Commission which does not mention political activity as a potential conflict of interest. The University Grants Commission (Disqualification, Retirement and Conditions of Service) Rule, 1992 provides for specific grounds of disqualification which, again, does not include membership of a political party as a valid ground.

It is evident that the decision of serving the show-cause notice stems from the fact that Prof. Yogendra Yadav chose to be an active member of the Commission who raised questions and recorded his objections in regard to several matters of national importance such as the introduction of the four year undergraduate programme in Delhi University, bypassing of the recommendations of the UGC committee in the notification of the API scheme, closing down of Centres for Social Inclusion and Exclusion, and the decision to set up a Centre on Teacher Education in a Technical University that does not even have a department of education. Prof. Yogendra Yadav's persistent

efforts to point out irregularities in the conduct of Commission meetings and recording of minutes also seems to have put some officials in an uncomfortable situation.

We believe that such active concern is precisely what should be expected from a member of a body of national importance like the UGC as this is what strengthens the working of such bodies. We are shocked that the Ministry, which, in a healthy democracy, should have given due importance to the matters raised,

and should have encouraged such vigilant participation, has instead initiated the process of removing the member. Such a measure sends a strong message of intolerance towards all members who consider it their duty to express their opinions and threatens to severely erode the ethos of informed debate and fearless participation. It demonstrates an utter disregard for the autonomy vested in the institution of the UGC without which it cannot be expected to play its role as a regulatory body effectively.

*—from a petition
to the Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India.*

Why allow candidates to contest from more than one constituency?

Election Commission should immediately implement a simple and basic reform that no person may be allowed to contest from more than one constituency or for both Lok Sabha and Vidhaan Sabha. It is ridiculous to unnecessarily waste public money on holding by-elections in case some person wins from more than one constituency or for both Lok Sabha and Vidhaan Sabha in a system where a person cannot represent more than one constituency and also cannot be a member of both Lok Sabha and Vidhaan Sabha. Rather a sitting MP or MLA must resign from his/her earlier seat before filing nomination for the other. Former Delhi Chief Minister Madanlal Khurana used to contest both for Lok Sabha and Vidhaan Sabha with ambition to retain Vidhaan Sabha seat to become Chief Minister in case of his party coming to power.

Otherwise he would opt for retaining Lok Sabha seat. Such faulty system should be rectified so as not to allow unnecessary by-elections for the convenience of over-ambitious politicians.

Also a Parliamentarian being appointed a minister (or Chief Minister) of a State should automatically lose his/her membership of Parliament on taking oath as a minister or Chief Minister. Likewise a state-legislator should automatically lose his/her membership of state-assembly/council on taking oath as minister (or Prime Minister) in the centre. A controversial vote of the then Orissa Chief Minister Girdhar Gomango pulled down Atal Bihari Vajpayee government by his single vote putting nation to costly mid-term elections.

- Subhash Chandra Agrawal



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The Modi mythology

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Idea of India at peril
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Report on
Muzaffarnagar – Violence

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Lal Krishna Advani's "sulk" over the road-rolling nomination of Narendra Modi as the BJP 2014 prime ministerial candidate lasted just 48 hours. He fought hard and well to ensure that the nomination went to some other leader, preferably himself, but he could not make the RSS yield. He beat a hasty retreat when he realized that Modi's nomination was inevitable. He is now trying to put a pleasant face on his embarrassment. BJP President Rajnath Singh says that Modi's choice was determined by the top echelons of the RSS and the BJP was fully supportive. Since the BJP leadership concedes that Modi's pan-Indian political-mass base is negligible, they need some other strategy to win votes. That strategy obviously is a strong push for Hindutva. Modi is one of the strong faces of Hindutva and the RSS hopes to project him as the winning candidate by virtue of his capacity to hardsell Hindutva. Leave alone the BJP. Its allies in the NDA formation also are banking on Hindutva and whatever it stands as the reference point of the BJP campaign. The Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray said the other day that his party hoped that

Modi would not compromise on the issue of Hindutva. Then, to no one's surprise, the former BJP president Nitin Gadkari declared at a RSS-VHP-BJP meeting in New Delhi a fortnight ago that saffron privar's basic agenda for fighting the 2014 polls comprised the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, Ayodhya temple construction, Article 370, cow protection, a common civil code, and the purify Ganga-Jamuna campaign. All the issues that were put in cold storage by the Vajpayee-Advani duo in order to ensure that the BJP-NDA secured power at the Centre.

Now that return to power in New Delhi seems full of hurdles, despite the unpopularity of the UPA, the buried issues are being revived. The RSS has taken charge again as it did in 2004 and 2009, and it now projects the view among its constituents that it is worth making the buried issues active since revival of Hindutva is a means to power. Past experience tells us that Hindutva is and can be a highly emotive issue among a section of the Hindus, although by and large Hindutva remains a divisive issue. The vast majority of voters in India feel that Hindutva is already

Between the lines

Idea of India at peril

Kuldip Nayar

a spent force and the political-electoral dividends it can yield is exaggerated but only limited in reality. The Indian electorate has a sizable section of youth as voters. The number of young men and women eligible to vote has risen sharply after the raising of the voting age to 18. Besides, the new generation that is passing out of the portals of universities and colleges eye a business or professional career as an ideal worth pursuing instead of getting caught in the spiritual-religious world of conservatism and status quo. Shri Modi comes to the electoral arena with a baggage he is finding it difficult to shed despite his protestations of non-involvement in the 2002 anti-minority campaign. Although many myths have been created by the BJP and the saffron parivar to paint Modi in lily-white colours, the fact remains that the minorities of the country still carry bitter memories of that carnage. The recent Muzaffarnagar riots, a blot on the Samajwadi Party government in UP, comes as a bitter reminder of what happens when the majority launches a vicious attack on the minorities, an experience the Muslims of Gujarat went through. The nation needs to be prepared for the intensification of the Hindutva campaign in the coming months and days. National politics is bound to get vitiated. Admittedly, the Congress has yet to wake up fully to the danger ahead. But the strong lobby of secularists among us have to raise their voices against the Hindutva campaign and save our democracy and polity getting sharply polarized on communal lines. All power to those who join the cause of fighting communal politics.

Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi, the prime ministerial candidate of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has asked the Jamaat-Ulema Hind, representing the Muslims, to list four or five steps he should announce to win their confidence. The Jamaat has rightly pointed out that it was for Modi to think how to win the trust of Muslims. One thing Modi could do straightaway is to apologize for the 2002 riots in the state, reportedly blessed by him after the burning of some Hindu pilgrims in a train compartment at Godhra, not far from Ahmedabad.

There is enough evidence to confirm that Modi convened a meeting of top officials to plan and execute an exercise to kill the Muslims. Hiren Pandya, a minister in Modi's cabinet, had admitted after having participated in the riots that they were preplanned and that the police were asked not to interfere. He was murdered and till today the murderer has not been brought to book. And only recently has a top police officer confessed in a letter to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that Modi used him to stage the false encounter.

In his first speech after the nomination, Modi talked about a range of issues—ties with neighbouring countries, terrorism and defence. But he did not utter a word about Muzaffarnagar's communal riots. The city, only two hours' drive from Delhi, witnessed the killing of 50 persons and the exodus of nearly 40,000 people—Hindus and Muslims, who have lived together for centuries.

Indeed, this is the result of Modi-type of politics of polarization which

has challenged India's credentials of secularism. Modi is a Hindutava poster-boy, as the media describes him. After 66 years of independence, the two communities tend to jump at each other's throat on the call of religious leaders or politicians in that garb. The nation has to introspect why the people play into their hands and why it has failed to establish a secular polity.

Modi does not care about India's ethos of pluralism. He has played the Hindu card because he believes that secularism does not sit well in a Hindu-majority country. If he has learned the lesson after the Gujarat riots, as he claims, there is no indication of that. He compared the other day the victims in the Gujarat riots to the puppies which get crushed under a speeding car.

The RSS, which has nurtured Modi, believes that it wants the next election to be fought on the plank of "minority aggressiveness." It is misinterpreting the minorities' articulation of their identity. Even if there is aggressiveness, it can be tackled. But the majority's aggressiveness can turn into fascism. This is what happened in Germany where the Nazis took over and Hitler emerged on the scene.

It is unfortunate that the BJP has selected Modi, knowing too well that the party was defeated in 2004 and 2009 elections because of its communal agenda. Even Atal Behari Vajpayee's liberal image could not wear off the stigma of parochialism the party has.

By and large, India is a tolerant society. The people do not mix

(Continued on Page 6)

Yusuf Meherally

Freedom Fighter *Par Excellence**

G. S. Bhargava

Lord Byron said that he got up one morning and found himself great. Though Meherally is too modest to put forth any such claim, he too overnight shot into prominence. One single day, February 8, 1928, put him on the pinnacle of popularity; his name was on the lips of everybody; his reputation reached the four corners of the country. Not that there was spade work before it but, as in the case of Byron's lyrical genius, the recognition was so sudden and complete.

On that day, he had not only dared to shout "Go back, Simon" (a slogan of his own creation, which echoed in every nook and corner of India) to the face of the all-mighty, British plenipotentiary, but had also defied the injunctions of his political superiors who counselled inaction. His impetuosity and dare-devilry, the extreme originality of his ideas, struck even Gandhiji, who complimented him. In a primitive world, he would have become a legend, an Ajax defying the lightning of despotism. Poets would have made of his heroic songs for a nation. The tale of his Perils and Patriotism would have been the model to inspire and inform children.

Born in late 1903, Meherally was only twenty-four at the time of the Simon Commission's visit. His father, Jaffer Meherally was a prosperous businessman and the children were brought up in the typical, aristocratic way. Fifty years earlier, his great grandfather, built

India's first textile mill in Bombay and laid the foundation stone for the country's light industry. The transition from feudal to capitalist economy was fairly set; factories and slums were multiplying in the urban areas. Their family was traditionally pro-British and all the upper class prejudices were handed down from generation to generation, as a part of ancestral bequest. When Yusuf went to jail in 1930, several of his elders said it was a disgrace to the family that one of its members was a "law-breaker".

The first nine years of his life were spent in Calcutta, then the storm-centre of *Vande Mataram* and anti-Bengal-partition agitations. But only after Gandhiji arrived on the Indian political scene and took the country spell-bound, did he enter active politics. At the age of ten, Yusuf returned to Bombay, his birth place. He then joined the St. Xavier's High School. While still in the high school, he studied the revolutionary movements of different countries and was impressed by the role youth had played in them. He read Mazzini and Garibaldi and closely followed the Russian and Chinese (Sun-Yat-sen's) revolutions. The successful boycott of the Milner Mission in Egypt and the birth and growth of the Sinn Fein Movement in Ireland interested him deeply.

In Gandhiji's Non-Cooperation Movement, he found a parallel to these liberation struggles, but its abrupt and inconclusive end on grounds of alleged excesses at Chauri

Chaura, dismayed and puzzled him. He shared the depression which set in among the youth after the calling-off of the movement. He thought that if a group of young people, intellectually well-equipped and properly trained, dedicated themselves to the cause of the country, the revolution could be led to a successful conclusion. This idea found fruition in the Bombay Provincial Youth League which was inaugurated in February 1928.

The Youth Conference opened a new era in the country's political history; for the first time, youth was canalised for national action. About 1700 delegates from all over the province attended the conference, which was presided over by K. F. Nariman. Meherally was the moving spirit behind the organization.

The most important decision of the conference was to organize an effective boycott of the Simon Commission and a detailed, though ambitious, programme was chalked out for the same. Though this decision was in consonance with the principle of the Congress decision, yet in the matter of procedure it went a long way ahead. And here lay the rub.

The Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Liberal Party were all united on the principle of boycott of the Commission. At that time, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was the President of the Bombay Congress, Jinnah the President of the League, Jayakar was in charge of the Mahasabha

*This biographical sketch of Yusuf Meherally (September 23, 1903–July 2, 1950) was written in November 1949.

and Setalvad was guiding the destinies of the Liberals. These luminaries met and formed a joint committee to conduct the boycott, which, according to them, should merely mean a public meeting where speeches would be delivered and resolutions passed. To the Youth League, with Meherally at its helm, this seemed the most ineffectual way of boycott. The Government, with their sycophants, had planned receptions to Simon and his colleagues, and such inaction on the part of the public would lend colour to the got-up shows.

February 3, 1928, dawned a decisive day in the history of Bombay. The Youth Leaguers planned an ambitious expedition on boats to meet the Commission on the sea itself, but it leaked out and the police took precautions to scotch it. They also wanted a hartal in the city but without Congress sanction it would not materialize. But undaunted, a band of 400 resolute young men led by Yusuf formed into a procession and marched to the harbour, before day-break. It was another Charge of the Light Brigade except for the fact that the commander as well as the followers consciously believed in what they were doing. There, they staged one of the most heroic and resolute demonstrations

the country had ever witnessed. They were thrice lathi-charged but did not budge an inch. Meherally himself was cruelly manhandled by an over-zealous police sergeant. None of the Congress leaders, who later claimed kudos and voters for the incident, cared to attend it. The news of the demonstration and the lathi-charge, exaggerated as usual, spread like wild fire and shops and establishments observed spontaneous hartal. The bulk of the students were with the Youth League and so naturally abstained from classes. Thus, a good part of the Youth League's boycott programme came to be implemented in spite of the non-association of the Congress with it.

