

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 68 No. 39
October 6, 2013

Rahul's unedifying tamasha

S. Viswam

A new beginning
Kuldip Nayar

A half-baked measure
Rajindar Sachar

Rahul Holds The Steering
Nitish Chakravarty

**Why is the Indian
Rupee Depreciating?**
Kavaljit Singh

**A Case for
Co-operative Farming**
Bapu Heddurshetti

Beauty And Skin Colour
Rammanohar Lohia

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A large number of people may have been bitterly disappointed with the Prime Minister's decision not to resign after being humiliated by Rahul Gandhi on the eve of Dr. Manmohan Singh's bilateral interactions with the American President and the Pakistan Prime Minister in Washington. Dr. Singh may well have chosen the wiser course by deciding to stay on in office after making it clear to Rahul Gandhi (and if possible, his mother) that in trying to humiliate him he (Rahul) has only exposed his own political immaturity and personal arrogance. Dr. Singh has emerged a better and wiser man and can well be described as, the "ultimate gentleman and democrat".

The Prime Minister himself listed the reasons why Rahul Gandhi was completely off the line when he staged his bizarre drama at the Press Club of India on the day the Prime Minister reached the US and two days before he was to fly back home. First, the question of issuing an ordinance staying the Supreme Court's disqualification of criminally convicted legislators had been discussed by the "core" group of the Congress. The Congress President Sonia Gandhi had

presided over the meeting which discussed the "ordinance matter" threadbare. Dr. Singh described the "core group" as the "highest body". Second, the Union to Cabinet discussed the matter twice, not once. The Prime Minister could well have added that there was enough time between the Cabinet's approval of the ordinance and the PM's departure for the US to attend and represent India at the UN General Assembly and in important bilateral meetings thereafter. Rahul did not seek an opportunity to bring his views to the knowledge of the PM or his mother. Instead he chose to humiliate the PM at a time when the PM was representing the country abroad in important interactions for the successful conclusions of which he needed to be sure and confident of his nation's support. Third, there was no reason why Rahul had to make a public statement on the issue which, the PM was aware, had turned controversial. And why had the public statement "to be that way"?

Meaning, why had it to be boosted up to be an issue where the PM and his government had to be held as being guilty of "complete nonsense" in approving an ordinance which

Between the lines

A new beginning

Kuldip Nayar

ought to be torn and thrown away! If after all this, the PM felt that Rahul deserved the right of a reply, it only puts him in a flattering light. Rahul, who wrote to the PM an e-mail eulogizing his leadership (tongue in cheek?) did not even have the courtesy of waiting for a reply before going public. This is where he showed himself up to be an immature and impatient politician out of his depth where serious issues of national concern are involved.

It was only to be expected that the opposition would go to town on a development which paints the PM, the Congress party and the government in a poor light. There was a chorus of demands for Dr. Singh's resignation, BJP's stalwart Arun Jaitley sought to know whether Dr. Singh had any self-respect. Dr. Singh's former Information Adviser counselled him to quit since service of the country was preferable to the service of a party and its leader. There was advice galore on why Dr. Singh should sever relations with the Gandhi family.

In the event, Dr. Singh has chosen the wiser path. Had he decided to quit on the ground that a Johnny-come-lately in politics had acted brashly and thoughtlessly, he would only have bestowed a modicum of respectability to a young man who has yet to understand Indian politics and demonstrate his own competence in his own organization. The track record is not flattering. On the contrary, it points the finger at a man who has consistently run away from political challenges and has so far nothing to show by way of acumen or understanding to measure up to the challenges of a complex and diverse nation such as India.

(Continued on Page 4)

In his reply to my letter, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has said: "I look forward to a time when Pakistan and India will be able to shed the debilitating baggage of the past and focus more on the future, when opportunities, rather than challenges, define the relationship between two proud and sovereign nations." His meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is an evidence of his ardent desire to make up with India.

Hostility between India and Pakistan is so proverbial that any movement towards lessening it comes as a relief. The meeting between the two may not have spanned the distance between the two countries. Yet it has broken the ice and it is a good beginning.

The skeptics are hard to please, particularly when Nawaz Sharif did not assure Manmohan Singh on the terrorist training camp in Pakistan (they number around 30). The meeting is a step forward. Both Prime Ministers were under great pressure from their domestic lobbies of opposition. Still they stood the ground and met for an hour. Both should be complimented in preferring a dialogue to the cancellation of the meeting which would have damaged the prospects of peace.

I have not been able to understand the logic of those who have opposed the meeting. Is there any other option? Both sides can defer the talks, but they have to engage

themselves sooner or later. And the outcome of the meeting has been positive. Both Prime Ministers have rightly pinpointed the priority: To firm up the ceasefire on the Line of Control (LoC).

The agreement reached in 1993 on the ceasefire has stood the test of time for a decade. It is unfortunate that the Taliban could penetrate in Jammu and Kashmir and kill five Indian soldiers. Now that the two Prime Ministers have directed their respective Director Generals of Military Operation (DGMO) to meet and work out arrangements to ensure that the ceasefire is not impaired. The two DGMOs should also find out why the violation took place in the first instance. True, the Taliban, not the Pakistan armed forces, did it. But how did the Taliban come to use the Pakistan territory to shoot their way into India? Some connivance by some is obvious.

The Taliban menace, which has made practically every place in Pakistan unsafe, has to be met squarely. Chief of Army Staff, General Parvez Kayani has declared that the Pakistan army would stay in Swat, part of Northern Waziristan, near the Afghanistan border. At the same time, he has differed with Nawaz Sharif on talks with the Taliban. He should recognize the fact that the entire region has come to be threatened by the resurgence of Al-Qaida, directing the Taliban.

The situation may get aggravated when the Western troops withdraw

from Afghanistan next year. Already the Al-Qaida is recruiting young men and training them for strikes after the withdrawal of troops. I have my doubts about the capability of the Afghanistan army and the police, trained by America, to withstand the Al-Qaida onslaught.

I think that the Al-Qaida's ideology of fanaticism has not been properly spelled out before the Pakistan public. The country has had a taste of it when the Swat Valley was occupied by the Taliban for some time. The music shops were closed and so were the educational institutions for girls. The veil was compulsorily imposed and the general expectation was that women would stay indoors. And there was not even an iota of free expression allowed, much less the liberal thought.

Madrasas and mosques in the region have become the breeding ground of the Taliban and their ideology of fundamentalism. I cannot understand why some Muslim countries are financing them. The outcast Libya is reportedly supplying them with arms. The Muslim countries seem to have forgotten the Arab Spring when the youth and liberal elements came on to the streets to confront the fundamentalists. At that time, every Muslim country began chanting the mantra of democracy. The fundamentalists were able to create division in the ranks of students and defeat the demand for democratic regimes. The Al-Qaida's fundamentalist ideology can revive the spirit of Arab Spring.

I wish Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and Nawaz Sharif had discussed the resurgence of

(Continued on Page 6)

Judicial Appointments Bill

A half-baked measure

Rajindar Sachar

Both the government and the Opposition in Parliament have shown remarkable comradeship in accusing the judiciary of all ills in society. The occasion was to find a substitute for the present collegium system of appointment of Judges of the High Courts and the Supreme Court. There is a broad agreement in the public and legal fraternity that the collegium system of appointments needs to be improved upon. But then critics must also answer the query raised by the present Chief Justice of India wherein he has pointed out that a fair amount of consultation with the government takes place and the judiciary takes into account any negative facts brought out against the proposed appointee.

There is a suggestion invidiously spread by politicians that appointments are based only on caste or personal considerations of the collegium members and merit plays no part. May I scotch this slander by pointing out that there is universal acclaim for the present judiciary's impartiality and determination in exposing Coalgate, telecom and other scams. The Supreme Court's recent decision to debar convicted legislators from continuing as legislators is a big blow to the evil of politicisation of criminals. Let me emphasise that the appointments of all these judges were made through the collegium system, while the judges who played a disgraceful role in colluding in the supersession case in 1973, and again during the Emergency in 1975 were all appointed before the collegium

system came into being. Because of these vagaries, are we justified in the wholesale condemnation of pre-collegium appointees? Certainly not. Since 1950 we have had stalwart judges like Krishna Iyer, Justice Mukerjee, Justice Mahajan, Justice Suba Rao and Justice Sikri.

No I am not opposing the desirability of change from the present closed collegium system. But this matter needs to be discussed in a calm, leisurely manner, and not by the outgoing discredited legislators and not in an atmosphere of suspicion and half-baked information. Now that the Bill has gone to a standing committee, it is to be expected it will be widely circulated throughout the country so that the legal fraternity, law schools, journals and public men could have time to discuss it at leisure.

Frankly, the strategy of the Law Minister to get passed the Constitution Amendment 120th Bill and send it to the states for ratification without the details of the Judicial Appointment Commission being included in it would have been a constitutional monstrosity. Not to include the details in the amendment would be such excessive delegation as to fall foul of the law. It also has sinister implications for future. The proposed Constitution amendment only provides for a Judicial Appointment Commission for Appointment of Judges being mentioned in Article 124A, and 217 of the Constitution but without full details like the composition

and the procedure for appointments being included. They are, of course, mentioned in the Bill, but that cannot prevent mischief being done by a future government.

As an example, the Bill provides that the Commission will be presided over by the Chief Justice of India. But if after approval of the Constitution amendment, Parliament were to amend the Act to say the judicial commission would be headed by the Law Minister, there would be no hurdle because the Constitution amendment only provides for a judicial commission but says nothing about details. In fact, but for the arrogance of the legislators, it should have been clear to them that the whole of the Judicial Commission Bill with all its provisions has to be part of the Constitution Amendment Bill, just as at present Article 222, specifically mentions that the Governor and the Chief Justice of a state will be consulted when selecting a judge for the High Court.

I feel that the present Parliament lacks moral justification to move such an important Constitution amendment. Elections are due latest by next May, 2014. It is reliably understood that the Election Commission may propose to have elections in four or five phases. If so, the first polling may start by February or March, 2014. It is normal to expect that half the present members of the Lok Sabha will not be re-elected. Is it morally fair and politically honest for the outgoing members to seek to pre-empt the decision which both legally and morally would be the privilege of the new Parliament?

Also the Bill has been sent to the Standing Committee. Since the full Bill has to form part of

the Constitution amendment, therefore till the Commission Bill is finalised the question of sending the Constitution Amendment Bill to the states for ratification cannot arise.

In the Bill for the Commission there are serious flaws. At present only the views of the Governor are to be obtained when a High Court Judge is to be appointed. But now slyly the Chief Minister also finds a place in the commission. I feel it is too political and allows partisan appointments. The inclusion of Chief Minister must be removed.

The provision of personnel for the selection of Judges, include a vague self-serving category of "two persons of eminence". Pray what is the measure of eminence for selecting judges? Supposing two legislators from Parliament or state legislators were to be included in this 'category of eminence' (even not having had the advantage of beyond middle class schooling), none of them would consider excusing themselves because their claim would be that they were so popular with millions of voters and how could they be not considered eminent? Perverse logic, but in the construction of the law, how could you rule it out? Of course, the simplest thing would be to substitute it by "eminent jurists". This will include a large source, namely "retired judges", "law Professors", "eminent senior lawyers (who are no longer in regular practice)". Their presence will automatically reduce arbitrariness to quite an extent.

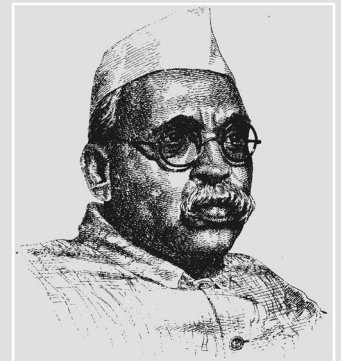
The exclusion of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha from the Judicial Appointment Commission is a serious flaw. In such neutral policy matters both the wings of Parliament must be included.

In my view the present Parliament could still redeem itself somewhat of all the scams/scandals, if before its term expires, it passes the Women Reservation Bill. No objection on the ground of imminent dissolution of Parliament will apply because one House of Parliament has already passed it, and also the first announcement the Prime Minister made after the 2009 general election was a promise to immediately pass this legislation — the same commitment had been made by previous governments.

(Continued from Page 2)

In the ultimate analysis, the entire bizarre episode over Rahul Gandhi's crudely staged tamasha has brought a lesson home: he does not deserve or qualify to be nominated as the Congress party's prime ministerial candidate in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Between the two, Rahul and Dr. Singh, the latter is a better candidate on any count.

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Rahul Holds The Steering

Nitish Chakravarty

Two acts of the ongoing drama over the ordinance exonerating lawmakers, judicially pronounced corrupt, have already been staged. The two phases have established beyond doubt that many in Manmohan Singh's own party doubt his ability to meaningfully lead the government and feel that the time for his exit has arrived. No rewards are on offer for correctly guessing what the third and, hopefully, final act of the play will unfold. It is possible that this will show the incumbent Prime Minister proceeding on extended furlough, and the Congress Party's young mascot, Rahul Gandhi, holding the steering in his hands rather than drive backseat.

The ordinance to overturn a Supreme Court judgment and to immunize convicted MP's against disqualification has been quietly buried in the Yamuna, and the fate of the bill introduced in the Rajya Sabha at its last session to give it a permanent place in the statute book sealed. The immediate objective behind the ordinance was to save Lalu Prasad Yadav, whose party provides the Congress-led coalition much needed oxygen, from not only losing his Lok Sabha seat but also forfeiting the right to contest the general election due in the spring of 2014.

Following the judgment of a Ranchi special court, Yadav has been disqualified as an MP and barred from contesting elections for 11 years. Another convicted MP -- Rasheed Masood -- has also been lodged in jail and turned out of Parliament. In

the meantime stiff competition is building up over whether the credit for bringing the Prime Minister down on his knees and scuttling the toxic piece of stillborn ordinance should go to Rahul Gandhi alone or the Opposition's shenanigans can claim a legitimate share.

The Government's decision to undo its earlier action and not to press the President to put his imprimatur on the controversial ordinance is obviously not a spontaneous action. The bill and later the ordinance were cleared at the highest level of the Congress, the leading partner of the coalition in power. This means that Sonia Gandhi herself was a party to these retrograde pieces of legislation.

The Government gave the issue a second thought only after Rahul Gandhi's snub. The Congress vice-president presumably has a better understanding of the ground realities and come round to the perception that the people are not likely to take kindly to the Congress in the general elections due next spring if it continues to give shelter to corruption at high levels.

Everyone other than those with a vested interest in ensuring immunity to legislators convicted by a court of law and sentenced to two years or more in prison has welcomed the withdrawal of the obnoxious piece of backdoor legislation. The strongest critics are leaders of the Samajwadi Party whose support is a lifeline for the coalition government. SP supremo Mulayam Singh Yadav

recently managed to wriggle out of serious charges of amassing tons of unaccounted wealth.

The increasingly strident voice of youth power has asserted itself in unmistakable terms that the government must be run according to its wishes [and whims?]. Rahul Gandhi has obviously set new norms of morality in political life but there was a disconnect between his perceptions and the next tier of leaders within his own party. Ajay Maken, the Congress Party's communication chief, was in the midst of articulating a strong defence of the ordinance at a Press Club of India function when Rahul unexpectedly phoned him and announced he would come across to the venue. Maken didn't have the foggiest notion about Rahul's intentions and his face fell when the Congress vice-president tersely described the ordinance as complete nonsense.

Even as Rahul's intentions -- he foresees stark defeat if the Congress continues to shield corruption -- are above board, his upstaging -- if not humiliating -- the Prime Minister at a time when he was abroad holding meetings with other heads of government, has evoked criticism on different forums. Many of those who opposed the ordinance tooth and nail feel that Rahul's public outburst against his own government has hurt democratic processes. Indeed there are many who want to know what prevented the "Young Turk", with free access to the highest authorities in both party and government, from

articulating his concerns within the party hierarchy.

The Prime Minister had little choice after Rahul's diatribe. He tried to save his face with the

argument that in a democracy there was always room for articulating one's opinion and for changing policy decisions. On his return to Delhi he went through the usual motions and quietly kowtowed to

the power behind the throne. It may be better for the Congress Party to stop washing its dirty linen in public and function as a coherent and harmonious team.

Need special law on superstitions

Main argument of Pratap Bhanu Mehta, that laws should not be framed in such a way that it pretends to send a moral message, contains some merit. But his proposition that acts committed out of belief in superstition should be called as 'crimes' only and be dealt with as per IPC suffers from some misunderstandings.

In cases of some actions based on superstitions for example Bhanamati, the victims suffer no physical harm or estimable damage to property, but great mental torture.

Due to the stones or brickbats pelted on tin sheets of the victim's cottage, or finding dead birds besmirched with vermilion outside the door, all members of the family get frightened. But as no physical harm is done or economic loss is incurred, these acts cannot be registered as offences under Indian Penal Code.

Secondly, while investigating an offence like murder, the police want to know the motive – either a fraud over money or women or old enmity. But in case of a human sacrifice caused by the perpetrators out of

belief in superstition, perpetrators hope to derive some material benefit by offering innocent child, male or female, of say 8-10 years of age for sacrifice, there can be no such. Only belief in the one or other superstition can be the basis of motive such acts.

It is for these reasons that a special law, enumerating black magic, human sacrifice, etc. as offences is required. People like Mehta should go deep into the understanding of the superstitious behavior.

—Pannalal Surana

(Continued from Page 3)

Al-Qaida. Both India and Pakistan, particularly the latter, have to ponder over the vacuum that will be created after the Western forces quit. If combating terrorism is a priority for the two countries, the Al-Qaida and its instruments of tyranny, the Taliban, should be on top of their agenda. In fact, the Taliban in the shape of mujahideen are already operating in India. The situation is still under control. But the birth of Hindu Taliban should be a point of concern for India.

I wish the two countries would realize the gravity of the situation and discuss a joint action. New Delhi should be able to anticipate the situation it could face if Islamabad goes under or functions at the behest of the Taliban. Even Kenya and Nigeria have not been able to escape

the Al-Qaida's fury. Peshawar, the capital of the North Western Frontier Province, has been a target three times in the last week, killing roughly 200 people.

Pakistan is still not coming hard on Lashkar-e-Toiba. Hafiz Sayed, its chief, is leading prayers at the government-controlled Gaddafi Stadium and inciting people against India. Nawaz Sharif, when asked by Manmohan Singh about action against the terrorists who struck in Mumbai on 26/11, said that the case against them in the court would progress now that the Pakistan's judicial commission had visited India.

Against this backdrop, the diatribe by Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi against the Congress and non-BJP governments was in a bad taste. He depended on a Pakistani anchor's

prankish remark that Nawaz Sharif compared Manmohan Singh to a 'dehati (rural) woman'. No such remark was made as it turned out to be later. Modi, aspiring to be the country's Prime Minister, should be cautious in what he says. But then he gets lost in his demagogy.

Madhu Dandavate

By
B. Vivekanandan

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Why is the Indian Rupee Depreciating?

Kavaljit Singh

The Indian rupee touched a lifetime low of 68.85 against the US dollar on August 28, 2013. The rupee plunged by 3.7 percent on the day in its biggest single-day percentage fall in more than two decades. Since January 2013, the rupee has lost more than 20 percent of its value, the biggest loser among the Asian currencies.

There is no denying that India is not the only emerging market experiencing a rapid decline in its currency's value. Several emerging market currencies are also experiencing sharp depreciation over the prospect of imminent tapering of the US Federal Reserve's policy of quantitative easing (QE) program. The South African rand and the Brazilian real touched four-year lows against the US dollar in June 2013. Except the Chinese Yuan and Bangladeshi Taka, most Asian currencies have witnessed sharp depreciation since the beginning of 2013. Nevertheless, the Indian rupee has fared much worse than other emerging market currencies because of its twin deficits – current account and fiscal deficits. The foreign investors are particularly concerned over India's bloated current account deficit (CAD) which surged to a record high of US\$88.2 billion (4.8 percent of GDP) in 2012-13. Despite a modest recovery in the rupee's value between September 4 and 12, the investors remain wary of India's excessive dependence on volatile "hot money" flows to finance its current account deficit.

Over the past several months, India's exports have considerably

slowed down due to weak demand from traditional markets such as the US and Europe. While high imports of gold and crude oil have pushed country's trade and current account deficits wider. The gold and silver imports were nearly \$33 billion (bn) during January-May 2013.

From Capital Glut to Capital Flight

There is ample reason for concern that capital outflows from India and other emerging markets will rapidly accelerate if the Federal Reserve decides to curtail its bond-buying program on September 17. This move would lead to higher interest rates in the US and investors may dump risky emerging markets assets in favor of safe havens.

Since the beginning of QE program, much of the money has leaked into emerging markets offering higher yields and better growth prospects. The emerging markets have been the biggest beneficiaries of Fed's loose monetary policy, which has pumped extra liquidity since the global financial crisis of 2008. According to the IMF, emerging markets received nearly \$4 trillion in capital flows from 2009 to early this year.

The investors borrowed cheap short-term money in the US and invested in higher yielding assets in India, Indonesia, South Africa and other emerging markets. This resulted in more money flowing into debt, equity and commodity markets in these countries. In India, many companies resorted to heavy borrowings overseas. The massive

capital inflows also enabled India to comfortably finance its trade and current account deficits rather than addressing the structural aspects of CAD.

However, this money will quickly leave India and other emerging markets when the tapering of QE program begins. Already, emerging markets are witnessing a huge outflow of dollars as investors have started pulling money out of bond and equity markets. The foreign investors pulled out a record Rs.620 bn (\$10 bn) from the Indian debt and equity markets during June-July 2013. If the Federal Reserve decides to taper the QE program, the liquidity withdrawal would continue to put pressure on the rupee over the next 12 to 18 months.

Other Developments

There are a host of other factors which have added to the bearish sentiments on the rupee. Economic growth in India in the first quarter (April-June 2013) slipped to 4.4 percent due to a contraction in manufacturing and mining. A sharp rise in domestic food prices has also put a grinding pressure on the rupee.

Apart from economic factors, the rupee remains vulnerable to rising global oil prices and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and North Africa. As the threat of US-led war against Syria rises, oil prices are expected to rise which will further make it difficult for the Indian government to reduce CAD since India imports over 80 percent of its oil.

The Belated Policy Response

During July-August 2013, following measures were announced by the Indian authorities to stem the depreciation of rupee and contain the current account deficit:

- The duties on the import of gold, silver and platinum were increased to 10 percent.
- The limits on foreign ownership of sensitive sectors (such as telecoms and insurance) were further liberalized.
- New restrictions were imposed on Indian residents seeking to send money abroad to buy property.
- In mid-August, the existing limits on overseas direct investments by Indian companies were substantially reduced. However, this policy was withdrawn by the new governor of RBI on September 3.
- The interest rates limits for deposits meant for non-resident Indians were liberalized.
- New restrictions on open interest on USD-INR trades were imposed.
- Banks have been banned from trading in domestic currency futures and the exchange-traded options market on their own. Banks can only trade on behalf of their clients.
- The margin requirement on the domestic dollar-rupee forward trade was increased to 100 percent of the traded amount, which means investors will have to give the entire amount of the transaction upfront.
- The state-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) – which buy dollars to finance their imports –

were asked to trade only with a single state-owned bank.

What is surprising to note is that the above-mentioned policy measures failed to arrest the sliding value of the rupee in the currency markets.

Forex Swap Window for OMCs

On August 28, the RBI announced a forex swap window for OMCs to meet their daily dollar requirement of over \$400 million through a designated bank. The OMCs will have to return the dollars to the RBI at a later date. By offering this facility to OMCs, the RBI took away a monthly demand of \$9 bn from the currency markets. This sensible move by outgoing RBI governor D Subbarao had an immediate impact as it successfully tamed speculative pressures on the rupee.

The RBI had announced a similar forex facility for OMCs at the onset of global financial crisis in 2008. This facility, however, was subsequently withdrawn. In August 2013, Brazil also announced a \$60 bn currency swap facility for companies and investors who wish to buy dollars. Under this facility, the Banco Central do Brasil, country's central bank, will offer \$3 bn of dollar loans and swaps per week till December 31, 2013. The central bank may provide additional funds operations to meet the dollar demand.

Offshore NDF Market

Amidst all these developments, the critical role played by the offshore non-delivery forward (NDF) market in determining the value of rupee should not be overlooked. The rupee NDF market has mushroomed in key global financial centers with the liberalization of trade and capital flows since the 1990s.

NDFs are over-the-counter (OTC) derivatives instruments¹ for trading in non-convertible currencies such as the Indian rupee and the Korean won. The contracts are called “non-deliverable” since no delivery of the underlying currency takes place on maturity. The counterparties settle the contracts on maturity by paying the difference between the spot rate (decided by the RBI) and NDF rate, usually in US dollars.

Since NDFs are the OTC derivatives, the actual size of the market is not known but various surveys suggest that the trading volumes in the NDF markets are larger than the onshore markets. According to a study by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), the daily turnover in offshore rupee NDF market was \$10.8 bn in 2010, nearly 52 percent of the total turnover (\$20.8 bn) in foreign exchange forwards and forex swaps.²

The NDF market for the rupee is mainly concentrated in Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai, London and New York. In recent years, London has become a key centre for trading in the rupee NDFs. According to FXJSC Semi-Annual FX Turnover Surveys, the average daily trading in rupee NDFs in London increased from \$1.5 bn in 2008 to \$5.2 bn in 2012, a jump of 250 percent.³

Being an offshore market, the Indian authorities have no powers to enforce regulations on it. The domestic banks and companies are not allowed to transact in the NDF markets. The main participants in the rupee NDF market consist of commercial and investment banks, hedge funds, currency speculators, international subsidiaries of Indian companies and big diamond merchants.

Although the NDF market is primarily meant to provide a platform to companies to hedge their foreign exchange risk and related exposures, the dominant players in this market are the speculators (who bet on the movement of the rupee) and arbitrageurs (who exploit the price differentials between offshore and onshore markets).

The Growing Influence of NDF Market

Being a 24x7 market, the offshore NDF market exerts considerable pressure on onshore currency markets, particularly when the market sentiment is fragile for the rupee. Before Indian markets open for trading, the NDF markets in Hong Kong and Singapore set the price movement of the rupee. A bearish or bullish trend in the NDF market set the tone for trading in the domestic rupee market.

An empirical study by a RBI staff member found that there are volatility spillovers from NDF market to spot and forward markets in India.⁴ The study also found that the magnitude of volatility spillover from NDF to spot and forward markets has become higher after currency futures were introduced in India in 2008.⁵ This is probably due to large arbitrage taking place between futures and NDF market, says the study. In its latest Annual Report (2012-13), the RBI has acknowledged that there is a long-term relationship between the spot and NDF markets for the rupee. "During the period of depreciation, shocks originating in the NDF market may carry more information, which gets reflected in on-shore segments of the market through mean and volatility spillovers"⁶, states the Report.

Arbitrage Game

Since foreign banks and institutional investors are present in both onshore and offshore markets, they profit from huge arbitrage opportunities using the prevailing negative sentiments in the market. Such entities buy dollar-rupee forwards in onshore market and sell forwards in offshore NDF market.

Rampant Manipulation in Singapore's NDF Market Singapore is the offshore hub for trading in the NDFs of key Asian currencies. In the wake of Libor rate-fixing scandal, the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) initiated a review of process for setting rates for NDFs in September 2012. The investigations carried out by MAS found that traders from 20 banks communicated with each other through email and electronic messaging to influence the NDF rate setting process run by the Association of Banks in Singapore. Some of the prominent banks found guilty in the rate rigging were UBS, ING, Royal Bank of Scotland, BNP Paribas, Barclays and Deutsche Bank. Based on its investigations, the MAS took penal actions against banks for professional misconduct and unethical behavior. Nearly 50 traders were suspended and guilty banks were asked to set aside additional statutory reserves (in the range of S\$100-1200 million) with the MAS at zero interest for a period of one year.

According to India Forex Advisors (a foreign exchange consulting and treasury management firm), a large demand for forward dollar pushes up forward rate and thereby influences the spot exchange rate in India. As witnessed during July-August 2013, the increased speculative trading in the NDF market exacerbated volatility in both the spot and the

forward market in India. Besides, a few international subsidiaries of big Indian corporations and some diamond merchants are also engaged in arbitrage practice.

Policy Options for India

Several episodes of financial crises in the 1990s (from Mexico to Southeast Asia) highlight the eminent role played by current account deficits in triggering a currency crisis. An economic boom fueled by short-term capital inflows and debt-driven consumption is a recipe for currency crash.

India's external sector vulnerability is a symptom of a much deeper malaise in overall development strategy and domestic policymaking. Despite the deterioration in major indicators of external sector vulnerability, the policymakers remain complacent in defending India's growth story. There are no quick fixes to country's imbalanced external sector and the Indian economy remains vulnerable to external shocks and global liquidity conditions.

Some analysts believe that India can rely on its foreign exchange (forex) reserves of \$275 bn to arrest the currency fall. But India's short-term external debt (with a maturity of one year or less) has already reached an alarming level. According to the official statistics, India's short-term external debt stood at \$116 bn in March 2013 and the ratio of volatile capital flows (consisting of short-term debt and portfolio investments) to country's forex reserves was as high as 96 percent. At current levels, the forex reserves can barely meet the country's import bill for seven months.