Meherally was the hero of the day. The following incident speaks of the popular esteem he had won that morning. After the lathi-charge, Yusuf was returning home, his bruised, bandaged hand in a sling when he was accosted on the way by a youthful passer-by. "Were you hurt in the morning's lathi-charge?" he asked. "Yes", Yusuf replied. "Our leader, Meherally, was also badly injured. He is in the hospital", the stranger informed Yusuf. Suppressing his laughter, Yusuf retorted:

Yusuf died a young man of forty-seven, very live and very much needed. It was a police lathi which had caused injury to Yusuf's heart, from which he was never really to recover. In 1943, when he was released from prison, the doctors had given him up. His friends rushed to try and save him, and for days he lay hovering between life and death under an oxygen mask. Gradually, he recovered, but only enough to continue to exist. Though bubbling with energy and a desire to do things, he had to spend the next seven years mostly in bed. Even from there he continued to function and take a hand in the running of the Socialist Party.

Yusuf never married. He lived with his brother and his family. But he never lacked friends, and was loved for his warmth and his charm. One hardly ever found anyone saying anything unfriendly about him. Wedded to politics, Yusuf's real love was books, particularly on history and art. Though his life was short and in later years, he was ailing, he achieved more than a normal man would during a full span of three score years and ten.

Minoo Masani in "Against the Tide"

"That is all exaggeration, he was not so much hurt." The man got angry and cursed the apostasy of Yusuf. Later, in the evening's public meeting, when he was revealed as Meherally himself, the confounded stranger came to him and apologized.

That year, Yusuf lost his father and as the eldest of the four children, he had to take up the family responsibility. His father originally wanted him to be a barrister and arranged with Mr. Jinnah to take him as his apprentice. But Yusuf's ambition was from the beginning to be a full-time political worker. The sudden death of his father created difficulties. As the head of the family he had to start earning to maintain the old family standards. But he did not want to give up politics, especially at that time and so brought about a revolutionary change in the domestic standards so that they could live within their means.

He had by that time qualified himself for the Bar. Relations and friends like Nariman were pressing him to apply for the advocate's sanad. He was reluctant but at last gave in. Here again, his anti-Simon demonstration came in the way. At the instance of Nariman, Yusuf launched prosecution against the police sergeant who assaulted him on February 3, 1928. The case lasted nine months and the lower court fined the sergeant. On appeal, the High Court quashed the conviction and acquitted him. But, because he launched proceedings against a police officer, Yusuf was refused enrolment as an advocate. His is the only case in the whole of India, where a qualified lawyer was refused sanad by the High Court for political reasons.

When acquainted of this, Jinnah was very angry that disregarding his advice, Meherally participated

in politics. "Young man, your life is ruined", shouted Jinnah at him. "No, Mr. Jinnah a life is not so easily ruined". Yusuf retorted with his characteristic optimism. He actually welcomed the refusal because it supplied him with an excuse for full-time political work. The history of the two subsequent decades has vindicated Meherally! After all, there is an aspect of life which Jinnah and his like cannot appreciate. After all, there is an aspect of life which Mr. Jinnah and his like cannot appreciate.

During the 1930 Civil Disobedience Movement, when processions and public meetings were disallowed, as today, these volunteers did marvelous work in keeping up the morale of the people. During the Salt Satyagraha, Yusuf and his associates gave a terrible fight to the bureaucracy. The local Congress higher-ups courted imprisonment and went to jail. The whole movement was run by him. He also saw Gandhiji twice during the Dandi March and got his sanction for his plan of work. At that time, he published in his *Vanguard*, which was suppressed just after that, an interview with Gandhiji which proved unique.

He was first arrested in 1930 and sentenced to four months' imprisonment. Again in 1932, he was charged with conspiracy and sentenced to two years. It was then, inside the 'C' class of Nasik prison, that he established close contacts with his Socialist colleagues. He is one of the founder members Congress Socialist Party.

He was again arrested in connection with the Individual Satyagraha in 1940, and was released the next year. That year, he presided over the All India Students'

According to an old definition, a good Muslim possesses a generosity like the generosity of the river; a benevolence like the benevolence of the sun, a hospitality like the hospitality of the earth. He answers the call of those in distress, he fulfills the needs of the helpless, his sorrows and endeavours are derived from the sorrows and endeavours of the people, he lives among them, bears all the hardships this association brings with it and repays those who do harm to him with generosity and self-sacrifice. The good Muslim cultivates friendship, because it is in friendship that the true relationship between man and God is revealed, and to be a good friend he cultivates these social qualities which are most pleasing to his fellowmen, charm of manner, ability to converse, argue, convince, participation in the enjoyment of literature and art, and in those observances which reveal deep interest in his fellowmen in reverence for the divine. The practice of equality is for him not an injunction to be obeyed but an instinct, a second nature that cannot bear to be repressed. The good Muslim loves God only, but in such a way that those among whom he lives are made to feel that he loves them only.

Do those qualities provide a frame in which Yusuf Meherally's picture could be placed? If they do, he was a good Muslim, but we shall not be denying him anything if we remember him as a man who loved us and whom we loved.

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*"I hate ugliness and cruelty," he told one of his friends, "and that is why I am a socialist. My socialism is based on aesthetic and ethical premises and not on economics". This remark reveals another and perhaps the most beautiful, aspect of his personality. It was the primeval sorrow of man for what men do to each other, knowingly and unknowingly, which moved him, and not any idea of a more efficient and more utilitarian organization of industry and economy. This sorrow could have made him a philosopher, a man of religion, a poet. Yusuf Meherally was more fortunate. It made him into a friend. His gift of friendship struck all who came into contact with him. It won him many friends, and it made his concern for them something deeply inspiring. "Take care of yourself he said with deep earnestness to a friend on parting from him in London, when he himself was on the threshold of death and knew it. For with these parting words he put into his friend's hand a book, Ernest Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*.*

– Zakir Hussain at the formal inauguration of Yusuf Meherally Centre in Mumbai on October 1, 1966

Conference at Patna. Later, during a tour of Punjab, he was again arrested on a charge of having defied a prohibitory order. In this connection, he was in Lahore jail for nearly a year where he wrote his satirical masterpiece *My Trip to Pakistan*. Politics and personalities of Punjab were dealt in such great detail that even long residents of the province had something to learn from it.

While still in Lahore jail' he was elected the Mayor of Bombay. His

mayoralty again was unique not for got-up receptions and publicity stunts but for real constructive work and civic service. He was at that time the General Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party and accepted the mayoral office, only on the express condition that he would be allowed to devote himself to Party work as usual. He created a new precedent by personally attending to citizen's complaints on civic matters; he initiated the system of quick dispatch of files

and put down official slackness with an iron hand. On the question of A.R.P. finances he literally made history. His predecessor in office, with the support of the majority Congress Party, sanctioned 24 lakhs of Municipal money towards the Government A.R.P. scheme. But Meherally, as Mayor, refused to pay even a pie. He met the Governor in this connection and frankly told him that the people had no faith in the Government and that they were afraid the British would withdraw from India also, as they did from Burma and Malaya. So, he argued, the defence organization of the people should be in the hands of those who would remain on the scene whoever might come. This led to the organization of the People's Volunteer Brigade. Bombay is the only city in India where the Municipality was allowed to run the A.R.P.

Just before August 8, 1942, Meherally conducted a C.S.P. camp at Poona, where was discussed a comprehensive plan of revolt. But, somehow, the police got the whole information in advanced and wrecked the plan. On August 9, 1942, he was arrested and detained. It was during this period, that he got the heart attack, which finally claimed his life. The authorities offered to give special facilities for treatment at St. George Hospital, but he demanded that two other ailing colleagues of his should also get the same facilities. They refused and he remained in prison. In 1943, when he was released, he was already collapsing and the doctors gave up all hope. For seven days, he was lying unconscious in the general ward of the J.J. Hospital, this darling of Bombay's thousands. In 1947, he left for America for treatment and returned in November 1948, considerably improved.

Among his publications, the two volumes of "Leaders of India" (biographical sketches of national leaders) have run into six editions. As a biographer, he is unsurpassed. Study of personalities and their impact on history has come to him naturally.

(Continued from Page 2)

religion with politics. The BJP has neither understood them, nor their aspirations. The idea of India is based on the country's diversity. What has happened at Muzzafarnagar is a challenge to the very idea. Once again the BJP has poured oil on the fuel through a fake video.

Refugees from the villages of Muzaffarnagar riots between the Hindu Jats and Muslims say that they were attacked by the outsiders. I am reminded that after the partition we too were forced to quit our homes by the outsiders. Our Muslim friends gave us shelter and provided us with rations for a month before we left Sialkot.

The victims of Muzzafarnagar complain bitterly that neighbours watched the mayhem but did not come to their rescue to stop the killing and destruction. The kinship dries up when rioting takes place. The Muzzafarnagar happenings are disconcerting because the communal virus has spread to the rural areas. The administration always fails because it has got politicized and awaits word from the ruling party. Officials did not take action fearing repercussions. The police are contaminated and tilt towards the Hindus.

What happened in Muzaffarnagar, according to the reports in the media, was an instigated riot, suggesting a conspiracy on the part of the BJP. A Muslim youth was killed for eve-teasing. In retaliation, two Hindu Jat

boys were lynched. And then all the hell broke. Leaders, both from the Hindu and Muslim communities, delivered inflammatory speeches.

The BJP further fanned the fire by releasing a fake video, showing the use of violence somewhere else to 'prove' the atrocities against the Hindus. A Muslim cleric led a mob after the prayers on Friday. And, as the state governor has said in a report to the Centre, the administration has become more effete than the ruling Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party which wanted to exploit the situation. But it was confused.

The BJP played a major role in polluting the atmosphere through yatras for building a Ram temple at the site where the Babri Masjid stood before its destruction. The RSS sees its chance in the next elections. It is doing everything possible to destroy the ethos of national struggle to establish a democratic, secular state. Modi's projection, once the RSS pracharak and an authoritarian by nature, fits into the agenda for a Hindu Rashtra.

I sympathize with L. K. Advani. I have seen how defeated he was towards end of 1979 when the Janata Party ousted him for refusing to sever links with the RSS. Instead, he founded in 1980 the BJP and made Atal Behari Vajpayee, who too had been thrown out, as president. Today once again, Advani is forlorn and lonely. Again, the RSS is responsible for his isolation. It has fielded Modi for the prime minister's office. Advani has not liked the manner in which the RSS has imposed Modi on the BJP. Apparently, the RSS feels that if somebody who meets the ideological stance of Hindu Rashtra, it will be Modi, not Advani who over the years has shed bigotry and regards Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan, as secular.

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Muzaffarnagar 2013 – Violence by Political Design

This fact-finding exercise was coordinated by the Centre for Policy Analysis. Team members were the human rights activist and former civil servant Harsh Mander; former Director-General of the Border Security Force, E N Rammohan; Professor Kamal Mitra Chenoy of Jawaharlal Nehru University; National Integration Council member John Dayal; senior journalist Sukumar Muralidharan and CPA Director and senior editor Seema Mustafa.

Introduction and Overview

The first impression of the Muzaffarnagar countryside, now green with the sugarcane ripening for harvest, is of utter desolation. Villages are tense with fear. Kasbas and hamlets are purged of their Muslim presence and the Hindu quarters have also emptied out in a self-imposed curfew even at midday, as women and children peep out from behind closed doors and windows, their menfolk having fled to avoid arrest as criminal complaints are made out against them. Fear is in the air. The atmosphere reeks of embitterment and betrayed trust, with neighbour now unwilling to trust neighbour, and apprehensive of ever returning to their accustomed lives. All the evidence points towards people who were forced to flee their habitations in sheer terror and seek out the safety of gathering among others of their own faith, occupying any vacant space in areas where they could be sure of not being targets just because of who they were.

“We will never go back to our villages”, say Muslim women refugees in a makeshift camp in the *tehsil* town of Budhana, some twenty kilometres from Muzaffarnagar. They are among two thousand five hundred men, women and children who fled their villages to seek safety in the town, among members of their own community. In the blazing post-monsoon heat, they are camped under a *shamiana*, where local community organisations scrape

together the means to feed them twice a day. An open drain runs nearby, fetid with stagnant water. There is no water source and no doctor or health-care worker has visited them in the week that they have been there. The sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) visited them close to a week since they were uprooted from their villages. Police patrols are at a distance and seem mostly static. There is a clear message that is held out to them: that they can only call upon members of their own community for sustenance and assistance in this hour of dire need.