Firstly, New Delhi should take urgent policy measures to curb inessential imports. Since increasing

exports may take considerable time, it is desirable to impose more curbs on gold, silver and non-essential items. In addition to higher custom duties, strict quantitative restrictions on the import of gold, silver and non-essential items should be imposed. The government should also consider imposing higher custom duties on those consumer electronics goods which are not part of Information Technology Agreement of the WTO. Indeed, such a policy regime may encourage smuggling but there are ways and means to check it.

Primarily six foreign banks (namely Citibank, HSBC, Deutsche Bank, UBS, J P Morgan, and Standard Chartered Bank) are the key players arbitraging between the rupee NDF market and domestic markets.

Since oil is the biggest item in its import bill, India should immediately accept Iran's offer to sell crude oil entirely in rupees and at concessional terms. By accepting this offer, India could potentially save \$8.5 bn in foreign exchange spending. Oil imports from Iran have declined substantially in the last five years due to unilateral sanctions imposed by the US and the European Union.

Secondly, India should immediately work out modalities for trading of goods in local currencies. India could begin trading in local currencies with BRICS partners and Asian countries. Russia, Malaysia and some other countries have expressed interest in trading in local currencies with India.

Thirdly, issuing dollar-denominated sovereign bonds in the midst of a crisis-like situation is a risky proposition. Besides, India will have to offer a higher rate of

interest to attract investors which in turn would further increase country's external indebtedness.

Instead of approaching the IMF for a standby loan which comes with stiff conditions, India could enter into currency swap agreements with key trading partners. Recently, India and Japan expanded their bilateral currency swap facility to \$50 bn. On the sidelines of the G20 Summit at St Petersburg in September 2013, BRICS countries worked out operational details of launching a \$100 bn Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) to ease balance of payment difficulties.

Fourthly, to rein in rampant speculation and manipulative activities in the offshore NDF market, the RBI should work out arrangements with other regulatory authorities in the form of information sharing and the setting of general standards. Currently, a new regulatory framework for OTC derivatives market is under preparation following the Dodd-Frank Act in the US, the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR) in Europe and the Basel III standards. As a member of G20, India should engage in the ongoing international initiatives aimed at increasing transparency and reducing systemic risk posed by the \$560 trillion global OTC derivatives market.

Lastly, the Indian authorities should not hesitate to impose capital controls as a macroeconomic policy tool to protect the domestic economy from a sudden capital flight. In this regard, capital controls imposed by Malaysia and Iceland on the capital outflows are worth examining.

Instead of approaching the IMF for a soft loan which comes with

stiff conditions, India could enter into currency swap agreements with key trading partners.

Notes and References

1. The phrase "over-the-counter" refers to stocks, currencies, commodities and debt contracts between two parties which are traded through a dealer network, rather than on a formal exchange. A derivative is a financial instrument whose value is contingent on the value of an underlying security. For instance, a futures currency contract or a currency swap.
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Beauty And Skin Colour

Rammanohar Lohia

The crowning of a 24-year-old Indian American, Nina Davuluri, as Miss America 2014, may be a moment of glory for nearly two million Indians who have made the US their home. But for many Americans, the cause célèbre was worthy of condemnation because a nonwhite had been chosen as symbol of American beauty. Those who had followed the US social media at that time might have been shocked to see the amount of hatred, racial slurs and abuse pouring out of their posts against an Indian-origin girl, that too a Telugu girl. The tweets that surfaced in the cyber space make us wonder, at least some, whether beauty is skin deep and why do people get confused and mix up beauty and complexion. The colour bias is as ancient as human civilisation. Hindu scriptures have references to fair and dark-skinned people and in later periods complexion had percolated into the caste system. Even today, a look at the matrimonial columns reveals how colour-biased we are. While there is no blatant discrimination against less fair-complexioned people, tinges of disappointment and disapproval are discernable at social gatherings. It is an irony, despite the fact that when the nature, plant and animal kingdoms are all colourful why humans have preferences and developed different perceptions, real or imaginary, about fellow beings' complexion. Some answers could be found in this article written by the renowned socialist leader in 1960.

–Ganga Reddy

The colour of the skin is no criterion of beauty or any other type of superiority. And yet the fair of colour and the beautiful are words of similar meaning not alone in the white lands of Europe but more so in the sultrier climes of Asia or the Americas. On merit, this distortion of aesthetics is inexplicable.

The dark of colour have not always been treated with neglect, at least not in India. To Sanskrit literature, the dark one, Shyama, is the beautiful one. She need not actually have been dark of colour, but if she was young and beautiful, and the young and the beautiful often tend to be synonymous, she was called Shyama. The perplexed cloud asks as to how he would recognize the damsel to whom the message was to be delivered and Kalidas describes the Shyama of slender waist and of step languorous with the weight of hips, of a lower lip red and full, of eyes that belong to an astonished deer and similar treasure. The male incarnations of

god-head, Ram and Krishna, were dark of colour.

The greatest woman of Indian myth was dark. Draupadi also called Krishna has suffered neglect, probably because current male vanity cannot reconcile itself to her five husbands and a platonic affairs or two in addition. Savitri and Seeta, the chaste and also the fair of colour, represent India's womanhood, not entirely without reason, but unreason ensures when other representatives are excluded. Krishna, the dark female, and Krishna the dark male, are however the two peerless flowers of India's myth-making with the utmost beauty and fragrance.

Draupadi is perhaps the one woman of myth or history in the wide world, who was wiser and wittier than all the men of her time. The question of comparing her with Krishna should never arise, for this woman of ready wit and deep wisdom was his friend, the companion, the heroine and the occasion of his years of duty as

Radha was of those of delight, and Krishna and Krishna are the two heroes of Mahabharat of equal merit, companions without a shadow of conflict. This Draupadi was dark of skin.

Are not then the fair of skin beautiful? To say that they are not would again be untrue. In fact, one of the finest poems on woman's beauty describes the visible forehead surrounded by the darkness of the hair as the incomplete moon of the 8th day. Such a forehead must necessarily be fair and this exceedingly delicate poem also belongs to Sanskrit literature. Ancient India had probably succeeded in separating beauty from colour of complexion and was ready to discover the beautiful wherever it was located. It had presumably at least during certain periods been able to rid itself of prejudices in favour of the dark or of the fair in appraisals of beauty. Succeeding generations have squandered this great maturity of aesthetic judgment.

From such rites of beauty contests as are revealed to the world, it would appear that the measurements of chest, waist and hip are among the deciding qualities. No dark beauty, however, has so far been elected. A Japanese Miss Universe succeeded in gate-crashing after what must have been nearly half a century of beauty contests. Japanese women must, of course, have been beautiful even before one of them was crowned as the queen of the world, and it is not as though they are more beautiful today than before. The change is not in them but in the eyes of the beauty judges of California. The turn for the dark skins of Africa and Asia may yet to come.

The eyes of the beholder have so patently deceived not only over weeks or decades but also over tens of centuries, for they see what the mind has taught them to. Assam is the fabled land of feminine magic and also of feminine charm. Visiting strangers extol the beauty of its females, most of them because of ceremony and without knowing what they are Beauty and Skin Colour talking about. Is it the soft melting beauty of the fair skinned which they praise or the celestial shapes of the dark skinned for which their eyes are beholden? Assam is indeed a land of female beauty, but they could hardly know it who confuse beauty with fair skin. The tea woman, or at least some of them, predominantly of Chattisgarh and Oriya extraction arrest the eye with the shape of their body and the lustre of their visage and hold it captive forever and these laboring women are dark-skinned. Not many hit upon this truth of beauty residing in dark as well as fair skin ever in their life. Some do, but when their youth has passed. Myth also makes

Radha the fair-skinned companion of the youthful Krishna, while

Krishna who is dark of skin is his companion in the period of statecraft and middle age. As one grows in years, one begins to prefer the south to the north and also those who are dark of skin.

I am talking from the angle of the male and about female beauty. There is no implication that I hold woman to be a thing of beauty and no more. If that in fact were my perspective, I would never have been able to discern Draupadi's beauty, of which her unexcelled wisdom seems to be a source, or that of Assam's tea women, with whom labour, independence and good looks would be difficult to disentangle. If I were a female, I would probably have looked at the question of male beauty much from the same angle. In the first place, the male has not suffered the same amount of depreciation because of the colour of the skin, and secondly, the female has so far been busy evaluating her own beauty as much as his. Should beauty ever become a mark of man to the extent that it is today of woman, which I very much doubt, the proposition about the colour of the skin would hold just as well if not more.

Meenakshi the fish eyed has her abode in Madura, now the chief city of the river Vygeyi, which at one time nurtured the great Pandyan kingdom. This great goddess who presides all by herself over what must be one of the largest temples of

India, is not the only fish eyed one. All women of the Vygeyi share in her beauty. To judge between the fish eyed and the deer eyed would be at all time difficult, for the Mediterranean eyes speak just a little bit more to the senses, while those of the Vygeyi speak that bit more to the soul. The fish eyes seem to possess a little extra of the quality of sympathy and mercy. These Vygeyi women of

the fish eyes are dark-skinned, as are most women of Tamilnad, India's true south.

Tamilnad makes its own films in Tamil language, though Hindustani films are also popular. A most curious fact stands out that, though male heroes of these films are generally Tamils, Andhra and Malayali women are just as generally cast in the role of film heroines. There may be many reasons for this, but I would like to mention one. I had occasion to see Tambaram Lalita, a Tamilian woman, play in a minor role, and I looked intently at her for a possible clue to the behaviour of Tamil films. The thick coat of paint and powder made her face look different from her arm, whose true colour showed through a coating that was not as liberal. Lest one should put it down to the failure of technique, it is only fair to wonder whether all parts of a heroine's body which a film has to show can be effectively covered with such thick coats of paint and powder.

I found Lalita just as beautiful as any other woman cast in the major roles of that film. A dark-skinned Meenakshi of shapely body would of course be peerless. But the dark-skinned Tamilians evidently do not think so and they prefer to see the

Malayali and Andhra women of lighter skin in their films. A friend completed my observation and told me that, before the beauty judgments of film audiences could come into play, the dark-skinned beauty would have to pass muster at the hands of the producer or the director. The coat of paint and powder may charm the audience, but the producer would be a little too close for that.

This distortion of aesthetic judgement must be ascribed to political influences. The fair-skinned peoples of Europe have dominated

the world for over three centuries. For the most Beauty and Skin Colour part, they conquered and ruled, but, in any event, they have possessed power and prosperity, which the coloured peoples have not. If the Negroes of Africa had ruled the world in the manner of the whites of Europe, standards of woman's beauty would undoubtedly have been different. Poets and essayists would have spoken of the soft satin of the Negro skin and its ennobling feel and sight; their aesthetic construction of the beautiful lip or elegant nose would have tended to be on the side of fullness. Politics influence aesthetics; power also looks beautiful, particularly unequalled power.

The worldwide conjunction of fair skin with overwhelming power has received great reinforcement from a specific Indian situation. Those fair of skin or at least less dark have generally belonged to the higher caste. The Hindustani word for cast is 'Varna', which probably means colour. The 'Rigveda' has named white as the Aryan colour. Against the background of bright colours of nature and sky in India, the fully white but unstarched raiment probably makes the beholding eye happy and accentuates the beauty of the wearer. But that has nothing to do with the colour of the skin. Nevertheless, the conjunction of worldwide domination with the speciality of India's caste has given to fair skin its formidable prestige and made it a thing of beauty in itself almost without other accompaniments.

Is the colour of the skin then no part of beauty. When the element of novelty tickles the beholder, all fair skin looks like soothing marble and, I guess, by the same token, all dark skin, ochre or wheat-like, looks like the immaculate trunk of the plantain

tree. After the novelty has passed, the blotches of the white will show themselves same as the monotone of the dark. The colour of the skin is certainly no criterion of beauty. If any quality of the skin goes into beauty, that certainly is its texture, a soft, unbroken and even texture, that is some times seen perhaps at its best in China or among the ochre or wheat-like women of Africa, India and similar lands. I have perhaps tilted the balance somewhat in the other direction, and that often happens when an earlier tilt is being corrected. A soft, unbroken and even texture may be found, though more rarely, among the fairer skin, which may cause madness to rage in the blood just as much as its darker skin.

While it makes no sense to prefer between the dark and the fair, some subjective impressions may be noted. All women are beautiful. Some are more so than the other. Among the more beautiful ones of fair skin are such as ooze frankness and innocence and pleasing beauty like the clear rippling brook or better still the transparent depths of rivers in the hills and the light of the moon. Among the more beautiful ones of dark skin are such as evoke the mystery of life and creation, the quickening that gives to fish its eyes, to the she-elephant its languorous step, to twilight its pregnant repose and all such things where deep calls unto deep.

Beauty and sexuality are allies. Darker women have in fact attracted the sexuality of the dominant male, but only in night clubs or on the sly. India's system of castes erects further hurdles. Not only are the ways of life and speech and conduct different, but the modes dictate a segregation, at least outward, between the sexes of the higher and the lower castes. The dark skinned women of the lower castes, when genuinely in

love, would perhaps neither relish nor be able to practice the ruses of the higher castes. There is, however, no love without sexuality and no beauty without love. The woman who loves and is loved radiates the beauty of the starlit sky, whether she is dark or fair. The darker women have in the recent past been denied such love, at least by those who speak or sing of beauty. Hurdles made out of different ways of life and erected among India's castes or between the dark and the fair in all the world may take time to remove. The greatest hurdle of them all is built upon a sheer error, which attributes beauty to fair skin.

The tyranny of colour is among the great oppressions of the world. All women are oppressed and mankind is the poorer for lack of adequate expression to their talents or gifts. Coloured women, who are more numerous, suffer greater oppression.

They are reared on a diet of anxiety and inferiority. Even as a little child, the dark girl, who may be sister to a fairer girl in the same family, has to accustom herself to neglect and treatment reserved for citizens of the second grade. The female child suffers lack of opportunities for growth in comparison to the male child, and on top of that, the coloured girl experiences an additional portion of shame, at least the burdens of an inferior position. The coloured male is also not wholly free of such burdens.

Soaps and creams and lotions and the latest is injections, as might change the skin to lighter hue, are very much in demand by the coloured youth, both male and female. In land where a minority of whites and a mass of coloured people live together, as in South America,

(Continued on Page 15)

A Case for Co-operative Farming

Bapu Heddurshetti

Recently the Government of Karnataka announced a new programme to be implemented in four districts on a pilot basis. Under the programme, 10,000 hectares of irrigated land have been identified in each district. Farmers who have land holdings in these 10,000 hectares will be integrated into a registered co-operative society and all subsidies from Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and allied departments will be routed through the society. Marketing of the produce also will be encouraged through the society. However, the programme aims to create only agricultural service co-operatives and falls short of creating agricultural production co-operatives through pooling of the lands by the members for the purpose of cultivation. There is a need to take a bold initiative in heralding a new era of co-operative farming in Karnataka.

Karnataka ushered in the first phase of land reforms in the early 1950s when the Zamindari was abolished and the tenants were given protection against eviction. In the second phase ushered in in 1971, the tenants were conferred ownership rights over the lands they were tilling and a ceiling was imposed on land holdings and the surplus land was taken over by the government and redistributed among the landless. These reforms eliminated the feudal land relations of zamindar and tenant but retained and enlarged the capitalist land relations of owners of land and workers on land. These reforms also drastically changed the pattern of land holdings.

Between 1971 and 2005, while the number of small and marginal farmers increased significantly the number of big farmers, came down drastically. For example, the number of operational holdings below one hectare which were 2,082,000 in 1970-71, increased to 3,655,000 in 2005-06 recording an increase of 175.6 per cent. Similarly, the number of operational holdings between one and two hectares which were 840,000 in 1970-71, increased to 2,014,000 in 2005-06 recording an increase of 239.8 per cent. If the land holdings of the marginal and small farmers are taken together, the increase is 195 per cent. However, the number of large land holdings of above 10 hectares which was 219,000 in 1970-71 decreased to only 79,000 recording a decrease of 277 per cent.

If the area cultivated by these marginal, small and big farmers is taken into consideration, the picture is not different. For example, while the marginal farmers holding below one hectare of land were cultivating 549,000 hectares in 1970-71, they were cultivating 1,651,000 hectares in 2005-06, an increase of 300.7 per cent. While the small farmers holding between one and two hectares were cultivating 1,221,000 hectares in 1970-71, they were cultivating 1,651,000 hectares in 2006-06, an increase of 235.6 per cent. Taken together, the area cultivated by marginal and small farmers, increased by 255.5 per cent. While the area cultivated by big farmers holding more than 10 hectares was 3,601,000 in 1970-71, it declined drastically to 1,184,000 hectares in 2005-06, recording a decrease by 304 per cent.

These are matters of relief for a socialist who desires equality in the form of equalisation of land holdings. However, according to the Department of Agriculture of the Government of Karnataka, since the size of economic holding for Karnataka is 2.56 hectares, these figures are a matter of concern also as the marginal and small land holdings are uneconomic and unviable and are causing a crisis in agriculture.

The facts that only 30 per cent of the total cultivated area has been brought under various types of irrigation and that the average yield of a number of crops in Karnataka is below the national average yield of those crops, have further accentuated this crisis. As a result, an estimated 62 per cent of the farmers are in debt. Dr. T. N. Prakash Kammaradi, Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Economics, and Honorary Director, Cost of Cultivation Scheme, of the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, opines that the market mechanism has been unable to transfer a fair share of consumers' rupee to producers. This has further worsened the situation.

Another factor has added to the woes of the farmers. Farm workers are not available even if they are offered Rs. 200-300 per day. Though according to the 1991 Census, in Karnataka, there were 50 lakh agricultural workers, which number must have increased during the last two decades, the agricultural workers must be finding better wages in other sectors and hence are not available for farming operations. Mechanization

of agriculture is also at a very low level in Karnataka with the result that according to Dr. T. N. Prakash Kammaradi, "if income from farming alone is considered, majority of farmers may fall below the poverty line in Karnataka".

All this calls for inaugurating the third phase of land reforms, i.e., consolidation of land holdings in the form of farming co-operatives which will pool the land to reap the benefit of economies of scale and make agriculture a viable enterprise for the marginal and small farmers. While agricultural economists talk only about qualitative improvement in agriculture, like irrigation, improved variety of seeds, agricultural credit etc., no one, not even the socialists, are talking about bringing about structural changes in agriculture by promoting farming co-operatives where land is pooled with a view to reap the benefits of economies of scale and overcome several of the hurdles mentioned above. It needs to be noted that any effort at qualitative improvement in agriculture will only benefit the bigger farmers and at best will benefit the farmers in proportion to the size of their operational holdings thus perpetuating the existing classes of farmers without bringing any relief to the marginal and small farmers.

There is also need to include the land-less agricultural workers as members of these farming societies so as to overcome the non-availability of farm workers for agricultural operations by offering them shares in the income of the farm proportionate to their contribution of labour, to begin with.

Socialists have been insisting on encouraging farming co-operatives from the beginning though they have forsaken it of late. In the 'Programme for adoption after the attainment of independence' they wanted that

the "state shall encourage and promote collective and co-operative farming with a view to ultimate collectivisation of all agriculture in the country". The programmes of the party mentioned in the constitution of the party included "organisation of co-operatives for production, distribution and credit in the unsocialised sector of economic life and encouragement and promotion of co-operative and collective farming by the State". They also mentioned 'encouragement of co-operative farming' as an immediate demand of the socialists. For Jayaprakash Narayan, 'socialism in agriculture' meant co-operative and collective farming. He said this 'was essential for the success of any attempt to recast Indian life on a socialist basis'. He explains what is a co-operative in his tract 'Why socialism'. "Under this, individual holdings remain (though much equalised by the redistribution of the land of the landlords and the capitalist farmers); the old agricultural instruments remain individual property; but for the purposes of cultivation, the holdings are pooled together and the crop is raised and harvested with joint labour. The produce is distributed according to the size of the holding and the amount of labour put in, after costs have been accounted for. This is the first lesson in social living".

There is need to transform the existing capitalist land relations in agriculture of 'owners of land' and 'workers on land' into socialist land relations of a single agricultural class living off the land. Farming co-operatives can achieve this end. Farming co-operatives will also enhance one of the normative ideals of socialism namely 'fraternity'. Hence socialists in particular should insist on encouraging co-operative farming.

(Continued from Page 13)

and where the white dominates, the accepted tyranny of colour can be seen in its most accentuated forms. All the world suffers this tyranny of skin's colour, a tyranny made worse because the tyrants do not practise it as much as the slaves, who inflict upon themselves.

Most tyrannies are built upon error and so is this largest and widest tyranny, that of colour. How coloured humanity has come to willing and eager acceptance of standards of beauty laid down by those of fair skin is probably a greater marvel than any. The key to the marvel is the same as in the case of the tyranny of the rich over the poor, the high caste over the low caste, the foreign-tongued over the native-tongued, the select over the mass. Between dark and fair as between rich and poor lie myriad gradations. The dark can be the black of coal or the yellow of pearl with many intermediate wheats and browns and ochres and chocolates, so that the fair who dominate aesthetic judgments are able to win substantial followers in the dark-skinned camp. The distance between dark and fair as between rich and poor is covered by innumerable intermediate points, so that the restoration of a valid aesthetic judgment has become as difficult as that of a proper economic or moral standard. When would the beautiful women of dark skin assert their supremacy or at least their rights of equality or, perhaps, the revolution in this as in other matters will be paved by the tyrants themselves. An aesthetic revolution in the evaluation of beauty and its relation to the colour of the skin will blow the air of freedom and inner peace over all the world almost as much as any political or economic revolutions.



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Vol. 68 No. 40
October 13, 2013

Election season starts

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to Corruption**
Nitish Chakravarty

State-Sponsored Apartheid
Abdul Khaliq

**Socialist Programme of
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K. S. Chalam

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Call it a "grand rehearsal", or a "curtain-raiser to 2014" or "semi-finals" or "political tug of war" or by any other name, the coming polls to four state assemblies, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Mizoram and the National capital territory of Delhi during November-December will see India enter into the election mode. The results of the polls in the five states will be with us by mid-December and within the next three to five months the entire nation will be walking to the polling booths to elect another Lok Sabha and another government. It is not only the contesting parties but all of us have a huge stake in the outcome of both the assembly and the national polls, since the shape and contour and the political colour of India may well change drastically after the two rounds. For the better or the worse? Again, the polls will answer this question.

The Election Commission has announced the poll schedule for the five assemblies. Although only some 630 assembly and some 11.60 crores of electors are involved in the exercise, the political significance of the round is considerable. This is because two of the five states are already under BJP control and the

party is sanguine about a favourable outcome in those two. Mizoram, Rajasthan and Delhi are held by the Congress. The party may repeat its successes in Mizoram and Rajasthan but it is Delhi which worries the Congress since the party has already won the state twice in a row but faces a big challenge this time from the combined Opposition of a determined BJP and the Johnny-Come-Lately Aam Aadmi Party whose real clout and hold among the people is to be tested for the first time. Has the AAP and its hopeful but impatient leader Arvind Kejriwal some stuff in them or are they blowing hot air?

The uncertainty over the national scene continues. Will Manmohan Singh go in for the current Lok Sabha's dissolution in March in order to have the 2014 parliamentary round in the relatively weather-friendly March or will he wait till mid-May when Indians all over the country run for the shade to escape from the scorching sun? It may be fair to say that neither the Prime Minister nor his party leadership has an idea right now when to go to the country.

In any case, like the rest of the country, the PM and those in the

ruling coalition and the opposition alliances will also be interested in knowing which way the wind blew in the assembly polls before assessing respective prospects for 2014.

The Congress chalked up impressive victories recently in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Karnataka. The political mood in the country has dramatically changed in the last couple of months since the advent of the “Modi factor” in the national poll scene. Since this “factor” is still to be tested for its strengths and weaknesses, it must be assumed that the BJP, as the sole party directly fighting the Congress,

will expose Narendra Modi to the people of all the five states as the party’s 2014 poll mascot. This is bound to prove a problem for the Congress since its current hopeful Rahul Gandhi is still to shed his coyness for the highest job in the country. Congressmen ask each other “Will he, won’t he?” (agree to be named prime ministerial candidate) very much like the over-anxious damsel picks off rose petals to find out whether her man loves her or not?

Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are politically “active and alive” states and although the Congress has ruled over them in

the past, they are not the traditional pocket-boroughs of the party anymore which they were in the past. The BJP chief ministers of the first two states have a good performance record and hence the Congress will have to move mountains to oust them. Similarly, Rajasthan has done well under Ashok Gehlot of the Congress and it will be as difficult for the BJP to oust him as it will be for the Congress to make inroads into the two immediate neighbours. We should not be surprised by the results in the three states. Or, in other words, we must be content with intelligent speculation alone. The public decides what is best for it! Interesting time are ahead of us!

Hail Siddaramaiah!

The Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is entitled to three cheers and the nation’s gratitude for choosing science and modernism in preference to tradition and superstition. He proved himself to be a realist and a practical leader when he ventured boldly into the boundaries of one of the districts of his own state without fear of a political downfall. He was aware of the so-called “jinx or curse” which comes into operation whenever an elected chief minister of the state pays a visit to the district town Chamarajnar and ensures loss of power for him soon after the visit. The general belief, which undoubtedly has sprung from knowledge gained by experience, is that a chief minister will lose office within six months of visiting the town. Hence, according to newspaper reports, chief ministers either avoid visits to the jinxed town or time it for the fag end of their tenure. Among the unfortunates who visited and fell by the wayside were S.R. Bommai and Veerendra

Patil who lost power in the eighties of the last century. Since then, successive chief ministers avoided even sighting the town! However, the gentleman who tried to break the jinx was H. D. Kumaraswamy who went there after a lapse of 16 years of a predecessor’s visit. On return to Bangalore, he had to quit and hand over power to the BJP partner. Recent chief ministers who respected the jinx were B. S. Yeddyurappa and Sadanand Gowda who never ventured in the direction of Chamarajnar. Their successor Jagdish Shettar did, but he did not remain in office for very long after the visit, he and his ministry and his party were sent home packing lock stock and barrel in the election that followed!

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah becomes the first chief minister to visit the town within six months of assuming office. He chose to debunk superstition and visit the town, interact with the people there

and announce a slew of development schemes. We hope he will stay in office till the end of his five-year even if only to prove that visiting Chamarajnar has little or nothing to do with political survival. It is the country’s good luck that we still have leaders who try to inculcate the scientific temper among the people and campaign against superstition and senseless ritualism. We hope the anti-superstition legislation his government wants to bring to the assembly shortly will be passed unanimously. Hail Siddaramaiah!

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Between the lines

Was a new state justified?

Kuldip Nayar

Apparently Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who okayed the creation of Telangana for formal decision by the cabinet, did not anticipate angry reaction of the rest of Andhra, called Seemandhra. When there is blackout, no water supply, no transport, no fuel and powerless mobiles, the mood in Seemandhra is that of now or never.

The centre could have gauged the sentiment by proceeding with what the constitution says. It is laid down that the state assembly should be consulted. True, in the house of 294, the Seemandhra's 179 members would have stalled a resolution on the creation of Telangana. But then the constitution says that there should be consultation, not concurrence.

The exercise would have enabled to foresee the extent of aggressiveness which even intelligence agencies failed to report. Probably, the anger in Telangana was no less when it was up in arms. Yet the centre had resisted the state's bifurcation although the agitation was at its fieriest during the days of Chenna Reddy, once the state's chief minister. Then the Congress president, K. Kamaraj, from the south had his ears to the ground. Sonia Gandhi, sitting at New Delhi, is not familiar with the ground realities of the state.

Was it necessary to divide Andhra Pradesh? This was the first linguistic state. The States' Reorganization Commission that followed the creation of Andhra

Pradesh recommended the creation of Telangana. Yet the centre stuck to a united Andhra Pradesh in the larger interest.

The Telugus enthusiastically welcomed the creation of Andhra Pradesh because the Telugu-speaking areas were retrieved from the Madras Presidency and amalgamated with Andhra Pradesh. The question that remains unanswered is why so much hostility has come to surface when Telangana is constituted.

After all, it is going to be part of India. Ambitious politicians are responsible for cultivating hostility. There can be fear that Telangana is more or less the old state of Nizam where *razakars* (armed men) were ruling the roost. But the state is strong enough to curb such a tendency. Also the Nizams encouraged *razakars* and dreamt of joining Pakistan.

Politicians eye the loaves of office that a new state would create. That greed may be the reason why state chief minister Kiran Kumar Reddy has not resigned even when he is for a united Andhra Pradesh. Had he resigned it would have come as a jolt to the Congress high command and probably things would have taken a different turn.

Indeed, the Congress has in mind the next elections where it expects to sweep Telangana. It is tragic that politics has held its sway over the interest of the people of Andhra

Pradesh. Its bifurcation would create problems for both the states like water disputes because river Krishna flows into both the proposed states. It is still not late to annul the decision.