Though the Home Secretary in the Government of Uttar Pradesh has claimed that those displaced from their villages had been sheltered in state-run camps, there was a conspicuous absence of any official at the Budhana camps. Sanitation seemed to be the least priority since meeting the basic needs of food was itself a challenge.

Inmates of the camp spoke of being attacked without warning with seeming intent to terrorise and drive them out of their villages. Several among them reported being sundered from their families and not knowing their whereabouts. A week into the violence, hopes were fading of ever finding those missing alive.

There were complaints of milk being unavailable for the many children in the camp, though nobody really spoke of a food scarcity. For those of the Muslim faith in

Budhana, it was a matter of honour to ensure that nobody seeking their protection at a time of danger should suffer want. The local community leadership seemed especially proud of the manner in which they had stepped up at the time. By the same token, they were rather disdainful of the absence of any official assistance.

At the District Magistrate’s office, staff were neck-deep in work preparing for the visits of the Chief Minister the next day, and of the Prime Minister on September 16. Personnel of the Special Protection Group (SPG) which attends to VVIP security, had landed in the sole helipad available in the district and were examining all arrangements being made for the Prime Minister’s visit. Since the Prime Minister intended to summon top officials from the district for an evaluation meeting, arrangements were being made in the vicinity of the helipad for the gathering. Part of the district administration’s attention was diverted towards ensuring that the helipad and the adjoining conference hall were in appropriate condition to host a VVIP visit and conference. And there also seemed to be a strenuous effort underway to ensure that at least some of the camps would be given the veneer of efficiency and good cheer that could uplift VVIP spirits.

The newly appointed District Magistrate, Kaushal Raj Sharma, was preoccupied with these arrangements, but did this team the

courtesy of a brief meeting. He was at pains to correct the impression this team had gathered of a sense of official neglect of the displaced people in makeshift camps. The official presence was thin he said, only because the job of comforting and sheltering the victim-survivors was best left to the community, which would not just deliver the service but also show deeply-needed empathy and fellow-feeling. The administration meanwhile was active from behind the scenes, providing all necessary supplies, including food, for the sustenance of those displaced in the riots. DM Sharma was particularly anxious to underline that the administration was being attentive to the special needs of children and those of tender years, by supplying milk in adequate quantities to the camps.

The Superintendent of Police (SP) and other senior officials, including the Deputy Inspector-General (DIG) and Inspector-General (IG) were unavailable since they were out in the field making necessary arrangements for the Chief Minister's visit the following day and the Prime Minister's anticipated arrival the day after.

The absence of the administration also shows in the absence of official records of the magnitude of human suffering. Columns of the army moving through the villages and combing the fields for bodies – mainly to still rumours that are rife about untold numbers being killed – are the solitary assurance of state protection for the victims. The police have filed their FIRs from initial oral statements from some refugees. They are yet to record statements, or organise affidavits from the victims. Lists of those displaced and the loss of property that has been caused

in the villages scattered through at least three tehsils of Muzaffarnagar district, are yet to be prepared.

As a fact-finding team from New Delhi, we are dismayed by the evidence we see of the severity of the violence in the villages. The official count of those killed is thirty-nine, of which it has been firmly established, six were Hindus – or more specifically Jats – and the rest, Muslims. Again, the official estimate of those displaced is twenty-five thousand, of which all except about seven hundred are Muslims. Those displaced from other faiths, the DM affirms, are Dalits who have fled Muslim-dominated areas in fear of retaliatory violence. They have not been specific targets of violence though.

Unofficial counts of those killed put the number much higher: at perhaps fifty-three, on the basis of the number of autopsies performed at various hospitals around the district. And community leaders put the number of the displaced at fifty thousand.

This puts Muzaffarnagar in 2013 in the category of the worst instances of communal strife witnessed in the country. It is certainly the worst in over a decade. This fact-finding team is deeply apprehensive at the short term and long term consequences of this massive and systematic internal displacement, and of the chasm that has opened between the two communities. What aggravates it further is the fact that the victims had lived in close proximity of the aggressors. They were farm labour in the fields owned by the people who attacked them in their homes.

A reconstruction of the events

When this fact-finding team

visited Muzaffarnagar, the threat of violence had abated, though rumour held the field. There were rumours in a Jat quarter of Kutba village – deserted but for the womenfolk who kept vigil over the fields and the cattle – that two from their community had been shot at and possibly killed in another part of the village. This rumour was soon scotched by the district administration. District Magistrate Sharma though confirmed that two bodies had been recovered from the Gang Nahar (or Jauli canal) the previous day and identified, though the causes of their death had not at that time been ascertained. The positive aspect here though, was that with the discovery of these two bodies, all members of the Jat community reported missing, had been accounted for.

This team found however, that even a week after the violence erupted in full-blown fury, there was no agreed narrative on what led to it.

There was general agreement among all those the team spoke to, that the Kawal incident of August 27 had lit the immediate spark. Many among them hastened to add the important rider that the embitterment of the atmosphere had been underway for at least two months prior to Kawal. Few among the victims that this team spoke to could account for the sudden strains that emerged in relations between the Muslims and the Jats of the district. But several among the Muslims this team spoke to in the camps of the displaced, reported being challenged and taunted for accustomed and long accepted patterns of behaviour. Wearing the skull cap and beard has been a custom for several among those of the Muslim faith in the district.

Just when it appeared that Samajwadi Party government had handled the 84 Kosi Parikrama incident quite well and had emerged as a hero in the eyes of Muslims, Muzaffarnagar has happened. It has painted the government in a very bad light. There was communal tension in the air in Muzaffarnagar for more than ten days, Muslim leaders had already met Mulayam Singh and requested on September 1 for paramilitary forces to be posted there.

38 people are already dead, many more have been injured, thousands displaced and there has been huge loss of property. While Durga Shakti Nagpal was suspended because of a minor act which did not even succeed in provoking any communal feeling, we're yet to see action against any high ranking official in Muzaffarnagar. Only two SHOs have been suspended. If a huge mahapanchayat is allowed to be held in which people came armed, when section 144 was in implementation, it shows complicity of administration. At what level the decision was taken to allow the mahapanchayat to be held? Obviously, it couldn't have been the two suspended SHOs. Responsibility will have to be fixed and action taken against guilty officer(s).

The meeting was dominated by BJP leaders who gave provocative speeches. Sangh parivar played a crucial role in mobilisation. It couldn't have been BKU alone. Currently the BKU can't possibly organise farmers on their own issues in such a large number. Why would the farmers assemble on a communal issue? It couldn't have happened without the communal machinery of RSS at work. The question is when the Sangh parivar leaders are clearly identified, who added fuel to fire, why are they being spared? What is the Samajwadi party government afraid of?

While communal riots have taken place earlier also in this SP regime but none was so bad as this one in terms of giving the rioters free hand and clear involvement of BJP leaders. Is it a coincidence that the communal atmosphere has suddenly worsened since the arrival of Narendra Modi on national scene? It is a speculation that Modi was testing the waters in Ayodhya through the 84 Kosi parikrama. It became clear very soon that Ayodhya issue can't be milked any more in the same manner as in post-masjid demolition phase. But the 84 Kosi parikrama did serve the purpose of charging the cadre. Now the energies of this cadre have been used in Muzaffarnagar.

The polarisation has been complete. Some of the traditional vote bank of Ajit Singh has shifted to BJP, at least for the time being and possibly till next election. Mulayam Singh's calculation may be that while his rival RLD would weaken, the gain for BJP may not be enough to convert into seats. He, of course, is still counting on counter-mobilisation of Muslims in his favour. This strategy of weaken your rivals to strengthen oneself may backfire if things go out of control as they look at this moment in Muzaffarnagar.

It is sad that parties like SP and BJP have brought back the politics of riots full fledged. They are playing with fire while people pay a price with their lives.

We strongly condemn the communalisation of politics and hope that people will teach a lesson to the parties indulging in this in the next elections.

**Socialist Party(India), Rihai Manch and
National Alliance of People's Movements**

But in the two months preceding the September violence, many among them reported being publicly upbraided for displaying emblems of loyalty towards the Taliban, which supposedly made them sympathisers or even participants in what is constructed in the media discourse as the global *jihad*.

Community honour, as represented in the dignity and bodily integrity of women, was among the themes constantly played on to sharpen the growing estrangement. A further twist was imparted by rumours made up in the ideological factory of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), of a "love *jihad*" launched by attractive young Muslim boys equipped with the full range of the tools of enticement – modish clothes, mobile phones and sweet-talk – to entangle young girls of the other faith, all for serving the hidden agenda of boosting numbers of those born into the faith.

In the circumstances, every incident involving any manner of interaction between a man and a woman came to be viewed with suspicion, especially if they came from different faiths. On August 9, as Muslims were preparing for their Eid-ul-Fitr festivities, one among them, Idris, was killed at the doorstep of the Eidgah in Muzaffarnagar. There had been an alleged incident of harassment involving Idris' daughter for which he had a few days before, confronted and slapped the offending individual in public. His murder was seen as retribution by the man who had suffered the public humiliation. Police were quick to apprehend the individual concerned, along with two alleged accomplices.

There was an incident of a Muslim girl being harassed by youths of the

Jat community in the village of Shoram on August 18. The offending individuals again suffered direct action by kinfolk of their target. A minor affray ensued which the local administration allegedly did nothing about.

Resentment was stoked by the VHP and its affiliates in the area, over the seeming alacrity with which the police had acted in a case involving the murder of a person of the Muslim faith in the August 9 incident. The atmosphere continued to deteriorate without any manner of an antidote being administered either by the political leadership or the local administration.

The Kawal incident on August 27 occurred in a milieu that had been saturated with communal toxins and readily lent itself to any interpretation that served immediate political agendas.

All that is known about Kawal, August 27, is that three young men turned up dead at the end of it. There have been reports about a youth from the village, Shahnawaz, constantly harassing a young girl from the neighbouring Malikpura village and being confronted by her brother Sachin and cousin Gaurav. There are reports of Shahnawaz drawing a dagger at that point, but being bested in hand-to-hand struggle and having the dagger turned on him with fatal consequences. There are also reports that he was simply shot dead by the irate kinsmen of the girl he had been harassing. Sachin and Gaurav were then reportedly set upon by Shahnawaz's community and beaten to death in public.

There are also recorded narratives in the media about Sachin and Gaurav being confronted by persons of the Muslim faith because of their

persistent pursuit of a young Muslim girl. At that time, according to this narrative, they managed to snatch a weapon from among their attackers and kill one among them, before they were themselves overwhelmed by the fury of the mob.

Competing with these accounts, all deeply suffused with community honour, is another one, rather more mundane: that Shahnawaz and Sachin ran into each other on their bicycles and got into an argument in which deeply offensive communal slurs were traded, following which they fell upon each other. Gaurav who was in the vicinity ran to the aid of his cousin. At the end of the fracas, all three lay dead.

In the circumstances, the U.P. state government reacted in the worst manner possible. It gave in to accusations that its supposed partisanship in allowing free rein to miscreants from the Muslim side had emboldened them to take the law into their hands. This narrative of a partisan administration arose, in part, from the action that had followed the August 9 murder and prompted after the Kawal incident, the summary and abrupt transfer of both the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police within hours. Kawal was a localised incident that could have been contained by a strong dose of political statesmanship. Instead of stepping up with what was required, the U.P. state government signalled indecision, ineptitude, or even worse – possibly a degree of collusion with the forces of disorder.

The Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), ostensibly an apolitical force that represents the cause of the Jat peasantry of western U.P., came up soon afterwards with the call for a grand council (*mahapanchayat*) or gathering of the Jat clans of

the region. That in itself may not have been cause for concern since this manner of gathering has been summoned to deliberate on a range of issues, including fair prices for agricultural produce. Yet the call issued for August 31 had overtones that were distinctly menacing: its theme was the honour of the women of the community, as represented in the slogan “*Ma, Beti, Bahu Bachao*”.

The administration had by this time woken up to the possibility of a serious breach of the peace and imposed prohibitory orders under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code. On August 30, community leaders of the Muslim faith in the guise of taking a delegation to meet the newly appointed DM, Kaushal Raj Sharma, began assembling in Muzaffarnagar town. Prominent political leaders from the area joined the delegation, inevitably boosting its number in a manner that made utter nonsense of the prohibitory orders in force. These included Kadir Rana of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) who represents Muzaffarnagar in the Lok Sabha, his party colleague Jameel Ahmad Qasmi who represents the nearby constituency of Meerapur in the U.P. legislative assembly, and a former Congress legislator, Saeed-uz-Zaman. The district administration insists there was no permission given – officially or otherwise – for the gathering. But when confronted by the angry crowd that had assembled in a central area of the town, the DM had no option but to emerge from his office and seek their dispersal through subtle persuasion. That, rather than the use of force was deemed the more prudent option in the circumstances. The petition seeking the reining in of hostile actions by the new alignment that had sprung up to avenge the

“love *jihād*”, was received and the gathering dispersed.