Probably, the services of Congress-vice-president Rahul Gandhi would have to be harnessed. If he could undo the ordinance to shield the convicted politicians and force the union cabinet to rescind its decision he would be able to undo the division of Andhra Pradesh as well. Indeed, it was ridiculous to introduce in parliament a bill to overcome a Supreme Court judgment that the MPs and MLAs will cease to be members of the respective houses and disqualified the moment they are convicted.

The bone of contention between Telangana and Seemandhra is Hyderabad. The proposed bifurcation will have Hyderabad as their joint capital for 10 years. Why not permanently? When Punjab was divided, it was announced that both Punjab and Haryana would have separate capitals and Chandigarh would be a union territory. The two states found that a joint capital was useful and convenient. So much so, the lawyers of both the states opposed to the centre's proposal to have a separate high court in Haryana. The proposal had to be withdrawn.

The argument that Seemandhra does not touch the border of Telangana where Hyderabad is

located is not convincing. Both states open in the other states. All belong to the Indian nation. Why then the opposition to have Hyderabad as the joint capital? It is, however, unfortunate that government servants of the proposed Telangana have threatened that Seemandhra's government servants must have their own setup in Hyderabad itself. Such tendencies must be curbed with a strong hand because they impinge on the country's unity.

The centre has also closed its eyes on the renewal of demand for the creation of other states. Vidarbha, Gorkhaland and some other states in the northeast have again begun agitating after the announcement of Telangana. The state governments are helpless when the centre announces Telangana without bothering about repercussions.

It is not understandable as to why New Delhi has created another problem when it is already reeling under deteriorating economic conditions on the one hand and uneasy burdens with China and Pakistan on the other. Maybe, the announcement of Telangana is meant to divert attention from other pressing problems the country is facing today. This is perhaps the Congress way of tackling them.

The government has done well in resisting the demand for the appointment of another States Reorganization Commission. It would have opened Pandora's box. I recall the passions aroused when the commission was appointed. There were so many claims which were equally conflicting that it was difficult to arrive at any decision which ultimately the commission made.

(Continued on Page 5)

P M Turns a Blind Eye to Corruption

Nitish Chakravarty

Even as the UPA II government is hobbling in the wake of a failed attempt to shield convicted lawmakers and attacks from a high-up within the party, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is basking in the autumn sun, because the stain of corruption that stalks the coalition in power and its supporters has not directly besmirched his reputation. It is true that no credible evidence has so far been dug out to arraign Dr Singh for lining his pocket with ill-gotten pelf. Dr Singh's spotless record insofar as illegal financial gains are concerned is envied by others in high positions in the Congress and other parties.

His honesty and integrity has been showcased by one of his erstwhile media advisers. The adviser has shared with the laity the information that at his first conversation with the Prime Minister after he joined the government, Dr Singh told him that if he smelt a rat even at the doors of his close relatives, he [media adviser] should not hesitate to bring it to his ears. In the absence of empirical evidence to the contrary, it has to be recognised that the pervasive corruption in the ruling coalition - of course some of his political adversaries also have been caught with their hands in the till - has not touched Dr Singh directly.

But the issue of corruption in the higher echelons of the government cannot and ought not to rest here. Charges of money made unlawfully by those responsible for organising the Commonwealth Games of 2010, and by one or more of the Prime

Minister's cabinet colleagues and their cohorts in the allocation of 2G spectrum licenses and also by those who granted licenses for mining high grade coal blocks to well connected businessmen turned politicians are no figments of imagination. Voluminous evidence has tumbled out of official records to clinch the charge that those entrusted with public funds have played ducks and drakes with money intended for public purposes.

Even as we have a duckback Prime Minister, in the perception of a large section of the people of this country, he cannot escape scrutiny for the misdeeds of his colleagues nor can he be totally absolved of accountability. Dr Singh has a lot to explain to sustain his claim of being unaware of what was going on under his watch and not being even remotely involved in the massive corruption that stalks his government. Quite a few members of the joint parliamentary committee which probed the 2G scam wanted Dr Singh to appear before the committee in person. The Prime Minister himself had said he did not have anything to conceal and was prepared to come before the committee. But still the committee's chairman vetoed the demand and denied it an opportunity to put searching questions to Dr Singh.

The argument that "compulsions of coalition politics" were to blame for some of the looting would not sell at a time when the credibility of politicians, especially members of the government, has hit the lowest point since India became

an independent republic. Enough legally admissible evidence is already out in the open that the Prime Minister was aware that the erstwhile Telecom Minister, A Raja, deliberately and wilfully tweaked rules and procedures to sell airtime at throwaway prices to cronies who shared the booty. Raja has claimed again and again that both the Prime minister as well as the Finance minister were on board when he overturned all precedents and rules and procedures in granting 2G spectrum licenses.

No one has fallen for the histrionics of Kapil Sibal who played a zero sum game after stepping into A. Raja's shoes following the latter's exit from the cabinet. Probably the times are out of joints for Sibal, especially after the drubbing he and a couple of his cabinet colleagues got from Rahul Gandhi over the ordinance to save MPs haunted by the spectre of disqualification. Plenty of evidence has come light to confirm the findings of the CAG that the loss to the treasury was close to Rs 2 lakh crores. No wonder Kapil Sibal has realised that sometimes silence is a better option.

There is no doubt any more that powerful and influential people are hyper-active to derail the probe. They have managed to whisk away key files of the Coal Ministry containing incriminating evidence. This may not save the businessmen-politicians from the long arm of the law, for collateral evidence should be available from the CAG's records as well as various other government offices through which the files made their rounds at breakneck speed. The suspicion is strong that the trail stretches to the Prime Minister's office. In spite of all the evidence

that have already been collated, the trial of the men in the CWG organising committee who played ducks and drakes with public funds is proceeding at snail's pace. The legal system is being misused to delay the trial of the men charged with serious offences.

How Ottavio Quattrochi managed to stymie the CBI's attempt to catch him after years of chase even as he was held by Argentinian police, and who manouvred the unfreezing of the Italian wheeler dealer's bank account in the U. K. are questions that are still being asked. In both cases it was the unseen hands of Quattrochi's well wishers ensconced

in key positions in the Manmohan Singh government who forced the CBI's hands, while the Prime Minister looked the other way. He was Finance Minister in 1991-96 when Quattrochi was tipped off to quit India post-haste after the CBI managed to obtain tell-tale evidence of the kickbacks he had pocketed in the Bofors deal. Dr Singh could have played a key role in nailing the Italian businessman but chose to keep quiet. Prime Minister Narasimha went overboard to rescue Quattrochi from the quagmire he was trapped in. Tagore has said celestial wrath should burn not only the wrong-doer but also the one who turns a blind eye to wrong-doing.

Manual scavenging spiritual

Narendra Modi mentioned the following in a book Karmayog published in 2007 on manual scavengers: 'At some point of time, somebody must have got the enlightenment that it is their duty to work for the happiness of the entire society and the Gods. And this job of cleaning up should continue as 'an internal spiritual activity' for centuries". Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy (the daughter of a devadasi) was the first lady doctor in South India. Later she became a member in the Madras Legislative Council and

moved a resolution for the abolition of Devadasi System. Sathiamurthy, a veteran Congress leader, cautioned that the abolition of this system would affect art and culture. Dr Reddy said, 'We have done enough of service to art and culture. We are tired now. Hon'ble member may ask his family ladies to take over this service'. I wish a Valmiki lady requests NaMo to deploy his family members to work for the happiness of the entire society and the Gods, giving much needed rest to the tired Valmikis.

—Sankara Narayanan

(Continued from Page 4)

The commission made two points as back as in 1985 when it submitted its report. Both points are as true today as they were then. One, whether the states are reorganized or not they will continue to be an integral part of the Union which is the real political entity and the basis of our nationhood. Two, the

constitution recognizes only one citizenship for the entire people of India, with equal rights and opportunities throughout the union. The proposed state of Telangana is, no doubt, a wrong decision. Yet the 28th state, if constituted, will keep in mind that the citizenship is one, with equal rights.

Rising Danger...

As India heads towards another general election soon we, the undersigned, would like to warn the people of India about the rising danger of bigotry, communal divide, organised violence and hatred for sections of people in the country.

At a time when conflicts are on the increase worldwide and both the global and national economy are in deep crisis due to falling incomes, rising inflation and unemployment there is a search for a 'messiah', a superman who will save us all and restore lost glory or take us towards new ones very soon.

We have been subjected to a media blitz in recent times to convince us that Narendra Modi is the man we need now. This corporate media campaign has already overawed the Bhartiya Janta Party to surrender before the 'Strongman of Gujarat'. He is being portrayed as a man who has the solution for all the complex economic, social and cultural challenges the country faces today. Modi's infamous role in the massacre of over 3000 Muslims in his state in 2002 is being brushed aside and he is promoted as morally 'fit enough' to lead the nation. False statistical claims, full of half-truths, are being used to present Gujarat as a model that all of India should follow to attain high economic growth. The voices of reason critical of Modi within his own party are being ignored and even attacked to silence them. Narendra Modi is being portrayed as the 'tough man' who is capable of taking hard decisions.

The history of the last century tells us that in similar situations, people of different nations have, in their desperation to find a way out, often opted for such 'tough men'. The results have been disastrous for them. A yearning for 'hard decisions' makes us surrender our collective wisdom as well as conscience to such men, who then proceed to rob us of our humanity. This desire for toughness and a hard state has led to the rise of fascist regimes and genocides in the past. The people of Italy, Germany and other countries of Europe have paid a very high price for their folly and the world is yet to fully recover from their misadventures. Generations have suffered an abiding sense of guilt for a decision taken by their predecessors.

Added to it is the fact that The Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (RSS) is now actively promoting Narendra Modi as the next prime minister. RSS is an organization, which has been propagating the idea of India as a Hindu Rashtra, a super identity under which all other identities, religious or cultural, are subsumed. India's strength lies in the confidence that identities of various shapes, sizes and colours have enjoyed over the millennia, a history that forms the very basis of the modern idea of India.

It is precisely this willingness to accept and celebrate diversity that has prevented India from going the way some of her neighbor countries have gone. Any attempt to homogenize India by the brute force of numbers will lead to permanent discord, perpetual violence and the ultimate disintegration of the entity we now recognize as India. The idea of India inevitably includes plurality, mutual respect, accommodation and vital diversity and that idea faces a real threat today.

We do need governments, which can take firm decisions to safeguard and ensure the material wellbeing of the people, especially, the most vulnerable sections among them. And yet we also need to take care that we do not fall into the trap of simplistic claims of there being instant solutions to any national problem. We do need to reiterate the values that constitute the very idea of India, an idea, which promises the smallest of identities a space and a rightful stake in the nation. A person like Narendra Modi, who is a permanent source of anxiety and insecurity for very large sections of our society, cannot and should not be allowed to lead India.

This upcoming Lok Sabha election will again be a test for people of India: are we strong enough to reject the idea of a hard state and a hard leader? Are we sensitive enough not to support an ideology that renders invisible large sections of the population or people? Can we prevent the politics of hatred and contempt for democracy from triumphing over the great Indian tradition of tolerance and brotherhood?

State-Sponsored Apartheid

Abdul Khaliq

A scheduled caste (SC) Christian associate - a convert from the Parayan Dalit community of Tamilnadu - is distraught that his country views him as a native alien, a second-class citizen. Being a Dalit in a society that still treats caste as indelible, he suffers all forms of socio-economic discrimination, and as a Christian he is denied the benefit of reservation and other concessions granted to SCs of the Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist religions. His anguish encapsulates the unconscionable injustice meted out to SC Christians and SC Muslims by the State.

Centuries ago Aristotle, recognising the unevenness of social structures, moderated the universal egalitarian ideal of equal treatment of human beings with his observation that justice implied the equal treatment of similar persons. Article 15 of the Constitution embodies this concern by qualifying the dictum of non-discrimination among citizens on grounds of religion, race, caste and sex with the proviso that the State is empowered to make special arrangements for the advancement of socially and economically backward citizens, and specifically for SCs and STs. However, the State's stance on the issue of Dalit converts from Hinduism blatantly violates this sacred canon of equal treatment of equals. The endorsement of SC status for SC Sikhs and SC Buddhists but denial of this status to the SC Christians and SC Muslims is tantamount to licensing and sanctioning discrimination on the basis of religion.

The pledge to be a Secular Republic is founded on the principle that the State will neither establish a religion of its own nor confer any special patronage upon any particular religion. Unfortunately, the Constitutional (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 circumscribed the scope of the wide-ranging colonial term "depressed classes" now defined as "scheduled castes" by excluding from the list any person who professed a religion different from Hinduism, thereby reflecting a clear bias in favour of the majority religion. However, this Order and allied notifications were at sharp variance with what our first President, Dr Rajendra Prasad and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru perceived to be the Constitutional provisions. The President, in a letter to H. C. Mukherjee in December 1950, clarified that "so far as educational and economic facilities to the backward classes are concerned, it is not the intention of the Government that there should be any differentiation on grounds of religion or castes. The only differentiation between the backward classes and other backward groups who are called Scheduled Castes can be in regard to certain political rights such as separate representation."

The grant of SC status to SC Sikhs in 1956 and SC Buddhists in 1990 is actually the culmination of a pattern of thought that has even been enshrined in the Constitution, which clearly distinguishes between Indic religions and those originating elsewhere. The explanatory note under Article 25 unambiguously

states that "the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jain and Buddhist religions." The purport of Article 25 is that a Sikh, a Buddhist or a Jain can lawfully enter a temple but not a Christian or a Muslim. The counter argument that the Constitution has separate provisions for minorities including Christians and Muslims is specious justification for this discrimination, as the minority provisions apply equally to Sikhs and Buddhists as religious minorities.

Although the Constitution has sanctified the freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion, the Constitutional order 1950, as amended from time to time, has penalised Dalit converts to Islam and Christianity for their religious beliefs. The true intent of the directive becomes self-evident when read in conjunction with the Circular issued by the Home Ministry in May, 1975 which states that "where a scheduled Caste person gets converted to a religion other than Hinduism or Sikhism and then reconverts himself back to Hinduism or Sikhism, he will be declared to have reconverted to his original scheduled caste." The hegemony of the dominant religion is sought to be protected by penalising SCs who convert to Christianity or Islam but restoring their privileges if they return to the fold. In effect, the State has legitimised discrimination against Dalits who convert to Christianity or Islam.

The philosophy underlying the Constitutional Order of 1950 and its amendments bears an uncanny resemblance to the thinking of our right-wing fundamentalists. The leading ideologue of Hindutva, Veer Savarkar has explicitly distinguished between the indigenous, Indic religions and those that originated elsewhere. A key concept is that Bharatvarsha has, in addition to Hinduism also given birth to the religion of the Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists who are all in this sense Hindus. Conversely, Muslims and Christians are foreigners in this country which rightly belongs to Hindus. Tragically, a similar quasi-racial bias is evident in the denial of SC status to SC Muslims and Christians while granting this concession to SC Sikhs and Buddhists.

The ostensible reasons for denial of SC status to Dalit Christians and Muslims are built around the myth that SCs who convert to these religions no longer face any social stigma or prejudice. Nothing is more untrue. Caste consciousness is a part of our everyday lives; its universality renders it normal. However hard we may delude ourselves, we are all scarred by it. A plainly irrational, wicked belief in Dalit inferiority is embedded in our culture. Dalits, irrespective of their religious beliefs, have similar narratives of oppression - victims of historical prejudice, of illogical hate, of violence. We need to face up to the brute fact that caste still influences the way social and economic privileges are enjoyed and determines the nature of human interaction. Being at the bottom of the hierarchy, the Dalits reap the whirlwind of an iniquitous system.

Mahatma Gandhi, 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, Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, he is still a harijan... He may change his garb and call himself a Catholic harijan or a Muslim harijan or a neo-Sikh, his untouchability will haunt him during his lifetime." Dr B. R Ambedkar asked the rhetorical question: "what good is Christianity for a Hindu if it does not do away with his caste?" India's most distinguished sociologist and social anthropologist, M. N. Srinivas, who had underlined the persistence of caste in modern India, noted that "conversion to Christianity only changed the faith but not the customs, the general culture, or the standing of the converts in society." Significantly, the Supreme Court in various judgements has emphatically underlined the obdurate hold of caste in our society. In its judgement in the S. Ambalagan vs Devarajan AIR 1984 case, the Supreme Court has inter alia observed: "he never lost his caste when he embraced another religion... this appears particularly so in the case of Scheduled Castes who embraced other religions in their quest for liberation but return to their old religion on finding that their disabilities have clung to them with great tenacity." You can change your religion but caste is part of your DNA, immutable and eternal.

The intellectual elite and the media have steered clear of this issue because acknowledging injustice would morally bind them to do something about it. Their reluctance to engage with this subject possibly stems from the belief that this unprepossessing group - Dalit and minority - does not count for much in the larger canvas of minority politics or in the mart of economic strife and gain. They also clearly wish to avoid

confronting the communalists for a marginal group of Dalits. The issue captured the headlines only once, when Mother Theresa sat on dharna at Rajghat in 1996 in support of this desolate group, but the media interest was clearly not in the cause she espoused but in her celebrity persona. Otherwise, the numerous dharnas and protest marches by these disaffected, powerless citizens barely get a mention in a media culture that expends reams of newsprint and hundreds of hours of prime time salivating over the sexual escapades of a deviant Baba.

Significantly, in 1996 the Narasimha Rao government had approved an amendment to the Constitutional (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 to include SC converts to Christianity and Islam as Scheduled Castes, but due to alleged procedural lapses the proposed Bill was not introduced in Parliament on the appointed date. Following the adjournment of Parliament, an Ordinance was proposed to the President but was not promulgated as, in the mean time Parliamentary Elections were announced. The shoddy handling of the proposal raised legitimate suspicions that it was aborted on purpose by the Rao government.

The aggrieved Dalits approached the Supreme Court in 2004 for redress of this palpable injustice. Almost 10 years on, the case hangs fire with little hope of an early resolution. Since the filing of the writ petition, the case has been listed innumerable times but almost invariably, the Government counsel has sought adjournment. The last listing was on 9th September, 2013, and predictably the case was again adjourned without a hearing. The unspoken understanding seems to

be to postpone indefinitely a verdict in the matter.

The most disingenuous of all - a classic example of political artifice and subterfuge - is the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs in Feb. 2011 on the pending writ petition. Couched in graceless bureaucratise, the minutes recorded state that the Committee “decided that based on data that will be collected in the 2011 Census, Government will institute further studies and thereafter consult with State governments and other stake holders.” It is clear to the meanest intelligence that the government’s intent is to keep this issue in limbo forever.

The Supreme Court has all along maintained that reservation and other benefits in the form of affirmative action for a group should be based on their social and educational backwardness, their social degradation and inadequacy of representation but not on religious considerations. The Court in the case of Soosai vs Union of India, 1985 observed that in order to establish that the Constitutional (SC) Order 1950 discriminates against members of a particular caste “it must be shown that they suffer from a comparable depth of social and economic disabilities and cultural and educational backwardness and similar levels of degradation within the community necessitating intervention by the State under the provisions of the Constitution.” Data compiled by the NSSO shows that educationally, Muslim Dalits are behind Dalits of all other communities with the largest percentage of illiterates at 48.08 percent in the rural areas

(Continued on Page 13)

Socialist Programme of Obama led to “shutdown”

K. S. Chalam

The American traditions of democracy and development are based on liberty and inequality as an incentive to obtain efficiency in the economy. The political process is a game played by the corporate houses numbering about a dozen, mostly the Jews and Anglo-Saxons. The history of these groups, some insiders tell us, is such that they keep on moving from one site to another depending upon the opportunities and alacritous prey. Therefore, there is no guarantee that they would make the US hospitable for the people or settlers. This statement by some of the locals was made out of frustration on the present impasse in America without regard to the consequences. The Democratic Party under the leadership of Barack Obama has considered that providing free and affordable medical aid is a minimum that a democratic modern nation could do for citizens. This is termed by the opposition Republicans who come under the above category of detractors, called the ‘Obamacare’ as Socialist agenda. They wanted to reduce the budget for health care and provide more business to corporate insurance companies. This led to the present shutdown in America pushing eight lakh employees out of work.

It is fascinating to note that Andhra and America are sailing in the same boat of furlough. Furlough is a concept of unpaid leave of some employees due to unforeseen circumstances. It is sentimental politics in Andhra and deep political

and economic crisis in America that led to the impasse. I was in Chicago airport while waiting for our flight to Hyderabad, watching Obama address to the budget session telecast live. As the fiscal year starts from October 1st in the USA, I had anticipated that the Congress would clear the budget and provide funding for ‘Obamacare’. The Congress was also obliged to raise the debt ceiling to avoid humiliation of default on debt obligations by 17th October. Strangely, by the time I reached Hyderabad, the Indian Cabinet cleared the Telangana resolution and America declared federal shutdown.

The federal shutdown is a process of stoppage of government activities when there is a funding gap or failing to pass legislation for government operations. This has happened several times before and the present crisis is due to a standoff on Health care Act between the Republicans and Democrats. The budget process in the USA is a very long and complicated procedure involving several stages of discussions and lobbying starting from the month of February to reach a consensus by October every year. We have a different mechanism and evolved ‘vote on account’ to avoid such uncertainties.

President Obama was very clear about the welfare schemes and according to the conservative Republicans (particularly the cynical Tea Party group), he is adamant to reorient his socialist programme. In

a capitalist country like America it is strange to notice that provision of medical aid is a socialist programme to invite the fury of Republicans. Socialism and Communism seem to be prohibited in public discourse in USA ever since Ku Klux Klan tirade against the ideas and democrats use welfare programmes as entitlements of citizens. The present deadlock in the US between Republicans who control the House of Representatives and Democrats is on the public health care system. It is ridiculous that an advanced country like America is not in a position to provide sufficient health care to its population in the twentyfirst century compared to others in the OECD club. Realising the need for health care to the poor and uninsured, Obama Government passed the 'Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act' in 2010. Now the Republicans wanted that the Act be repealed and the budget allocations reduced for health care. The Democratic Party and Obama took a firm stand on this and said that it is non-negotiable. This led to the present stalemate and shutdown.

People of India and those who talk about the efficiency of the medical system in America do not tell us how the system functions. No doubt, it is one of the best in the world for the rich and those who can afford the cost. But for the average American and the poor African-American, Hispanics and others it is life threatening. There are studies in the US that have estimated the per capita cost health care is the highest in the world at \$ 7000 while it is only \$ 3165 in France. Health care business, yes it is a big business, is a for profit service involving 17 per cent of GDP now. There are two types of health care systems in US, one Medicare for

those who are above the age of 65 and few others and two, Medicaid is a means tested health and medical service provided to low income groups. The federal government gets revenue from payroll taxes at 2.9 per cent of wages and other sources to fund the schemes. Then where is the problem?

The services are not directly provided to the enrollee or insurer. The splendour of freedom to choose in capitalist system is so cosmic that it has created a middleman called the Insurer or Medicare Contractor. The experts advocate that competition among the contractors would reduce the cost of service and is cheap. This is very fine. But, T.R Reid in his "The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper and Fairer Health Care", assessed that 7.0 lakh people go bankrupt and 45000 die annually from curable diseases because they were either uninsured or underinsured. It is estimated that a single emergency trip costs about \$ 100000 and an MRI test \$ 1000, while it is \$ 105 in Japan. The charges include administrative, marketing, customer service, billing and may be lobbying costs. Thus, the argument that private insurance reduces cost of health care has turned out to be a myth, rather an academic folklore.

The crisis today is due to the high costs of health care and lower rates of recovery. It is reported that the private insurance companies have a \$2.8 trillion annual business and would be doubled by 2018. The expenditure on prescription drugs would cost \$ 453.7 billion or 4.5 trillion by 2018. It is projected by scholars that the per cent of GDP spent on health and medical services would go up from 16.2 per cent in 2007 to 20.3 by 2018. The

projections are based on figures during a recession period might increase when the economy comes out of the bust. Thus, the medical and health care business is very lucrative for the corporate houses that deal with Insurance, Pharmaceuticals and related interests.

Health insurance became major item of public expenditure as health care constitutes 26 per cent of a budget of \$ 3770 billion in 2013. However, it is this amount that seems to have made the lobbyists to stall the Congress. The Republicans argue that public provisioning of health care interferes with the freedom of the citizen and therefore demand withdrawal of the 2010 Act. The hidden agenda is that by doing so it would increase the business of the corporatists, while the democrats feel that it pinches the poor. As one American commentator states that the US Chamber of Commerce has turned out to be Multinational Chamber of Commerce and have no qualms that they would shift their offices elsewhere like out sourcing the ICT services to reduce costs. The ordinary American wants a nationalised and single payer healthcare system without the middleman/ insurer as in developing countries.

There seem to be a breakdown of Constitutional democracy with the imperfect Presidential form of Government. The system relies heavily on the authority of the President while the legislature is always divided on party lines. It is said that there is no democratic principle to resolve disputes between executive controlled by one party and legislature roughly by another (as it happened now). The two dominant parties, ideologically and ethnically divided, might

confront and hasten the collapse. This seems to be imminent in view of the internal contradictions of the economy that is encountering the famous 'law of falling rate of profit' for quite some time.

It is estimated by some economists that the rate of profit between 1950 and 1970 declined by 50 per cent, from 22 per cent to 12 per cent. Whether one agrees or not, Marx argued that the twin evils of 'high unemployment and higher inflation and low real wages' would lead to crisis in the system. But, it did not happen as predicted by Marx and sarcastically remarked on this prediction by Lohia and others. But, the situation now needs reconsideration in view of the fact that how the labourers of one region are induced with higher wages while others in different regions exploited through BPO and other techniques. It was also possible to keep the constant capital and technology under check with innovations like weightless goods, mystifying the economy with share market, co-opting the middle classes particularly the intellectuals to fabricate stories of success. This also brings to focus the need to examine the crisis in capitalist system from alternative approaches as scholars like Michael Heinrich (Monthly Review, April 2013), found that the falling rate of profit and other predictions in Marx were edited by Engels and needs reappraisal. Whatever may be the predictions of Marxists and others about the collapse or survival of the capitalist system, the present crisis in America and Europe and the theories advocated by them for LDCs need a re-evaluation. We do not know what the Columbian economists say on this. Are the Indians listening?

North Andhra- cheated once again

K. ChandraMohan

North Andhra region of Andhra Pradesh consisting of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam are the most neglected and underdeveloped districts in the state of Andhra Pradesh in terms of any parameter. In fact, the region was once under one district, Visakhapatnam, the largest during the British regime. It has provided all the resources particularly the forest based products to the British and therefore, we could see small ports developed by the British for their export on the Eastern coast. The history of the region is distinctly different from other regions of the state who claim a unique identity as the Telugu speaking people. The region and the people, scholars claim were responsible for the development of the language Telugu in the name of "TriKalinga" (a derivative is Telang and Telugu) during Buddhist period and later was abandoned with contempt with the emergence of dynasties that were supported by Brahminical theology. Thus the history and culture of the region is more ancient and enduring than the rest of Andhra, was considered by the developed coastal Andhra people as alien. Therefore, the derision for the region could be seen not only in the historical period but also in the modern period as the six developed coastal districts never considered the history of the region as part of Andhra calling the region as "thoorpollu" (Easterners). Interestingly, the state website and the historians do not speak about the Eastern Gangas who ruled the whole of Andhra at one time. They leave

the region as separate and consider the three districts as part of Kalinga or Odiassa even now. Therefore, the whole separate movement for a Telugu speaking state started in this region and the renaissance crusade of Andhra originated here with Gidugu, Gurajada, Unnava, V. V. Giri, Sri Sri and other leaders in the Madras presidency. It is a region with self-sufficiency and own identity based on Eastern ghats. The backwardness and neglect started with the formation of a separate state in 1956 with the dominance of coastal Andhra both in North Andhra and elsewhere.

Underdevelopment as a Legacy

The current separatist movement in the state created a very interesting situation each claiming that they are backward. In fact, the coastal Andhra leaders who claim for a united Andhra quote backwardness of the region giving data of North Andhra and do not allow the local people to speak on their behalf. All the incidents of the movement are taking place in Visakhapatnam and the leaders are not local people except one or two students' representatives. There are no incidents in the developed coastal districts like Kakinad, Eluru, Vijayawada, Ongole, Guntur, and Nellore and are concentrated in Vizag. This is good if the local issues of underdevelopment and exploitation are discussed. They talk only about Telangana and Hyderabad here. Therefore, if the data on underdevelopment of the region is presented by separating the three districts as North Andhra,

the realities would come out. We are of the opinion that it is a cunning plan to block the opportunities in the form of a development grant in the process of present debate on the separate Telangana state. Though the people are neutral or have no voice in the issue, the dominant politicians have created hiatus between us and the Telangana. This is unfair and sincere observers know about the intentions of this drama.