Within the over-heated communal atmosphere of Muzaffarnagar, the DM’s gesture in meeting with the delegation from the Muslim community was read as a measure of appeasement of communal aggression. The new consolidation under the Hindutva umbrella was quick to portray what the DM thought was mere administrative prudence, as the blatant display of a double standard: prohibitory orders would be imposed on the Jat *mahapanchayat*, but not on the Muslim petitioners.

This imparted a fresh edge of anger to the *mahapanchayat* that gathered on August 31, focused exclusively on the defence of feminine honour. Again, the administration faltered in its enforcement of prohibitory orders, for which the DM offers the alibi that these gatherings are often organised by discrete communications through community networks, which arrive at decisions to assemble at a particular place and time without any prior announcement. The clans (or *khaps*) of the Jat community have their own means of mobilisation which they use frequently, often catching the administration on its blindside.

Yet with all these alibis on offer, the evidence seems overwhelmingly to indicate that the administration remained passive as the spiral of provocative actions gathered momentum. The precise reasons need to be ascertained. It is more than likely that the paralysis arose from conflicting guidance from the political leadership, both locally and at the state level. If so, the trail of formal instructions and informal verbal orders conveyed

In the midst of riot-hit Muzaffarnagar district where 38 people have been killed in communal clashes since Saturday, two villages have emerged as islands of communal harmony where the area’s famed ‘Ganga Jamuna tehzeeb’ is still alive.

Even as bloody clashes eroded the trust between the two communities in the area, the Jat-dominated Mohammadpur Shakist village did not allow its lone Muslim family to leave for ‘safer’ options.

Despite the fact that the village lost a young man belonging to the majority community in the clashes, the villagers asked the Muslim family not to leave the village and promised that they would be protected.

On September 7, 35-year-old Jogendra was killed along with 42-year-old Virendra of neighbouring Modkhurd village while they were on their way home after attending the mahapanchayat. The riots began after people returning from the mahapanchayat were allegedly attacked by people of another community.

The Muslim family mourned Jogendra’s death along with the entire village. “The death of Jogendra was a setback for my family as well,” said Raisuddin whose septuagenarian mother Bundi has been visiting Jogendra’s home every day to help the family in their hour of grief.

The 10-member family runs a barber shop in the village and occasionally works in the fields of Jats to earn their livelihood.

Bundi said, “Barbers in villages perform certain rituals during the period of mourning and I did all these rituals for the family and helped them with their daily chores.”

The families have stayed together for generations and the Jats never made them feel that they were the only Muslim family in the village. “We share our grief and happiness and they have even deputed me as the chowkidar of the village,” said Raisuddin.

Prosperous Jats provide them interest-free loan whenever they need money. “In our time of need, we never return empty handed from their doorsteps,” said Raisuddin even as he and his son offered water to mourners at Jogendra’s house.

The family has also been given the responsibility to invite people for Jogendra’s arishti (ritual).

Jogendra’s distant relative Sunil Choudhary said, “We can’t ignore the significance and support of Raisuddin’s family in our daily life. It is our responsibility to protect them in order to keep the ethos of humanity intact.”

In another instance of communal harmony, resident of village Jaula in district Muzaffarnagar, majority Muslims have protected about 100 Hindus living in the village.

“Despite all odds, we have not allowed them to leave because it will give a bad name to our village which we can’t bear,” said Abdul Gaffar, the village’s former headman.

The village is also giving shelter to members of a community who have fled riot-hit areas. The majority community said they had promised that no harm will come to the Hindus and despite the prevailing atmosphere, they have stayed true to their words.

- S Raju , *Hindustan Times*

by the political leaders through the two weeks that followed the Kawal incident, needs to be uncovered.

District Magistrate Sharma, new to his job, speaks now of having received some inkling of a cycle of Jat community gatherings being planned after the “*Ma, Beti, Bahu Bachao*” assembly. Again, because of the undercover mode of communication and organisation adopted, the administration missed out on the details. It received word that one *panchayat* of a particular clan grouping (or *khap*) had been held on September 5. To add to its confusion, there was also a call for a *bandh* through the district by the BJP that very day.

Meanwhile, a video clip purporting to show the killing of Gaurav and Sachin was circulated through the mobile phone network, and posted on the facebook page belonging to Sangeet Singh Som of the BJP, who represents Meerut’s Sardhana constituency in the state legislature. The video never had great plausibility since it was easily traced to an incident in Sialkot in Pakistan, two years back, in which two brothers were killed in a grisly incident of mob violence. But in the overheated environment of Muzaffarnagar, it circulated widely and ignited further animosities.

What seems germane here is that with the buildup of tension and the continuing acts of default by the district administration, there was no way that the *mahapanchayat* planned for September 7 could have been stopped, except through a determined assertion of administrative will. This would have involved a mass deployment of security forces through Muzaffarnagar district and adjoining areas in Shamli, Meerut,

and Baghpat – not to mention the districts of Haryana from where significant participation was expected.

The administration decided against this course and instead, seemingly opted for the strategy of keeping a close vigil over the events of the day. All the groups arriving at the venue of the *mahapanchayat* – Nangla Mandaur in Jansath block, about twenty kilometres from Muzaffarnagar and very close to Kawal village where it all ostensibly started – were closely observed for any possible violent intent. DM Sharma states now that all the lethal weapons that were later brandished at the *mahapanchayat* were carefully concealed as the crowds assembled.

The *mahapanchayat* itself was raucous and unruly. Sangeet Som and an itinerant saffron-robed woman from the vicinity of Muzaffarnagar, Sadhvi Prachi, were reported to have made especially angry and accusatory speeches, denouncing the continuing threats to the faith from the large Muslim presence in the district. Lethal arms were unsheathed and brandished with clearly threatening intent. The few political leaders who came to the event with the purpose of injecting an element of moderation were shouted down amidst much heckling and chanting of the name of Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi as the man of the moment.

As the crowds dispersed, filled with the spirit of revenge, Israr a freelance photographer who had been hired that day to film the event for the local police was set upon and beaten to death. And from then on, divergent narratives emerge. One side has it that as a tractor transporting a trailer full of

participants in the *mahapanchayat* crossed the Jauli village, it came under fire from Muslims who had hidden themselves in the fields adjoining the road. Six people were allegedly killed and their bodies dumped into the Gang Nahar. That account is disputed by one of the local elements who has been named in the police report registered after the event. The reality, he claims, is that those on board the tractor trailer dragged a passerby on board and began mercilessly beating him, ultimately leading to his death. A brawl ensued in which firearms and lethal weapons were used after which a number from both sides lay dead.

Violence had meanwhile erupted in Muzaffarnagar town, where Rajesh Verma, a news reporter who works as a stringer for the IBN 7 network was shot through the chest and died on the spot. It is difficult to escape the inference that Verma who was an extremely popular journalist in the town, was shot with deliberate intent, though both sides were reportedly using firearms quite freely by this time.

By that evening, curfew had been clamped in three police station jurisdictions within Muzaffarnagar town, but violence had spread like a contagion to the villages, especially in the tehsils of Budhana and Muzaffarnagar, and the neighbouring district of Shamli.

Victim-survivors that this team met from the village of Kutba in Budhana tehsil, spoke of assurances being given all through the evening of September 7 by the *gram pradhan* Devinder, asking all communities to stay calm and keep the peace. The next morning at eight, the *pradhan* himself was seen leading a violent

mob, burning down Muslim homes and hacking those who came in their path. Kutba village reported eight deaths and is along with other villages within the jurisdiction of the Phugama police station, among the worst affected in the violence of those days.

There were also reports which indicated the opposite: of Muslim families being sheltered by the *gram pradhan* through the night of September 7 when violence began spreading, and being escorted to the safety of camps set up by the community in neighbouring towns the following day. Such an incident, also coincidentally involving a *pradhan* named Devinder from the Kinauni village in Budhana tehsil, was recorded by a delegation of the CPI(M) which visited the district at roughly the same time as this team.

With violence engulfing widely dispersed villages where Muslims and Jats have lived together in amity for decades, the job of enforcement became much more difficult. In most cases, this team found that the security presence had been pulled out of villages where the worst outbreaks had happened, presumably since they had been evacuated by members of the vulnerable community. A security presence was visible in the more substantial towns such as Budhana and Tanwali, though only in the main thoroughfares and squares and not in the vicinity of the camps and shelters for the displaced.

Conclusions: Of state failure and political cynicism

The conclusions of this team are that the state government seems to have been taken by surprise, though they have no reason to, that there was probably a deliberate disregard

of rising tensions and intelligence reports. Muslims were attacked not so much with the intent of causing deaths, which would invite serious opprobrium, but with the object of chasing them out of the Hindu majority villages. The team has concluded that there was a plan to end decades of coexistence and “cleanse” certain villages of the Muslim presence. Having carried through this part of their agenda, the young males – particularly those of the Jat community – have also chosen at least during daylight hours, to make themselves scarce in their usual places of habitation. The police response has been too little and too late. Investigations into the cycle of provocation and violence that led to the conflagration of September 7 have made little headway. And the police have been conspicuous by their absence in villages cleansed of the Muslim presence, where even the Jat community has chosen to make itself scarce. Mobile patrols and static pickets have been absent where they may have been most required. With the kind of religious cleansing that has been attempted, a number of pickets should have been set up in all villages of mixed religious composition, to check the growing animosity between communities. And even if a number of complaints and FIR’s have been registered, there seems to have been no attempt to arrest the perpetrators of the killing and violent expulsion of Muslims.

The state government has disregarded all norms of prudent staffing of police stations in a district of mixed religious composition. Police stations according to the many victim-survivors this team met, simply refused to respond to their urgent calls for help because they were manned by personnel

in tacit sympathy with the caste agenda of the aggressors. In this respect, the locals believe that the AkhileshYadav ministry has reversed a healthy practice from earlier years, to assign police command posts in a manner that minimised the potential for conflict of interests arising from caste or religious loyalties. The outcome is a complete loss of faith in the agencies of the state, with the police now castigated as an accessory of caste and communal violence.

This team was shocked at the inability and incompetence of the state government, with even the basic measures not being taken to ensure that those provoking a communal conflagration were thwarted in their designs. Under threat of communal strife, a government has four major tasks to perform, and this team which includes an experienced civil administrator and senior police officer, feels that these tasks, if done with commitment and competence, would have averted the threat of communal violence. The essential steps involved — prevention, control, rescue, rehabilitation and justice – are dealt with in greater detail below.

Prevention

The AkhileshYadav government failed to still the rumours that spread through the area like wildfire, adding to burgeoning tensions and pushing communities into confrontation. There are no two views that the Muzaffarnagar, and indeed the western belt of Uttar Pradesh, was plagued by toxic rumours designed to pit communities against each other. Instead of defusing these from the very beginning through a sustained information campaign, the state government chose to ignore them, contributing to a volatile

atmosphere that could have erupted at any time.

Reports of the fake tape that was posted on the social media by a BJP legislator of adjoining Meerut district were also not acted upon by the state government until it was too late to intervene. Arrest warrants of the legislator were issued, and the fact that the video was of an incident in Pakistan, were made known only when the violence had erupted.

Despite the tension over the incidents of alleged harassment of young girls and the subsequent deaths, the state government allowed large gatherings from both sides to take place without check. Displaced villagers from different parts of the district told the team that the violence started after *panchayats* were held in their respective villages. Though DM Sharma claims that a number of preventive arrests were made between August 31 and September 7, his case seems to lack conviction.

The team does not accept the explanation of the district authorities that they did not expect this *mahapanchayat* to take place. Villagers confirmed that there was sufficient notice for this, and at least they all knew it was going to be held. The failure to act on information was an abject failure of the state government.

Control

The state government was unable to contain the violence after it broke out. District authorities claimed that they had no idea it would spread to the countryside, and were expecting it only in the town area of Muzaffarnagar. The police was absent with not a single incident being reported by the villagers of police intervention to either

arrest leaders making provocative speeches, or to help those being attacked by mobs. There is not a single shred of evidence to prove that the police acted against the mobs that freely attacked and killed their neighbours, and looted and burnt homes. The Army was called in eventually, and its presence brought down the levels of violence even though it was not authorised by the state administration to use force for ensuring peace. Women and children trapped in their homes told the team that they were rescued by the Army from the burning villages. The displaced villagers also spoke of incidents where the local police had supported the attacking mobs, but this could not be confirmed independently. However, the absence of the police in itself was an act of omission that really amounted to commission insofar as the raging violence was concerned.

Rescue

The apparatus of the state government was not visible in effecting the rescue of villagers from the mobs. Instead there are several instances when Muslims from adjoining villages, rushed in to rescue those who had been trapped in their bastis and could not escape.

Villagers ran for their lives through the days and night, with the state administration unwilling or unable to help them. Some were killed, others were injured, but the effort remained to run to safety. Women spoke of how they ran with their little children, terrified out of their wits, barefoot with no belongings for help, with not a single policeman in sight. Their homes were looted and set ablaze but the police are still to visit several of the affected villages till date.