Water distribution: The region had the bounty of nature in the form of the Eastern ghats and about 10 river systems along with tanks and rivulets. It is a surplus region if the riparian rights are legitimately considered. The dominance of the advanced districts could be seen in terms of drawing of irrigation water from the rivers that depend upon the region's rivers like Sabari, Sileru, Eleru etc. The cunning nature of the leaders could be discerned if the distribution of the proposed Polavaram is considered. The major source of water in Godavari if the upper reaches of Telangana are taken care of comes from Eastern ghats of North Andhra emanating from Vizianagaram. But, no one has ever discussed the sharing of water beyond Visakhapatnam city as they have interests only in the city and not about the needs of Vizianagaram or Srikakulam districts. The amount of money spent on irrigation projects have been considered as reasonable if we know that the lands in the region are appropriated by Coastal players. Despite of that, the amount of net area irrigated and sown in the region is lower than the coastal and Telangana. This may be verified from the data presented by the Statistical bureau of the state.

Agriculture: The region consisted of forests and tribal areas have scarcity of cultivable land. Yet, most of the projects that need land are now being located here creating tensions in the region. It has the longest coast, half of the total state. But, no worthwhile project on the coast except the old Port at Visakhapatnam was planned. The emerging needs of the economy could have given opportunity for the region but for the cunning nature of the politicians, who are settlers from the neighboring districts and diverted projects from Viskhapatnam and others in the region. The city of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam are used as dumping grounds of polluting industries like Pharmaceuticals that are thrown out of Hyderabad. This has created problems for the irrigation needs of the region due to the diversion of water from agriculture. It never occurred to the powers in Hyderabad that the irrigation needs of the farmers should be first met and then the industrial needs could be augmented from new projects. Therefore, agriculture in the region suffered. Land holdings in the state indicate that 5 per cent of the 6 coastal districts (excluding North Adhra) own more than 52 per cent of the land in the region and if data are culled out in other districts of the state, the role of dominant contractors of coastal Andhra and politicians will be known.

The data show that the agricultural income of the districts in the region is the lowest with Rs 136732 in Srikakulam, Rs 170609 in Vizianagaram and Rs 249976 lakhs in Visakhapatnam. The highest income comes from West Godavari with Rs 734002 lakhs and Krishna and Guntur follow it during 2010-11.

Industry: The first industrial corridor was set up by the British keeping the natural harbor in Visakhapatnam and Garividi for its minerals. After independence, the government of India has located several public sector units here including the Vizag Steel plant. Nothing has happened during the last two decades of liberalization except locating the polluted units of thermal projects and pharmaceuticals. The per capita consumption of power in the region can be taken as an indicator of industrial growth in the region that remains the lowest in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram. The outmigration of labour from the region despite some opportunities in Visakhaaptanm is a sad commentary as to how the limited opportunities are castoff by outsiders.

The contribution of industry to district income is found to be the lowest in the district of Vizianagaram at Rs 257867, Srikakulam Rs 288594 and Visakhapatnam being a centre of public sectors and port has Rs 1585746 lakhs during 2010-11. The highest amount is contributed by Rangareddy with Rs 1680269 lakhs followed by Anantapur, Chittoor in Rayalaseema and East Godavari, Guntur of coastal Andhra.

Services: The service sector has grown much faster than the remaining sectors in Andhra Pradesh. The agricultural development supported by subsidized irrigation water and other inputs has allowed the coastal region to concentrate on higher education. In fact majority of Engineering, Medical and Professional colleges in the private sector in the country are owned by the people of coastal Andhra. Interestingly, almost all the colleges in the North Andhra are also held by them. Andhra University located

in Visakhapatnam according to some is responsible for the initial educational progress of Coastal Andhra and not North Andhra, in a way helped to provide the necessary conditions for settlers to remain here and become even political leaders representing their regional interests and not the locals. This is found to be true as the neighboring districts have grown much faster than Visakhapatnam and North Andhra due to the leaders who migrated to Visakhapatnam and continued to help their regions from where they originated. Thus, the educational expansion has helped to develop skills to provide employment in the service sector that has grown in Hyderabad and other areas but not in Visakhapatnam.

The contribution of service sector to SDP was Rs 665373 in Srikakulam, Rs 633764 in Vizianagaram, the lowest in the state and Rs 2305551 lakhs in Visakhapatnam. The sector contributes Rs 4034826 in Hyderabad and Rs 2263139 lakhs in RangaReddy district. Interestingly, East Godavari the neighboring district of Visakhapatnam contributed as much as other developed districts in the state like Guntur, Krishna and some districts in Rayalaseema in recent years. But, North Andhra has remained the lowest in this area also.

It is established that the three districts in the region including Visakhapatnam particularly its tribal belt are the most backward in the country. This seems to be man-made as the opportunities created by the government are snatched away by the powerful of the coastal districts and others. Therefore, in order to make the openings reach the local people, a

system of quota or reservations for the locals is imperative at least for a period of 20 years if not more. This is necessary to protect the locals as the benefits extended by the social welfare department such as house sites, small business opportunities etc meant for Scheduled castes and tribes are alleged to be trapped by non-locals or settlers.

The state income has grown faster than the national income. But, the SDP from the three districts has remained one of the least grown in terms of district incomes. The per capita SDP in the state is Rs 60703 in 2010-11. The lowest amount of Rs 39293 has come from Srikakulam and Rs 46719 from Vizianagaram though Visakhapatnam district due to the city contributes Rs 88100.

Yet, the amount is much lower than Hyderabad's Rs 99706. If the rural incomes of Visakhapatnam particularly the tribal belt are taken in to consideration, they come below the amount of minimum to assess poverty levels.

The people are disillusioned with the present arrangement and ready to support anyone who would give them the necessary hearing and much needed attention. After all development of the region and the people (and not the contractors) should be the aim of any political party and hope that the central leadership listen to the oppressed and marginalized region with a separate package either as part of united Andhra or as a truncated region.

—With inputs from K. S. Chalam

(Continued from Page 9)

and 31.7 percent in urban areas. The Buddhists have the lowest percentage of illiterates among the different Dalit communities. Similarly, Muslim Dalits constitute the highest percentage below the poverty line with 39.6 percent in rural areas and 46.8 per cent in urban areas compared with 7.6 per cent Dalit Sikhs in rural areas and 24.8 per cent Sikhs in urban areas below the poverty line. An in-depth study conducted by the National Commission for Minorities in 2008 concluded that SC Christians and SC Muslims “were invariably regarded as inferior by their co-religionists.... discrimination includes social and cultural segregation expressed in various forms of refusal to have any social interaction; endogamy expressed through the universal prohibition on Dalit - non-Dalit marriages and through severe social sanctions on both Dalits and non-

Dalits who break this taboo...social segregation extends to the sphere of worship, with separate churches being almost the norm among Dalit Christians and not uncommon among Dalit Muslims.”

On the basis of cold facts, it would be impossible to deny SC status to SC Muslims and SC Christians on grounds of social, cultural, educational backwardness and social segregation. To set aside their petition on the argument that the caste system is not recognized in these religions is to blind oneself to the realities of this country. Moreover, it is then contradictory to justify granting SC status to SC followers of Sikhism and Buddhism which also doctrinally abjure caste. In the ultimate analysis, this issue is the acid test of our nation's commitment to a secular polity.

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Appeal for election fund

The Socialist Party has decided to field candidates in Delhi, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections to be held between November 11 and December 4, 2013. We request you to extend financial help to meet the basic expenses of the elections. You may send your cheques/drafts in the name of Socialist Party (India) at its Delhi office (270-A, Patpar Ganj, Mayur Vihar Phase - 1, Delhi - 110091). You may also transfer the amount directly in the account of the party. The party's bank Ac/No is 50065914767 with Allahabad Bank and the I.F.S. Code is Alla 0212227. The details of the collection/expenditure will be provided to every contributor by the treasurer of the party.

With this appeal we would like to remind you that the decision to re-establish the Socialist Party on 28 May 2011 at Hyderabad had been motivated by a strong desire to build a new, committed socialist India, and to safeguard the freedom. India's Constitution and sovereignty

have been facing danger posed by the neo-liberal onslaught for last two decades. Most of the mainstream political parties, during this period, have ignored the basic philosophy of the Constitution that seeks to ensure equality and progress in all areas of life for all its citizens. Instead of following the Directive Principles of the Constitution, governments in India are following the dictates of World Bank, IMF, WTO and multinationals/corporate houses. The consequences are obvious: suicide by lakhs of farmers, large scale displacement, scams, price rise, unemployment, illiteracy, disease, crime and fundamentalist tendencies that threatened the country's internal and external security.

The control of neo-liberal forces over the country's economy, politics, culture and education is becoming increasingly dangerous. Our independence, achieved after long struggle and sacrifices by lakhs of Indians is under great threat. India was enslaved and looted for 250 years by one East India Company.

Now the precious resources of the country are being looted by hundreds of multi-national companies that have infiltrated into every sector including the Defence. Instead of confronting the neo-imperialist invasion, India's present political establishment, already hounded by corruption, communalism, casteism and family rule etc., has become its agent.

The Socialist Party is committed to the idea of establishing alternative politics and system based on the legacy and philosophy of freedom fighters and socialist thinkers like Acharya Narendradev, Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, S.M. Joshi, Yusuf Meherally, Sane Guruji, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, Aruna Asaf Ali, Madhu Limaye, Kishan Patnaik and Surendra Mohan.

We hope that you will join hands with us to make this long and difficult struggle successful by contributing some amount out of your hard earned money.

–**Bhai Vaidya (president), Justice Rajindar Sachar (senior member)**
Kuldip Nayar (special invitee to national executive),
Pannalal Surana (chairman, parliamentary board),
Sandeep Pandey, Akhai Achumi, Balwant Singh Kheda (vice-presidents),
Dr. Prem Singh, Omkar Singh, Nurul Ameen (general secretaries),
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Vol. 68 No. 42
October 27, 2013

Chasing the rainbow

S. Viswam

It's Kashmir again
Kuldip Nayar

**Phailin Fury against
Telugu community**
K. S. Chalam

**Eight Years of Right
To Information**
P. M. Ravindran

**Disruptive Innovation
of Democracy**
Uday Dandavate

**Globalization and
Gender Justice***
Lorraine Michael

Against Commercialization

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They are still digging for treasure in Uttar Pradesh's obscure village Daundiya Khera in Unnao district, and hence comments at this stage on that episode may well be overtaken by the discovery of pots of gold - or just more dirt. Even so, some reaction to the alacrity with which the Archeological Survey of India began digging on a site identified by a sadhu in his dream(s) is quite justified. It is just as well, however, that the Supreme Court has refused to interfere in the ongoing excavation even while giving a hint to the Centre that it may take a good look into what is happening at the treasure dig. The court was realistic enough to say that if 1000 tonnes of gold are discovered, everybody would be happy. Why 1000 tonnes, one can say, even a hundred would be welcome given the circumstances in which the dig was undertaken. The court said it could not proceed on the basis of assumptions.

The function of the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) is to dig and that of the Geological Survey of India(GSI) is to tell it where to dig. The two institutions have so far remained non-controversial. The fact that the two got together now to proceed with a dig inspired by a dream of a sadhu of a hidden treasure

on the spot has raised a few questions. Fortunately or otherwise, there have been answers from many sources all of which attempt to sell the idea that the excavation is uninfluenced or inspired or stirred up by a sadhu or his dream. Suddenly, an act which would not have aroused even peripheral curiosity is shrouded by mystery, religion, suspicions, and greedy anticipation. Not to mention that already many claims have been projected for ownership of a treasure that still needs to be brought up from under the deep bowels of Mother Earth.

Before we go deeper (into the details of the story), what is passing strange is the timing of the dream, the reporting of the dream, the sudden interest of the GSI in the possibility of metals lying buried under the dream-spot and the amazingly speedy response of the ASI to the GSI's suggestions. The GSI said it had detected the "presence of non-magnetic anomalous zone" at the spot which appeared in the sadhu's dream(s). The ASI said:"Let us dig and see for ourselves."

We do not know if the dream appeared first or the GSI finding of metals, but the sad fact is that two government organizations responded

Between the lines

It's Kashmir again

Kuldip Nayar

officially and speedily to a call of sheer superstition. Amazing that a treasure buried at a spot 150 years ago by Raja Ram Baksh was unspotted by either the GSI or the ASI or even the same sadhu till now. Even more amazing that the ASI now claims it has "scientific evidence" of something buried at the spot. It claims that the treasure was buried around the time of the 1857 mutiny and in order to hide it from the British. Amazing that everything relating to the existence of wealth below the soil hit the news at this time and day and that too through a dream. An ideal story for the superstitious who are willing to believe any tale so long as some religious sentiment or personality or mythology is associated with it.

Union Culture Minister Chandresh Kumari Katoch says the treasure could be in the form of gold, silver or copper, that the government's interest in the excavation is focused on the site being a Buddhist pilgrimage centre in the 7th century, and that the ASI is excavating 147 sites and that the spot under the spotlight is one of them where the ASI was planning a dig. Additional Director General ASI, D. R. Mani says that his organization works only if there is scientific or archeological evidence. Meaning? The ASI believes there could be pieces of pottery, and not necessarily gold or silver or iron ore. Whom do you believe?

There is a touch of the bizarre to the whole episode. There may or may not be gold. If there is, there will be a huge big struggle for ownership of the find. Meanwhile, and predictably, digging for buried treasure will start in many other areas. It only requires a sadhu to have a dream. Superstitious Indians will do the rest!

I do not know why Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif goes over the same exercise on Kashmir every two-three months. He raised the question at the UN General Assembly and again mentioned it during his meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at New York. Now he has brought up the matter before having talks with President Barack Obama at Washington. Probably, he sought his services.

America has reiterated its stand that it considered Kashmir a bilateral issue which the two countries should solve. This is what India has been saying. By insisting that Kashmir is a core issue for any conciliation with India, Pakistan is not bringing the opportunity for any solution nearer.

What does not go with the style of Nawaz Sharif is his remark that both countries are nuclear powers. Is that a threat? How can any country even say that it has a nuclear weapon or, for that matter, its opponent has? It means extinction of Pakistan and northern India.

One other ominous change I have noticed on the part of Islamabad is that it has stopped the mention of Shimla agreement. The earlier statements stated that Kashmir should be sorted out according to the UN resolution and the Shimla agreement.

At that time, then Pakistan Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had orally told then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi that he would see

that the ceasefire line on the border became an international border. He went back on the undertaking because he could not sell the proposal to a country which had lost its eastern wing. Still Pakistan must realize that there is no solution to Kashmir except through talks. Therefore, the Shimla agreement has the greatest chance of making it to the page.

True, there is the pressure of rightists on Sharif. But this is not what an average Pakistani feels. Not long ago when I went to Pakistan and asked a cab man what he thought of Kashmir, he replied: I have to think of how to earn the next meal, not bother about Kashmir. An expert in Pakistan once remarked that what they could not win in the battlefield, they could not expect to win at the negotiating table.