(to be concluded)

Gandhi Katha

Dear Friends,

This is to invite you to a unique discourse on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti which falls on 2nd October. Narayanbhai Desai, senior Sarvodaya leader, a true Gandhian and the son of Mahadevbhai Desai who was Mahatma Gandhi's private secretary for two scores of years has been narrating 'Gandhi Katha' for the last eleven years. This discourse has taken place all over Gujarat and also in various places in the country and the U. S.

We in Mumbai will get a golden opportunity to listen to the unknown aspects of Gandhi's life and personality from the 88 years old veteran who has had a personal interaction with the Mahatma.

The venue is
Mahatma Gandhi Seva Mandir, opposite the Lake,
S V Road, Bandra West
and the time is
5.30 pm to 9 pm every day
from October 2 to October 6, 2013

Yours sincerely,

*Neela Bhagwat, Pushpa Bhawe, Vijaya Chauhan,
Rajni Bakshi, Ramdas Bhatkal, Daniel Mazgaonkar, Vinayak Pandit,
Amarendra Dhaneshwar, Jayant Diwan, Simpreet Singh...*



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Aberrations in the army

Kuldip Nayar

I have been getting calls from the Pakistan media to inquire whether the army stalled the government from certain decisions or forced it to take some without its willingness. Their concern is understandable because the army is the boss in Pakistan and even Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who said the elected government would be superior, has to clear the agenda of close India-Pakistan relations with his army chief General Parvez Kayani.

I have assured the Pakistan media that the situation in India is like the one prevailing in advanced countries in the West where voters are the arbiters. However, I can recall one example of the Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act which can kill anyone on suspicion without being arraigned. The government was inclined to modify the act after a commission's recommendations. But the army had its way and the act stays without any amendment.

Except for this, I have found the Indian army obedient to the elected government. It may be a cliché but the army is apolitical and takes pride in eschewing politics. There may be discussions in messes or canteens of the armed forces on the present conditions obtaining the country. But

they are healthy and nothing beyond the ventilation of disgust.

This is not even a case of Bonapartism. I know of a few aberrations on the part of certain army chiefs who have gone beyond the ambit of authority. But there is no instance of defiance. When General K.S. Thimmaiah, a popular army chief, submitted his resignation to the dismay of public, it was against the functioning of the then Defence Minister Krishna Menon.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru intervened and made Thimmaiah to take back his resignation. Menon stayed on at the Defence Ministry and Thimmaiah retired after completing his term. General K. Sundarji went beyond his authority during the military exercises (brass tacks). He went into the disputed territory under China and into Pakistan. Islamabad was so disturbed that it sent its foreign secretary Abdul Sattar to New Delhi. Sundarji was pulled up. However, he continued to be the army chief until his retirement.

Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw was popular among the people, particularly after the victory in the Bangladesh war. Even the then

Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, was suspicious. He made it clear when he met her that he was proud to head such armed force which did not interfere in political affairs. "You do your job and allow me to do mine," he was supposed to have told Indira Gandhi.

The latest example, somewhat disturbing, is that of General V. K. Singh who retired recently as the army chief. He shared dais with the controversial Gujarat chief minister, Narendra Modi. I wish V. K. Singh had waited a bit longer before jumping into politics. There is no harm in generals joining politics. The greatest democracy of America has examples of top military chiefs like Douglas MacArthur and Dwight D. Eisenhower running for presidential election and winning the coveted position. But both of them did not rush to the election platform from the theatre of war. They contested only after decent intervals.

The main allegation against V. K. Singh is that he set up a unit, Technical Support Division, to snoop on the government at Srinagar and used secret funds to topple it. In an interview to a television network, he has gone further to say that the army has been financing since independence ministers in the Jammu and Kashmir government to maintain "peace and stability" in the state.

The allegation of snooping against the elected government at Srinagar is a serious one. The ruling National Conference is justified in demanding a probe by a sitting Supreme Court judge. The centre is in the dock as far as V. K. Singh's admission that the military has financed all ministers at Srinagar. Let the Omar Abdullah government explain whether the charge is correct. Farooq Abdullah,

(Continued on Page 4)

Criminals Under the garb of Jihaad

Shamsul Islam

Last week ended in the horrible bloodshed of innocent people in two separate and faraway parts of the world, Nairobi and Peshawar, the blood of innocent children, women and men was spilled for none of their fault. However, in both the carnages, the perpetrators came from organizations linked to Talibaa and Al-Qaeda. They claim to represent true Islam and avenge the wrongs done to Muslims by the West and its allies.

Peshawar in Pakistan is a historic city where stands one of the oldest churches in the (Indian) sub-continent, All Saints Anglican Church. This historic Church built in 1883 inside the Kohati Gate within the walled city of Peshawar is part of the Parish of the Church of Pakistan. It is an impressive and architecturally unique place of worship with minarets and a dome that bears a striking synthesis of Saracenic architecture; a combination of Mughal and British designs.

This historic Church draws large number of worshippers and tourists on every Sunday when prayer is held. On September 22, 2013 when hundreds of worshippers were coming out of the Church two suicide bombers exploded bombs strapped to their bodies. The explosions instantly killed around 80 worshippers and onlookers including 37 women and 7 children and more than 150 people were wounded, most of them critically. It may raise the death toll to more than 100.

The group, Jandullah (Soldiers of God), a terrorist group once financed by Pakistan Army and linked to Pakistani Taliban admitted that it carried out the bombing. Ahmad Marwat, the Jundullah spokesman said that his organization "carried out the suicide bombings at Peshawar church," and "will continue to strike foreigners and non-Muslims until drone attacks stop."

According to press reports large number of friends and relatives of victims gathered outside the Church and denounced the Pakistan government for not being able to control terrorist activities in the country. Protests were held in all major cities of Pakistan in which thousands participated.

At Nairobi, capital of Kenya and the largest city in the country was targetted by another terrorist group Al-Shabab (the Youth) based in Somalia and linked to Al-Qaeda again. A group of well-armed terrorists entered a popular upscale shopping mall on Saturday (September 21, 2013) afternoon throwing grenades and firing automatic weapons. Till Sunday, more than 70 innocent visitors to the mall had been killed and around 200 people had been injured. It is believed that a large number of visitors to the mall were under the captivity of the armed bandits so number of casualties is bound to rise. Shockingly, at the time of attack a programme focussed on children was being held and the death toll of children is feared to

be very high. The victims were not only Kenyans. French, Dutch, South African, Indian, Australian, British and Canadian visitors also lost lives. Shedding of blood of innocent children, male and females continued through Monday.

Prominent Ghanaian poet Kofi Awoonor who was attending a literary festival in Nairobi and visiting the mall too became victim of this terrorist attack and died on the spot. His poetry represented African voice against western imperialism, its stooges in Africa and militarism. He symbolized fight against apartheid.

According to press reports Al-Shabab defended this gruesome carnage holding that it was carried out the attack in response to Kenyan military operations against Muslims in Somalia.

British Prime Minister David Cameron called it “an absolutely sickening and despicable attack of appalling brutality”. US President Barack Obama was quick to call Kenyan President Kenyatta to express condolences and promised “US support for Kenya’s efforts to bring the perpetrators of the attack to justice”.

These gestures are welcome but we need to ask them: Is not it a fact that West created Talibaan and helped Al-Qaeda to grow in face of rising secular challenge to the Western exploitation and hegemony in areas populated by Muslims in 1980s. The Jihadi Islam was created and nurtured by the Western intelligence agencies to counter socialist and nationalist movements in ‘Islamic world’. If predecessors of David Cameron and Barack Obama had not created

these monsters and helped them to grow world could be a better place today. The Western hypocrisy continues even today. Alex Lantier writing on World Socialist Web Site on September 23, 2013 said, “The horror of the Westgate attack underscores the criminal character of the support offered by the United States government and its allies to Al Qaeda-linked opposition militias in Syria. These forces have carried out hundreds of terrorist attacks in that country, according to US officials, killing large numbers of innocent civilians”.

However, despite this de-humanised and questionable parentage, the criminals of Jandullah and Al-Shabab cannot be absolved of their diabolical crimes against humanity. These gangs of criminals defend their acts arguing that they are fighting to ‘Save Islam/Muslims’ from Christian/non-Muslim adversaries. Their grouse is that in the name of fighting terrorism the West is targeting all Muslims and see what these self-appointed guardians of Islam are doing. They are killing and maiming innocent people who have nothing to do with rulers of any creed or hue. Thus there is no difference between these two.

They want to kill non-Muslims. It’s idiotic to think that bombs and bullets are programmed to first verify from the victims his/her religion before striking. They forget that on this earth almost everywhere people professing different religions stay and work together. Both at Peshawar and Nairobi they have put to death number of Muslims.

And how do they justify killing of a renowned atheist poet in Nairobi? He did not believe in Christian

God or any other God. The fact is that they choose soft targets; the common people. By such acts these terrorists do not weaken the West but help the latter to behave in a more draconian manner.

These terrorist swear by the name of Allah, the God. We are told that Allah loves children but these soldiers of Allah have no remorse in killing children. These terrorists believe that fight is between Muslims and others. What about persons like Noam Chomsky (and millions others like him) who have spent life time in opposing West’s criminal designs. And what about Muslim rulers of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey etc. who have worked for generations as foot-soldiers of the West? The fight against Western Imperialism requires unity of all suffering people. By indulging in mindless theocratic violence these Jihadi terrorists are only further dividing the people. They are the best friends of the West.

For Jihaadi terrorists, it is difficult to comprehend that human civilization did not start with the advent of Islam. It developed through millions of years. There were conflicts but synthesis was the rule and Islam too developed as synthesis of many cultures and religions. Also, no religion can claim that its followers make a monolithic whole. Islam versus others or any similar call by any religion is a hoax propagated by all kinds of Fascists. May God give such elements some common sense to understand complexity of human society!

This spate of theocratic violence against common people once again reminds us of prophetic words of Dr
(Continued on Page 7)

Mohan Singh

Mohan Singh, passed away at AIIMS in New Delhi on 22nd September, 2013 after a prolonged battle with blood cancer. He is survived by wife Urmila and two daughters.

Son of Mahendra Pratap Singh and Surya Jyoti Kumari, Mohan Singh was born on 4th March, 1945, at Deoria. He was married to Urmila Singh on 6th July, 1969. His romance with socialist movement started at a very young age under the guidance of his uncle late Shri Ugrasen, who was elected to UP Vidhan Sabha several times as Socialist Party candidate and later on to the sixth Lok Sabha as a Janata Party nominee. Mohan Singh was inspired by great Socialist leader Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia.

Mohan Singh, did his M.A. at Allahabad University. As a student he took keen interest in debate competitions. He was President of

Allahabad University Students' Union in 1968-69. He was imprisoned in 1966 for occupying Anand Bhavan in Allahabad and also in an agitation launched by Socialist Party on the language issue along with Rajnarain. He was also jailed along with Madhu Limaye for participating in Satyagraha in 1973. He was detained for 20 months during the Emergency for taking part in Jayaprakash Narayan's movement. He took part in Socialist Youth Conference at Brussels in 1974 and also visited Belgium, Germany, Holland, Thailand, U.K., U.S.A.

He was General Secretary, All India Samajvadi Yuvjan Sabha (1973-74); Joint Secretary, Socialist Party-Uttar Pradesh (1973-74); General Secretary, Uttar Pradesh Janata Party, 1977-79. Member Uttar Pradesh Assembly, 1977-85. Minister of State, Government of Uttar Pradesh; Chief whip, Lok

Dal Legislature Party (1980-85). Member, Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council (1990-91). He was elected to the tenth Lok Sabha (1991-96); Deputy Chief Whip, Janata Dal Parliamentary Party (1991-94); Chief Whip, Samata Party (1994-96); re-elected to 14th Lok Sabha (for third term) in 2004. He was on the National Executive of Samajwadi Party and later its General Secretary and was elected to Rajya Sabha in 2010. He was awarded the Best Parliamentarian award in 2008.

Mohan Singh was committed to socialist ideology and socialist causes all his life. He wrote hundreds of articles and many books. Some of his books are (i) Yaadain Aur Batain; (ii) Bharatiya Samvidhan Ke Nirman Mein Nehru; (iii) Dr. Ambedkar - A Multifaceted Personality; (iv) History of Socialist Movement and (v) Freedom Movement and Socialist Contribution.

-Qurban Ali

(Continued from Page 2)

former chief minister, is so disturbed that he has demanded a CBI probe immediately. The constitution by V. K. Singh of a special cell for special purposes has also to be looked into. The defence ministry has issued a statement to assure that the matter is being pursued for "further action." V. K. Singh was said to have been upset by the leakage of report against him by top army officials.

The report is not yet in the public domain. But the charges are too serious to be left at that. The revelations make a mockery of the army's function in a democratic polity. Covert operations are conducted all over the world. They should never see the light of the day and the officials engaged in them

should keep quiet till their death and not even mention them in their memoirs.

The military also needs to revise its rules of retirement so as to stop the former chiefs of the three services—army, air force and navy—from joining a political party for a decade after their retirement. Being in command they are bound to have earned enough fame to influence the voters. All this darkens the image of the army.

However, V. K. Singh is not the entire army. He is a maverick. He has criticized even the Supreme Court for having rejected his claim to continue one year more in service because of his birth certificate was "incorrect." When he had made no

effort to have the "mistake" rectified during his entire career, he had no right to do so after occupying the position of the chief of army staff.

V. K. Singh is all politics. Even his body language says so. What he has said speaks volumes of affairs between the government and the army. The self-righteousness of V. K. Singh is not understandable. Why did he not stand up and stop the financing on Kashmir? Instead, he accelerated the process. He says that Omar Abdullah has "an agenda." What is it and what did V. K. Singh do to stop it? To topple an elected government is no solution. His own credibility is in doubt. His association with Anna Hazare at present should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Muzaffarnagar Violence 2013 by Political Design - II

Relief

Government figures place the number of displaced persons at 25,000 but the villagers of Muzaffarnagar insist the number is well over 50,000. Hundreds and thousands of men, women and children ran for their lives over September 6-9, as they were attacked by mobs armed with lathis, guns, swords, daggers and broken glass. They just ran without knowing where they would go, as the crowds attacked them and their homes that were looted and in several cases gutted. Many villagers ran for shelter just out of fear of being attacked. They ended up in the bigger *kasbas*, in *madarsas* or just some open spaces where they were assured that surrounding habitations held no threat.

They have been living under the open skies since then, dependent entirely on the goodwill of those around them for food, clothing and medical help. The local community has been looking after their needs to the extent possible, by arranging food, bedding, clothes. The state government had not stepped in according to the testimony of the victim survivors, though DM Sharma insists that the district administration had been organising supplies of essential commodities. It is difficult to avoid the inference that these interventions came rather late and were intended to embroider the scenario just ahead of a series of VVIP visits.

The team does not believe that it is a good idea for the district administration to make a virtue of community self-help in such situations. When the authority of

the state is seen to have eroded, or even collapsed, a visible presence of its agencies in the subsequent rescue and rehabilitation is essential to restore public confidence.

Mothers with little babies complained about the lack of food and medical aid. There were no doctors at the camp. No police, no state official at all. The thousands of displaced persons who made it clear they could never go back home, have been left by the Akhilesh Yadav government to fend for themselves.

Justice

The state government has still not been able to initiate the process of justice in the district. The police has filed a number of FIR's but these represent something of a scattershot approach and seem to have not named the real perpetrators of the violence. Eyewitnesses to the violence told this team that they have not been interviewed by the police. The essential step to restore confidence, of setting up small police posts near the shelters where the displaced have gathered, to gather their testimony, has not been taken.

At one of the larger villages, Kutba, the team found a number of *safai karamcharis* brought in to sweep the streets of what was a virtual ghost town. Everyone had fled, the Muslims as they were attacked, and the Jats for fear of arrests. Only a few women and old men remained. Asked about it a sub-divisional magistrate supervising the arrangements said he was there for cleaning up. Then seeming to realise that this *safai* could well be interpreted as clearing up the

evidence of serious crimes, he said that his job was to take stock of the situation.

This team believes that the procedure adopted shows a desire to cover up some of the worst acts of violence that have occurred. The *safai* operation which has been undertaken even before *panchnamas* with the victim have been registered about the losses they have suffered, creates grave doubts about how compensation will be evaluated in future.

Media mischief

It has been just over a year since graphic images were circulated over internet and the mobile phone network about the supposed atrocities inflicted on Muslims during the riots that engulfed the Bodoland areas of Assam. The images were quickly discovered to be manipulated and pulled out of an entirely irrelevant context, with deliberate intent to stoke the flames of vengeance. Soon, rumours were spread through the mobile phone network that all people of northeastern origin in all parts of India had been marked out for a severe retribution. A mass flight of these people from some of India's most cosmopolitan cities such as Bangalore and Pune ensued. In Assam, where they were mostly headed, journalists and social media users put all their energies into combating the noxious spread of rumour. Despite the state of panic in which they arrived back in their hometowns, those who had fled did not become agents of a further escalation in the cycle of violence. Soon they were all travelling back to their places of work. It was

an incident that illustrated the worst of the possible uses of the social media. By the same token, it showed also that the same media, when used with a degree of social responsibility and sensitivity, could be the best antidote to sectarian political agendas.

Similar lessons emerge from Muzaffarnagar, though with one rather crucial qualification: though its use for destruction was amply on evidence, nobody quite stepped up to show how the social media could be used for building bridges and cooling the embers of sectarian hatred. The circulation of the images from Sialkot already referred to, was one of the most blatant abuses of the power of the social media in the Muzaffarnagar context. Those suspected of responsibility for this dark deed have been booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including forgery, criminal conspiracy and promoting enmity on religious grounds. But no arrests have been effected, though one among those responsible is believed to be roaming free in full public view in the district just adjoining Muzaffarnagar.

Further mischief has arisen from the use of stories and visuals published on mainstream media platforms, though after morphing and manipulating them to serve a sectarian agenda. The hand of the VHP functionaries in Muzaffarnagar is suspected in these particular acts. For instance, on September 8, a story from the Muzaffarnagar edition of *Dainik Jagaran*, a widely circulated daily newspaper in the Hindi belt and especially U.P., was circulated with the headline “*Muzaffarnagarmein Musalmaanonka Aatank, Hinduonmein Khauf*” (Muslim

terror in Muzaffarnagar, Fear among Hindus), when the story was originally published under the headline “*Panchayat se laute do logon ki hatya*” (Two killed while returning from panchayat).

On September 9, another scanned news story from the *Dainik Jagaran* was circulated with the headline reading: “*Musalmaanondwaara Hinduonka Katile-aam Jaari*” (Mass Murder of Hindus by Muslims Underway), while the headline as published by the newspaper was “*Dangaiyonko goli maarneka aadesh*” (Orders issued to shoot rioters on sight).

The authorities seemed to respond to these threats in the worst possible manner: blocking the circulation of various newspapers in the district. On September 9, it was reported that copies of newspapers published in Delhi, Muzaffarnagar and Lucknow, were being examined by the authorities and deliveries being delayed for fear that their content could aggravate communal animosities.

This was quite clearly the worst possible response to the crisis of hatred spread through the social media. In all such situations, it is the considered opinion of those who have studied the role of the media in conflict situations that the best recourse is to allow the people to judge for themselves. Any reasonably well informed social media reader would, on seeing the purported *Dainik Jagaran* headline circulating through social media, make an effort to check it against the original. The forgery and the mischief would in other words, have been quickly detected if access had been ensured to the original item. In seeking to deny this access,

the authorities acted in panic and ill-considered haste.

It is also appropriate to flag the response of the mainstream media – including the numerous news channels – for what seems a rather tepid response to the horrors of Muzaffarnagar. From the days of Gujarat 2002, India’s first major communal pogrom in the age of the twenty-four hour news channel, it has been evident that a close watch over the course of the violence, once it flares up, often shames the authorities into acting even against those with political connections. That element of media pressure for swift and purposive administrative action seems to have been absent in Muzaffarnagar. The reasons would need careful study by all, including the media community.

The larger politics

Finally, it is vital to take into account the larger context in which the most recent round of communal violence in Uttar Pradesh was constructed. This is a story that goes back to an early date in the life of the Akhilesh Yadav ministry. In October 2012, riots broke out in Faizabad district after some idols were reported missing from a temple and politicians of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad appeared on the scene to blame the administration and whip up hostilities against those of the Muslim faith. The idols were soon afterwards discovered, but by then the violence had occurred, the estrangement between communities had set in – and political dividends had been harvested by whichever force staged that entire episode.

This was followed by a number of minor skirmishes over the next few months. In August this year, when the VHP chose to visit its

old battleground of Ayodhya with the ritual mobilisation of the “*chaurasi kos iyatra*”, the U.P. State Government responded with a heavy-handed security cordon to prevent Hindutva activists from arriving at the proposed site of the action. Local *mahants* at Ayodhya spoke up against the VHP effort to take over as its exclusive patrimony, spaces they had learnt to share over generations between various cults associated with Hindu divinity. And the *kosiyatra* was soon called off with the VHP retreating in disarray.

Muslim political groups in U.P. remained unimpressed since the Akhilesh Yadav ministry has had a history of double-dealing ever since it took office last year. There were rumours rife of a “fixed match” in which the VHP had made a pretence of withdrawal on the Ayodhya battleground, only to raise the stakes elsewhere. And the entire thing was seen to be a choreographed spectacle in which Akhilesh Yadav’s Samajwadi Party (SP) and the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would create a sharp polarisation on communal grounds, compelling the electorate in the state to make a choice between them, and squeezing out the other parties which have been claiming significant shares of the popular vote in recent elections.

Political formations and civil society actors in U.P. and elsewhere will have to watch the unfolding of any such agenda in future months since the BJP has with the formal nomination of Narendra Modi as its prime ministerial candidate for general elections in 2014, signalled that it will raise the temperature of confrontation between communities as a matter of electoral strategy. The possible retreat of the Muslims into

a siege mentality would suit the cynical calculations of other parties that thrive on the vulnerability of the religious minority. Political formations committed to secularism and civil society actors working for communal peace need to blow the whistle on this agenda before it causes deeper damage. The consequences in human suffering of its full implementation could be beyond imagination.

Recommendations

This team has on the basis of its discussions with victim-survivors and the local administration, arrived at a number of concrete recommendations in regard to immediate priorities for action:

A Supreme Court judge should be appointed to carry out an immediate and time-bound inquiry into the incidents of violence;

The Communal Violence bill should be brought to the first rank of legislative priorities, making dereliction of duty by public officials involving both acts of omission and commission, a punishable offence and instituting the principle of command responsibility.

Legal and mandatory duties be instituted under the bill for rescue, relief and rehabilitation of the victims of communal violence.

Immediate arrest of the political leaders who incited violence at the *mahapanchayat*.

Arrest of the originator of the fake video which fomented ill feeling among communities and contributed directly to the violence.

Lists to be prepared of all those displaced; their material losses evaluated; supplies of food, drinking water, shelter and clothing to be ensured, with special attention to the needs of women and children.

Doctors and medical attendants to be pressed into service at all camps.

Urgent attention to the conditions of sanitation in the camps.

September 22, 2013.

(Continued from Page 3)

John Joseph, Bishop of Faisalabad (Jhang) in Pakistan. He shot himself to death on May 6, 1998, while leading a protest march against Blasphemy Laws in the Sahiwal (Montgomery) town of Pakistan. Six days before he sacrificed his life at the altar of bigotry being indulged in the name of Islam in Pakistan, Bishop John Joseph wrote an open letter to his friends world over. In his letter, the Bishop underlined the fact that religious bigotry is created and nourished by the rulers but once it is able to settle down it turns into a monster capable of consuming the creators. But the heaviest price is paid by common people. He warned that we should not believe that blood-thirsty cult of religious violence will go away by itself or rulers who created and fanned it would like to see its end. He pleaded that “each one of us has to get involved and play our role”. We have not learnt any lesson from Dr. John Joseph’s martyrdom. Unfortunately, we the commoners have become mere spectators. If we wish to challenge the theocratic violence we need to become activists to unmask the criminals who spill blood in the name of religion.

Khadi Gramo

It was in 2002, a year before Yusuf Meherally's birth centenary, that Yusuf Meherally Centre launched a campaign to promote khadi and gramodyogs. The three and a half decades of rural development work led it to conclude that what it did, what the Centre had done till then, was not enough. The institution was in health care, and education, and empowering Adivasis and women, and afforestation, all the right things, all that was part of prevalent thinking then and is so even now, but the question that bothered the organisation was what was it doing for youngsters that would prepare them to lead a moderately decent life? The young, if they passed their SSC, did not wish to slog as their parents did in the fields. Rather, they seemed to feel left out, at a loss.

The work the Centre did, did not deliver what it believed was development. When the Centre went to Tara in 1967, a village not far from Mumbai, to provide medical care, the exploitation of Adivasis was visible, palpable. An eye opening discovery was that if an Adivasi borrowed Rs 20 from a moneylender in Panvel, 18 kilometres from Tara, he first paid one and a half rupee as interest in advance, so he got only Rs 18.50 in hand. He went by bus to borrow and lost one day's labour, and he did this week after week to give his/her weekly installments of one and a half rupees and there was no end to his indebtedness. An Adivasi also got bonded because he borrowed to survive. And he migrated in search for work. And there were women who got abandoned by their husbands on day one, a situation that continued for several decades into their marriage. These women led a

life of dependence on their parents, their brothers - a life which was hardly dignified.

The Centre addressed these issues, worked intensively, but success was negligible. It decided to provide employment by setting up a brick kiln, duplicating what the Adivasis did, however not as labourers, but as co-owners. The brick making experiment failed, failed not once, not twice but thrice. And as far as abandoned women were concerned, intensive interaction with them for a year did not motivate them to take to some work which would give them an income. The Centre, thanks to various experiences, concluded that its understanding of the culture of the deprived was not adequate. These failures made the Centre take to several new initiatives and the centenary year of Yusuf Meherally was the best occasion to do so.

YMC decided to work for total change and for all sections of the village society, and it also decided to mobilise youth to fight injustice. It defined injustice in a very broad sense - exploitation of Adivasis was, of course, injustice, treatment of women too, but not having work that provided basic, modest living was also deemed injustice. A motivated and dedicated group of young people and a search for new ideas of development which gave importance to employment rather than to growth, the Centre felt would do the trick, in the sense that its work would become more meaningful.

When the Centre completed 25 years in rural development, it had organized a yatra called Manav Jyot Yatra. The yatrists talked of communal

harmony, watershed development and rural development. It defined rural development as watershed development plus organic farming plus non-conventional energy plus gramodyog and marketing its products in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. These were post-Babri days and the yatra covered Gujarat as well as a part of Maharashtra. The success of the yatra in those communally tense days was heart-warming.

And yet, many of those who actively worked for the Centre, who ran the Centre, were not happy. What the Centre did was not getting replicated. The villagers were benefitting certainly, Adivasi exploitation was less and migration had reduced, and women were articulate, and yet a feeling persisted that there was something missing. The search for something more, something different, continued and it resulted in the formulation that the common person should become the 'karta' of the change, of wealth creation, of development and not the rich and powerful as had happened all through history and not even the State, which for a brief period in the post-colonial years, was seen as a change agent. That money does not trickle down but certainly goes up, was an important realization. A more just and equal society, as what Yusuf Meherally wanted, could come about only if wealth was created by common persons. And it is this thinking that made it take to khadi and gramodyogs as the base for a new development paradigm, a new society, a new arrangement of economic affairs. Khadi had a recall value, thanks to its salience in the freedom movement and

dyog Andolan

its association with Gandhiji, as nothing else. And by that time the ideas like green house gas emissions due to industrialization, carbon footprint, global warming, etc. had become popular. And for the Centre, khadi took a new role: It became a symbol for the fight against global warming.

Further introspection led to a new realization. While the Centre's work was certainly good and impressive, it was not changing man much. He had not become less selfish and more humane, in fact, he had become less sensitive. And the idea of using the simple cottages, in which Gandhiji lived for the last few years of his life, for changing man, was born. A replica of Bapu Kutli was built at Tara when the Centre entered its Golden Jubilee. Two years later, a replica of Ba Kutli was built and inaugurated on August 9, this year, and soon, before the year ends, a replica of Adi Nivas will be built. The values like *satya*, *ahimsa*, *Shrampratishta*, *Shramdan*, simple living are being promoted though these replicas and the Centre hopes that with this deliberate act of promoting values, it will be instrumental in bringing a change in man, a change for the better. JP had famously said that democracy required a belief in the educability of man and Yusuf Meherally had certainly said that he was a socialist because he did not like ugliness and cruelty. For the Centre, Khadi Gramodyog Andolan, a youth movement committed to communal harmony and fighting injustice will determine its future history, and days like Yusuf Meherally's birth anniversary, September 23 and Gandhiji's, October 2 and January

30 will become the days of dedication.

The campaign that was launched in 2002, became Andolan on the Gandhi Nirvan Din on January 30, 2005, and since then the Andolan is doing all it can to promote khadi and gramodyogs and its thinking. And when the Andolan was launched, there were friends, sympathizers who raised the question: can khadi be promoted within the system? It is an important question, and underlines the urgency of search for an alternative and creating a system where a committed man can live without depending on the existing ones.

Creating an alternate system while, of course, needing an in-depth analysis of present day anomalies and irregularities, will need a committed and continual drive to weaken the existing arrangements or system. Khadi Gramodyog Andolan, the changed man, the common person based green economy, and the new youth movement will perhaps ensure this.

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Appeal

The Khadi Gramodyog Andolan appeals to all khadi lovers, environmentalists, Gandhians, Gandhiji-inspired socialists and those forces which seek an alternative, sustainable, green development to contribute what they can, what they desire, to Yusuf Meherally Centre for promoting khadi and gramodyogs and for mitigating the damage due to global warming. Khadi is a perfect eco-friendly fabric. It is the foundation on which the edifice of a new, green, alternate prosperity can be built.

Khadi gramodyogs will generate employment, especially in rural areas, and hence it would prevent forced migration to cities, especially mega cities and the city's problems will ease a lot. It will reduce the striking visual contrast between the tall towers standing as islands in the sea of huts, which causes the social unrest we see, the rise in crime graph the statistics captured, the violence that is increasing and the destruction of moral fibre that is all pervasive.

Please decide to donate what you can on October 2, and January 30 every year and send a powerful message that we reject the present arrangement and are keen to search the new.

Please draw your cheque in favour of Yusuf Meherally Centre and in your covering letter marking it for Khadi Gramodyog Andolan and send your cheque or cash to our office.

Resolve to give preference to gramodyogs, to use hand-made paper as often as possible, purchase locally crafted products, wear khadi, eat organic, indigenously grown foods and contribute your mite for rural development.

—Haresh Shah, Nalin Shah,
Babubhai Patel,
Shashi Chandore, Madhu Mohite

Conveners,
Khadi Gramodyog Andolan

German SPD Down but not Out

D. K. Giri

The loss of SPD in the elections held in Germany last Saturday, 22 September 2013 is no surprise. It was largely predicted. But the margin of SPD defeat is worrying. Angela Merkel, who secured a third successive victory as the Chancellor took her CDU/CSU to 41.5 per cent, whereas SPD got 25.7 per cent, Greens 8.4 per cent, Free Democratic Party (FDP) 4.8 per cent and Alternative for Germany (AfD) 4.7 per cent. In the last elections in 2009 CDU/CSU had got 33.8 per cent, SPD 23 per cent, Greens 10.7 per cent and FDP 14.6 per cent. In the 2013 elections, the business-supported FDP, is the biggest loser slipping down under 5 per cent. The right-wing AfD failed to make the threshold of 5 per cent, necessary for Parliamentary representation. In terms of seats, out of 630, CDU/CSU will have 311 seats, SPD 192 seats, Greens 63 seats and Left parties 64 seats. In order to form the government 316 seats are needed.

Although the results were largely as predicted, it calls for a deeper analysis of why a 150-year old party, the SPD, did so badly, the second worst showing for the party since the World War II and Angela Merkel, despite severe economic crises in Europe, beat the anti-incumbency trend and won a third term.

The first reason for defeat could be personalization of German politics by Merkel. Increasingly, most democracies including the developed ones in Europe are following the American style of personalization of politics. The presidential elections

in USA are fought on oratory, public posturing and style of leadership. The trend was started by Ronald Reagan who defeated Jimmy Carter in 1980 with his theatricals, although Reagan was new and had less substance in his policies. In the Obama era too, Obama scored over his rivals within Democratic Party and outside over the Republican rival in oratory and presentation. In Britain, David Cameron beat Labour's Gordon Brown more in style than in substance. Likewise, Nicholas Clegg of Liberal Party did well with his oratory skills to become the Deputy Prime Minister. Although it is not a welcome trend, in the media glare, the performance of the leaders on the dais matters. So in Germany, while Merkel's style of posing as a strong and determined leader paid off, the SPD did not have a counter-strategy to deal with her.

Is SPD losing the electoral touch? The SPD has not been winning elections since 1998. The chairman of the party Sigmar Gabriel said on Sunday night after the elections, that the party is no longer a "volkspartei", the party of the people. The party is still divided after Schroder's loss in 2005 elections and his infamous labour market reforms.

The third factor could be that SPD seemed to have suffered from credibility loss on two contradictory perceptions of the party. Peer Stienbruck did not enjoy the credibility as the leader of a Left party. He was not seen as the leader to present the party on matters of social reforms, minimum wage or rising disparities in German society.

Stienbruck's well-paid speeches to banks and finance industries gave the contrary impression. At the same time, SPD had a pronounced left-bias in the campaign. Elections are won on a centre platform. In fact, most Social Democratic parties in Europe are making this strategic mistake. They are appealing to the poor and unemployed, as indeed they should, but they must have also messages for the middle class and for the rich as well. The majority of Germans are not poor. With low unemployment, higher salaries and rising entrepreneurship, the middle class did not feel the need for a change, as was urged by SPD. Angela Merkel connected with this feeling and got the support of the majority. The tax rise proposed by both Greens and the SPD scared the entrepreneurs. The SPD failed to convince the voters that tax rise would affect only the top five per cent. A similar misperception was unnecessarily created in 1990s, when the Shadow Chancellor of the Labour party in Britain, late John Smith had proposed a tax rise for the super rich. The party came to be known as a tax party.

SPD's handling of European issue was also not convincing to the voters. Stienbruck's criticism of Merkel on Euro and Europe lacked credibility. The SPD had always voted in line with Merkel in Bundestag. So, for Steinbruck to criticize Merkel's handling of Euro crisis did not wash. SPD's European policy seemed incomplete. It could have posed a clear choice between a Europe based on a vision of solidarity as well as closer

integration and a selfish-nationalistic or particularistic concept of Europe held by Conservatives. Just a platitudinous statement that Europe is needed was not enough. There should have been a clear choice presented between a European Germany and a German Europe. The voters should have been told in clear terms about what they could expect from a federal European Union. What was even worse for SPD was that they did not have any narrative of Europe which countered new populism and new nationalism resurfacing in Europe. One could empathise with the Progressives in Europe who have a double challenge to face. They have to convince their voters that the alternative policies they advocate offer scope for growth and jobs. Secondly, they will have to convincingly argue that Europe is part of the solution not a problem.

The party is over for Angela Merkel. Despite the landslide victory she cannot form the government on her own. As Merkel does not have the majority, the big question is whether the SPD should join the “grand coalition”. There are two opinions on this. If SPD joins, and certainly the pressure will be high for them to do so, they will carry the ills of the government and not the credit as they will be the junior partner. Consequently, they might lose more in the next elections. If it does not join the government and Germany goes for another election, Merkel might get the absolute majority and parties like FDP and AfD may bounce back. SPD is in real dilemma. The call clearly is, “you have to join the government to guarantee the stability of Germany, to counterbalance the CSU, not to waste the opportunity to realize part of your political programme, etc.” Reflecting the resistant mood

in the party, the SPD second-in-command Andrea Nahles said after the results, “we won’t be committing to any coalition this evening”. Hannelore Kraft, the State Governor of North-Rhine Westphalia, who is tipped to be the future SPD leader and a Chancellor candidate, said, “Ninety per cent of my regional party association is against a grand coalition. It is not a disgrace to sit in the opposition.” At the time of writing the members of SPD are thinking of an internal party Gallup to decide on the issue.

SPD seems to be bitter with their experience of the last coalition. But pragmatism should be the driving force in politics. Some would say that the past experience of Grand

Coalition (2005-09) dealt more with personalities than political issues. Therefore, despite all its misgivings, SPD will, in all probability, join Merkel in the end because public pressure is likely to mount as the weeks go by.

In fact in the coalition scenario, SPD seems to be the only possible ally as the Greens have badly lost and are in turmoil for their leadership has resigned en-masse. Moreover, the CSU’s Bavarian Governor Horst Seehofer, a powerful ally of Merkel, has ruled out even talking to them. The whole of Europe, and indeed, the rest of the world will be looking at German politics as it takes interesting twists and turns in the coming days.

Japan’s nuclear power network shuts down

Japan’s only operating nuclear Reactor 4 at Ohi in western Japan went offline on September 16 with no definite timetable for a restart.

The country’s network of nuclear plants which used to provide up to 30 per cent of the national grid’s power has been closed for intensive safety checks since the 2011 meltdowns at the Fukushima plant triggered by a tsunami in 2011.

Public opinion has turned against nuclear power since the Fukushima catastrophe, the largest nuclear disaster since a fire at the Chernobyl plant in Ukraine in 1986, and the government have found themselves under increasing pressure to tighten safety standards.

However, as radiation continues to escape from the stricken plant on Japan’s northeast coast, the Japanese government has stated its commitment to restarting many of the 50 idle reactors. This is despite

the previous administration saying they would phase out nuclear power completely.

So far, power companies have made applications to restart about a dozen reactors. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who took office in December, says nuclear power remains essential, even with a surge in generation capacity from solar, wind and other renewable sources, and that the mounting costs from importing gas and oil are unsustainable.

In the absence of nuclear power, industries have worked hard to avoid disruptions by using backup generators and shifting to new sources, such as solar power. To date, Japan has avoided energy rationing and blackouts. However, households in Tokyo have seen their energy bills rise by as much as 30 per cent since the Fukushima meltdown.

–*Report in The Independent*

*Letter to the Editor***Savarkar and Mukherjee**

While I agree with substantiality of Shamsul Islam's contention in his article "A open letter to the Hindu Nationalist: N. D. Modi" published in Janata (July 28, 2013), I feel it is necessary to get certain facts right. He has quoted from Savarkar's Presidential Speech at Hindu Mahasabha Conference in 1942. I have not gone through the original speech of Savarkar, but I presume that S. Islam has quoted him correctly. However, Savarkar's statement cannot be taken to be true by anyone who has some knowledge of pre-Partition Bengal.

The then Chief (Prime) Minister of Bengal A. K. Fazlul Huque resigned from his post for the differences with Muslim League. Then he revived the Krishak Praja Party. It may be recalled that Huque Saheb had won the election in 1937 as a Krishak Praja Party candidate and his party had won in of Muslim seats defeating Muslim League. He was keen to form a coalition ministry with the Congress. Although many Congressmen in Bengal were willing for such a coalition, the central leadership of the Congress was against it. Disappointed Huque then formed a coalition with the Muslim League. After some time he succumbed to the pressure and joined the Muslim League. But some of his followers were not prepared to join the Muslim League and they continued with the KPP. But when due to differences with the Muslim League he left the ministry Huque rejoined the KPP.

In the meantime on the issue of Pant Resolution at Tripuri congress and subsequent suspension of the elected President Subhas Chandra Bose, by the Congress in Bengal was divided. It may be remembered

that some CSP members and some non-CSP AICC members of Bengal were with Subhas Chandra even on Pant Resolution issue. So, two Congress committees had been functioning in Bengal. The minority that is the Patel group was known as official BPCC, whereas majority was known as suspended BPCC. When Huque Sahib came out of Muslim League, he approached the leader of suspended BPCC Sarat Chandra Bose with the proposal to form a coalition, to which Sarat Bose agreed. It was resolved that Huque would be the Prime Minister and the number two in the cabinet would be Sarat Bose with Finance portfolio. A day before the oath taking ceremony, Sarat Bose was arrested. But other members of suspended BPCC joined the ministry. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji, then a Hindu Mahasabha member, joined the ministry as Finance Minister. He was the only representative of Hindu Mahasabha. (In his legal career Huque was junior to Ashutosh Mukherjee, the father of Dr. S. P. Mukherji and he was very close to Mukherjee family. On Shyama Prasad's death in 1953, Huque sent a condolence message to the Mukherjee family with words 'I have lost my only brother'.)

Within a short period however, the relationship with the Governor and Huque and Mukherjee became strained. Since both of them were men of high caliber and integrity, they refused the Governor's anti-people dictates. The Governor then dismissed the ministry.

I want to emphasize that there were fundamental differences between Savarkar and Shyama Prasad. When Quit India movement was launched by the Congress at the behest of Gandhiji, Shyama Prasad

met Savarkar and urged upon him that Hindu Mahasabha should join the movement. But Savarkar declined by saying 'so many Hindus (not Indians) have already joined the movement. What is the use of Mahasabha's participation?' Undaunted Shyama Prasad provided all possible help to the movement even while he was a minister and also after he came out of the ministry. In 1943, there was a disastrous famine in Bengal mooted by the British rulers. Prof. Humayun Kabir who was very close to Maulana Azad and Fazlul Huque was also a CSP sympathizer, introduced many socialist youth and other Augusters to Shyama Prasad. By this time, Shyama Prasad was able to form a well organized Bengal Famine Relief Committee. I have heard from Late Sisir Dhar, Late Prof. Dilip Chakrabarty and other Augusters as to how Shyama Prasad persuaded them to use the Relief Committee badge, which helped them to move around with their over and underground activities during the Quit India movement.

I have heard from the leaders of Jamnalipta Jatiya Sarkar that ho Shyama extended his helping hand to the Jatiya Sarkar. I have a senior friend named Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra who was a student then, who was working as 'in between' Jatiya Sarkar and Shyama Prasad.

I have no intention to write a biographical sketch of Shyama Prasad in this letter. But what I want to emphasize once more that the contents of Savarkar's speech as quoted in the 'open letter' is a travesty of truth and unbecoming for a former revolutionary and a president of a political party.

–Sandip Das

Criminals and Elections

The Samata Party had taken steps to convene an all-party meeting to deliberate on what steps parties could unitedly take to prevent criminals from entering the electoral system. George Fernandes, as its President, sent out letters to all party heads in the late 90s. It was only Comrade Harkishan Surjeet of the CPM who bothered to reply and express his willingness to meet. No other party bothered to reply or even express support for the idea. This effort naturally died a natural death. There is always a struggle within parties when tickets are being allotted, between the 'decent' aspirant and those with criminal antecedents. Unfortunately, unless the party leadership stands very firm, and is willing to let the good candidate lose rather than be convinced by the muscle and might of the criminal contender who has proven his 'winnability' through these methods earlier, the 'criminal' is given the ticket since every single seat, particular in coalition politics, counts.

If you speak to most of the 'criminals', they will stoutly defend themselves and insist that their opponents, when in power, had framed false cases against them. There have been cases even with the Samata Party, where the Lalu Prasad Yadav regime declared a Samata party leader a murderer, when he was clearly many kilometers away from the crime scene. Later he was declared an absconder, and had to flee from Bihar with only the clothes on his back. His house was vandalized, and family harassed. He obtained protection only when the Samata Party took up the matter with the Human Rights

Commission who immediately sent a senior officer to enquire. An important footnote of this story is that this same person had all the cases against him withdrawn when he joined the Lalu Yadav's RJD. It demonstrates how politicians manipulate the police like puppets to vanquish their opponents.

George Fernandes and others were being tried for violence against the state and treason by a wholly illegal and authoritarian government during the Emergency. If he had been prevented from fighting elections he would have continued to rot in jail and not been able to provide leadership to the country or the socialist movement. A 'crime' is a crime in the statute books, but what kind of crime and under what circumstances and in what context should surely be issues that have to be studied to provide justice in a highly politicized polity where leaders at the highest levels misuse the CBI, and other police agencies to harass and implicate their political opponents in crimes they did not commit.

Today, a young farmer's leader and former MLA has been sentenced to life imprisonment for a crime foisted on him falsely when Digvijay Singh was Chief Minister in Madhya Pradesh and in which Kamal Nath, a central minister still exercise influence despite the state being ruled by the BIP. In this case, which has been reported at length in earlier issues of *the OtherSide*, the police fired upon and killed 27 farmers, 14 years ago. A few months ago, Dr. Sunilam was sentenced to life imprisonment. The police terrorized witnesses to save their own skin,

and the judge while agreeing with everything the under-trial said, gave a harsh adverse judgment. This is a good way to send a message that those who lead struggles for the poor against corporate and mighty political interests, will end in jail and have their political career ruined.

Parties must collectively deliberate and decide on such matters. If one party decides to avoid giving tickets to anyone under trial, while others give tickets to those who intimidate and terrorize voters and win with impunity, there is no level field. What can the Election Commission or the Supreme Court do about this? As of now, there could be many political persons under trial because of false cases being framed against them. Often a trial is harsh and unfair because the lower judge has been coerced by 'political' seniors. Until the appeal is heard and disposed of fairly in higher court, the innocent person is left floundering and considered guilty. It would be a travesty of justice to allow such situations to tip the scales of justice.

While we all want perpetrators of heinous crimes and the thoroughly corrupt to be punished and shunned by the political system and kept out of assemblies and Parliament the medicine being given to cure the disease must not have harmful side effects. The innocent are harmed more than the criminal who think nothing of committing murder, rape and dacoity in the first place.

- *Edditorial in
the OtherSide, August, 2013*

People's Agenda on Water and Sanitation for the Urban Local Bodies elections in Odisha

Ranjan Panda

Most of the ULBs of the state are going for elections this month. In this context a team of Water Initiatives Odisha (WIO) volunteers visited nine cities from all across the state and talked to people about their problems in relation to water, sanitation and related aspects. The team also tried to get an understanding of the people's expectations from the candidates who are contesting in these elections. Most of the city dwellers felt they are living in unhygienic conditions. Most of our cities are severely polluted due to blind and unplanned waste disposal, felt the citizens.

Especially the slum dwellers, who are living in most unhygienic conditions and with very poor basic amenities, have felt that they don't have any right to water and sanitation in this state. Most of the slums in urban areas of the state have most of their inhabitants going for open defecation. We are forced to drink untreated water, complained many slum dwellers.

Based on the discussion with slum dwellers and other people, WIO team found out that at least 90 percent of slum dwellers of the urban areas of Odisha defecate in the open; and only about 25 per cent of them piped water supply; much of which is untreated.

Most of the municipalities in the state are dumping the solid waste, medical wastes and all other types of hazardous wastes anywhere they

find a space, haphazardly without any proper planning. Almost all garbage is transported in open body transport carriers. None of the urban areas have a proper solid waste management plan – at least known to the people - as a result of which malaria and jaundice have become common in most of the slum areas of the state. In cities like Puri, the 'supposed to be protected' sweet water zones have turned out to be garbage pits, open defecation fields and place for dumping all sort of waste materials. In almost all the cities, water bodies, river sides and open fields are being used as dumping yards of municipal bodies as well as private contractors used by them in sanitary operations. Majority of the people we talked believed privatization of sanitation services has miserably failed.

All rivers flowing by the cities of the state are heavily polluted due to urban wastes, human wastes and industrial pollution, revealed the survey. Mahanadi is among the most polluted rivers in Odisha, in so far as urban wastes are concerned.

None of the cities in the state have sewerage treatment facilities. While there have been some initiatives taken in cities like Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack; there is completely no progress in any other city. Even in the above cities the plans are just in their preliminary stage. In Puri, a sewerage treatment plant has been inaugurated by the Chief Minister

of the state but things seem to have been done in hurry keeping in mind the ULB elections. No treatment is happening at the moment. Cities of the state need to think immediately about having decentralized garbage and sewage management plans and programmes. The citizens of almost all the cities we travelled have unanimously voiced their concern in this regard.

People in almost all the cities expressed their concerns over the reducing green spaces, increased vehicular pollution, and lack of roads for pedestrians and bi-cycle riders. A large section of the people also thought concrete roads are not good for the cities as they are increasing the heat during summer as well as making it difficult to maintain water supply pipes and other such services.

Many urban dwellers of the surveyed cities said they are aware about the ill effects of plastics but have not found suitable alternatives. They have also expressed their dissatisfaction about the lack of drive by municipal bodies and related institutions in this regard.

Overall, urban people of the state have said that municipal bodies should be strengthened and privatization of their services and functions be stopped. However, they have also questioned the efficiency of many municipal bodies. There is a common complaint by people that the ULBs are not involving the local people in decision making.

Rather they are influenced by their political compulsions and private contractors.

WIO appeals all the candidates contesting in the ongoing ULB elections to consider these above concerns and opinion of the urban people of the state as their agenda for action while seeking votes.

WIO also urges upon the urban people of the state to vote for candidates who show commitment

towards protecting Rivers, water bodies and work towards making the cities self-sustaining in water resources from within the city areas.

People should also vote for candidates who are committed towards decentralized garbage-sewerage treatment and management; creating ample green spaces including forests, parks and play grounds in the cities; and above all who are committed to

provide drinking water, sanitation and greenery as a right to the urban people.

Saving rivers from dying; adopting local specific natural ways of water harvesting technologies; recharging ground water; forest conservation and creating greenery within the cities would not only hold key to water security of the cities themselves but also would help reducing the growing water conflicts between urban and rural areas.

Mushawarat condemns terror attacks

Dr Zafarul-Islam Khan, President of All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat said in a statement here that the terrorist attacks on innocents in a church in Peshawar and a commercial mall in Nairobi are worst examples of anti-Islamic behaviour which deserve to be condemned and resisted by all possible means.

“These crimes by fringe groups working at the behest of powers in

their respective regions and beyond, are simple terror which in no way is sanctioned by Islam or has the consent of Muslims anywhere in the world,” he said.

Dr Khan said: “The only legitimate Jihad is against invading and occupying armies while attacking innocent civilians is a plain and simple criminal act against Islam and humanity.”

Pasha Patel

Anti-bribery Laws needed in India

We appreciate the UPA Government’s efforts in passing two landmark Bills in the Parliament. One is giving poor Indians right to food at lower price and the other being Land Acquisition Act which was pending for a long time. Now let us hope during the remaining period of UPA’s tenure it will spearhead and get approved in the present Lok Sabha more stringent and effective

“Anti Bribery Law” as is prevalent in the U.K. and U.S.A.

The need of the hour is to adopt Zero Tolerance attitude towards corruption. Anti-bribery laws of U.S.A. and U.K. are so strict that they punish companies even for any bribes paid by their global subsidiaries.

Satish Murdeshwar,

Madhu Dandavate

By

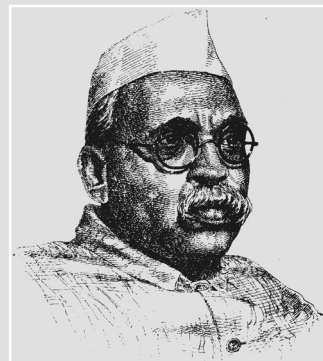
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