Sharif's proposal, when he was in the wilderness, is worth implementing. He said that the two countries should set up a committee to talk about Kashmir without interruption. After having done that, both counties should open up for trade and business. And the visa should be made easy for people-to-people contact. In fact, the Pakistan Prime Minister should be pursuing his own proposals seriously.

In the meanwhile, the allegations by the former chief of army staff General V.N. Singh that the Indian army had been financing ministers in Kashmir to maintain "stability" in the state have taken a serious

turn. The Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly has ruled that he would summon the general to explain to the house on the charge of ministers being financed.

However, some of us who have followed the situations in Kashmir since its integration with India are not surprised. New Delhi always had a finger in the pie. Even a popular leader like Sheikh Abdullah had to be subservient to New Delhi. Once he did open his mouth to say that they would rather starve than accept India's diktat and he had to spend 12 years in detention.

In fact, there were no elections in the years soon after the state joined the Indian Union. Sheikh Abdullah, then called the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, accepted the fait accompli which was decided at Delhi. The practice was vigorously pursued when Ghulam Bakshi Mohammad replaced the Sheikh after the latter was detained. The decision about who should head Kashmir was taken at New Delhi.

There was a separate department on Kashmir affairs in the External Affairs Ministry. Probably, it was meant to convey that since the matter was before the UN, it had to be dealt with by the External Affairs Ministry, headed by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. The department was transferred to the Home Ministry when the more sagacious Govind Bhallab Pant took charge after quitting as the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh. The department is still part of the home ministry.

It must be said to the credit of Nehru that he did not accept Maharaja Hari Singh's request to

Phailin Fury against Telugu community

K. S. Chalam

The Phailin monster which devastated property and livelihoods of people is the worst cyclone of the century so far. It has landed on the East Coast of India and battered its traditional and age-old speck on the Kalingandhra region. The area is known in history since much before it was recorded in Vedas and the Puranas. According to French and German scholars like Sylvian Lvi, Schmidt and others, whose writings are marginalized or ignored, the inhabitants of the region are Pre-Dravidian and Pre-Aryan and therefore original people of India. Interestingly, the region that was affected by the super cyclone now was a single geographic and cultural unit during the Madras Presidency of British India. It constituted of Ganjam and Visakhapatnam districts. They make up 57976 sq kms (much bigger than a state like Kerala) which was a Telugu country. The Andhra Mahasabha activities under the leadership of the Justice Party functionaries of the region were responsible for the radical postures of getting a separate state for Telugu people. We are referring to these historical antecedents to learn how is it that, except Rayalaseema leaders like Vijayamma and MudduKrisnam Naidu, none from other regions from amongst those many of the self-proclaimed guardians of the Telugu culture have expressed their anguish if not solidarity for the countrymen who are in distress. The historical bond with Rayalaseema lies with the fact that the region was named as Rayalseema by Chilukuri Narayana Rao of Srikakulam and Deshpandya SubbaRao of Nandyala went to

Round Table Conference, London to represent the injustice done to the Telugu speaking people of Ganjam and Vizag agency areas in the form of a new state to be formed in 1936.

Therefore, the pious proclamations of Telugu unity, culture and brotherhood seem to have turned out to be political slogans in the din of skirmishes among brothers should not become a routine. We need to help each other not only as humans but also as kin of a common legacy and language. We may reflect on the kind of intensity of the damage in the East coast. Several agencies of the government and others are assessing the value of devastation. The initial estimates indicate that in Srikakulam district and parts of Vizianagaram lakhs of rupees worth of properties like nets, gear, boats, catamarans, houses of fishermen are lost in addition to the submergence of paddy in thousands of acres. The intensity is much severe in Uddanam or Udyanavanam (like Konaseema) as the Phialin crossed at Bhendi the entry point of Uddanam in the East Coast and ended at Balasore in Odisha. The major thrust of knock down was at Gopalpur in Ganjam district 16 Kms from Berhampur. The Uddanam coconut growers were just recovering from another damage done to the crop few years ago when this cyclone destroyed around 12 to 15 lakh trees that spread in around 40 thousand acres on the coast. The area is known for cashew (Palasa) that earn foreign exchange, and other horticulture crops. There is another tragedy in the region and it was only brought out by an international news

(Continued on Page 4)

agency like New York times that about 10 thousand, yes ten thousand, people were killed here due to acute kidney failure before this natural calamity.

The situation in Ganjam district along with other 11 coastal districts of Odisha is very severe. It is reported that in Ganjam district alone 2.5 lakh houses are destroyed and the whole of Berhampur University campus is devastated. About 2 lakh hectares of paddy is damaged along with 50 thousand hectares of ragi crop and vegetables in another 20000 hectares. We may remember here that it is this region, particularly the Chilka lake, that gave to the world the first strain of paddy crop in history. The amount of damage done to public property like railways, roads, telephone system and other infrastructure in the region amount to billions of rupees. However, it is painful to notice that there is little mention about the amount of damage done to the fishermen. It is here that we the Telugus should reminisce and reconnect with the inhabitants who are Telugu speaking.

It is reported in the English press that the fishermen at “Pentakota” (heap of garbage) slum on the coast of Puri were the worst affected, signifying that they are Telugu people. It is not only on the Puri coast where the temple for lord Jagannath was built by Telugu king Anayanka Bhima and shifted his capital from Mukhalingam to Cuttack, the fishermen of the entire East coast up to Rameswaram speak Telugu. They are not migrants. They are the original inhabitants and have colonized the entire Far East including Bali in Indonesia.

It is relevant here to bring to the notice of our Telugu cultural

leaders that Telugu people do live beyond Godavari also. It is not only the present generation of self-proclaimed leaders but even scholars of the North or those who are under the influence of North-West continue to relegate our ancient past and limit our geography to narrow confines. It was noticed by several scholars like Sylvian Levi who has remarked that, “we must know whether the legends, the Religion and the Philosophical thought of India do not owe anything to the past. India has been too exclusively examined for the Indo-European standpoint. It ought to be remembered that India is a great maritime country.... The movement which carried the Indian colonization towards the East was far from inaugurating a

(Continued from Page 3)

join the Indian Union until it had the approval of the then popular leader Shiekh Abdullah, in jail at that time. It is unfortunate that the Sheikh turned out to be a disappointment. He took New Delhi’s dictated arrangement like a duck to water.

Since then, chief ministers at Srinagar—Mufti Mohammad Sayeed of People’s Democratic Party or Farooq Abdullah—have understood that Srinagar has to tilt its sails according to the winds blowing from New Delhi. Young state chief minister Omar Abdullah makes proper noises but it is no more than a storm in a tea cup. He is rightly strengthening the state police so that the use of Indian army, stationed in the state, is as little as possible.

But he is defeated by the Pakistan army which keeps the pot boiling. It was a relief when the two countries agreed not to violate the LoC. But

new route, adventures, traffickers and missionaries promoted by the technical progress of navigation and followed under better conditions of comfort and efficiency, the way traced from time immemorial, by the marines of another race, whom Aryan or Aryanised India despised as savages.” It was the non-Sanskrit speaking seafarers who not only established our Telugu colonies in the East but also discovered several countries like Singapore before the savage Europeans descended on India. We are proud that they are from the Telugu speaking East Coast of India which the present Telugu cocoons may not recognize. However, is it not time to recall our past if not help our own people when they are in distress?

the line has been violated all the time in recent times. Pakistan is more to blame because it is giving covert support to Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan to infiltrate into India before the winter sets in and clogs the passes because of snow.

If insurgency in Kashmir is part of Islamabad’s policy, what was the purpose of Prime Minister Sharif’s meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh? They agreed to honour the agreement reached in 2004 to make the LoC sacrosanct. The Director Generals of Military Operations of the two countries were to meet. True, no time frame was fixed. But they should have met by this time, although their meeting might have turned into a formality. Political masters have to realize the futility of cross-border firing. Three wars should have made it clear to Pakistan that it cannot wrest Kashmir forcibly from the hands of India.

Eight Years of Right To Information

P. M. Ravindran

It is eight years since the Right to Information Act came into being for the citizens. I repeat, for the citizens, because it had come into force on 15 June 2005 but could not be used by the citizens because the first 120 days were given exclusively to the public authorities to prepare themselves and their documents for responding to citizens. But what is the state of the only pro-democracy, citizen-friendly law at the end of eight years of its existence? That, even the Kerala State Information Commission has not published details required to be proactively disclosed as per Sec 4(1)9B) of the Act speaks volumes for the subversion of the law by those very public servants tasked, empowered and paid to enforce it!

Dr Abdul Kalam is undoubtedly one of the best Heads of State we ever had in this country. He had even earned the sobriquet Peoples' President. But it is learnt that even he had, before signing the document that was soon to become the much touted transparency law of the land, sought to exclude his office from its purview. Anyhow, later events, related to disclosure of information about imposition of Emergency, has revealed how the law can be misinterpreted to deny information. The way Sec 8(2) and 8(3) of the RTI Act were made to look silly would be of interest for all citizens concerned with democratic values and rights. These provisions are reproduced for ready reference:

(2) Notwithstanding anything in the Official Secrets Act, 1923 nor

any of the exemptions permissible in accordance with sub-section (1), a public authority may allow access to information, if public interest in disclosure outweighs the harm to the protected interests.

(3) Subject to the provisions of clauses (a), (c) and (i) of sub-section (1), any information relating to any occurrence, event or matter which has taken place, occurred or happened twenty years before the date on which any request is made under section 6 shall be provided to any person making a request under that section. (It may be stated that clauses (a), (c) and (i) of sub section (1) do not apply in this case)

Anyhow, K G Balakrishnan, as the Chief Justice of India, did not feel constrained like the President of India. In what is now popularly known as the Judges' Assets case, he declared himself out of purview of the RTI Act. His decision was held wrong by the ultimate authority on the RTI Act - the Central Information Commission, as well as by two benches of the Delhi High Court! The matter is now with the apex court itself!

Interestingly, it needs to be noted that even when the CIC held the CJI to be wrong it did not go the whole way to impose the mandatory penalty under Sec 20 of the RTI Act. And do you know who would have had to pay this penalty if the CIC had done its job right? K G Balakrishnan, the then CJI! In the majority of cases the information commissioners fail in their duty to

impose the mandatory penalty for delay, not only causing colossal loss to state but also rendering the law impotent.

But the Judges' Assets case had a positive fall out too. Even when the final word on the legality of the then CJI's decision is pending with the apex court, almost all the judges have voluntarily disclosed their assets and the details are available on the web sites of the respective courts! A small victory for RTI but a giant leap for democracy indeed!

The matter however does not end there. On 13 September, 2012 in the famous Namit Sharma case the apex court came down heavily on the executive for the lack of transparency in the appointment of information commissioners. Thus far the court was bang on target and this is something that has been vociferously demanded by RTI activists throughout the country. But then the court went overboard and directed that all appeals must be heard by legally qualified information commissioners and demanded that the CICs should be either retired high court or apex court judges! Thankfully, on 16/4/2013 the court stayed this latter part of the order. It would be interesting to find out what the information commissioners throughout the country, more than 90 percent of whom had been bureaucrats without any qualification in law, had been doing during the period from 13 September 2012 to 16 April 2013. It would be reasonable to presume that they all had paid holidays at

the exchequer's cost! A visit to <http://www.keralasic.gov.in>, the official website of the Kerala State Information Commission shows, on 07 October 2013, that for the year 2013 the five ICs between themselves had disposed off only 91 appeals, which is just about what as many ICs of the Central Information Commission disposes off in one day! Worse, more than 50 percent of the appeals had been filed in 2010 and 2011. That is the delay in disposal is almost three years.

With the apex court having expressed reservations about non-law qualified people sitting in judgement in (quasi) judicial proceedings it is important for us, the mango people, to have a look at the competence of our law qualified judges themselves. One need not repeat the Judges' Assets case. Now, what about the simple case of date of birth of the former Chief of Army Staff, Gen. V K Singh? As per a recent report in the media the retired General has been hauled up for contempt of court when he had expressed surprise at to how the courts had followed different criteria in confirming the age/date of birth in his own case vis a vis the juvenile accused in the notorious Delhi rape case!

I also have with me the order of the Kerala State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, headed by a retired high court judge wherein an appeal against a District Forum order had been dismissed for want of an application to condone the delay in filing the appeal. The same commission had sent a notice for hearing in the very same application for condoning the delay, called interim appeal in judicial parlance! And then there is the case of a law qualified President

of the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum who had noted in the docket of a consumer complaint that the hearing is adjourned due to absence of staff and when the attendance registers were checked it was seen that all the staff had been marked present! Well, it does pay to be law qualified, because it will let you manipulate processes and decisions effectively and efficiently, doesn't it? That's it! (Readers may view the blog 'Chief Minister's Contact Program-consumer fora' at <http://raviforjustice.blogspot.com/2011/11/chief-ministers-contact-program.html> for more details.)

Now this is what the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution has said about our judiciary:

'Judicial system has not been able to meet even the modest expectations of the society. Its delays and costs are frustrating, its processes slow and uncertain. People are pushed to seek recourse to extra-legal methods for relief. Trial system both on the civil and criminal side has utterly broken down.' Also, *'Thus we have arrived at a situation in the judicial administration where courts are deemed to exist for judges and lawyers and not for the public seeking justice'.*

About this report by this judiciary-headed, judiciary-heavy commission itself, two of its members have recorded the following notes:

Dr Subash Kashyap has written that *'While no comments are being made on what went wrong in the procedure, priorities and perspective, it may be put on record that several of the recommendations now forming part of the report*

go directly counter to the clear decisions of the Commission on which the unanimously adopted draft report of the Drafting and Editorial Committee was based'.

And Sumitra Kulkarni drove in the last nails thus:

I believe in a Unified and truly Secular India. However, the Commission debates seemed often to reduce the Constitution to being a platform for divisiveness and not unification.

The Commission did not initiate or promote sincere debate in the public with regards to the issues that it was contemplating. The efforts was more to "evade and defer" instead of to "identify issues, table them for debate and to deal with them".

It is also interesting to note that while the judiciary is ordering the executive to bring transparency in the appointment of information commissioners, the executive is in the process of getting a law legislated to bring transparency in the appointment and posting of judges!

Even in the matter of RTI, it is the judiciary that has proven anti-citizen by prescribing exorbitant application fee, cost and even introduced a fee for the 1st appeal!

It would be worth recapitulating some cases to illustrate how the RTI Act has been messed up by now.

In an application seeking action taken on an application submitted to the CM of Kerala the PIO replied that 'it appears that the application was submitted during the tenure of the previous CM. Since there

is no procedure for handing over documents when incumbents change no information can be provided.' The matter is pending with the information commission. But in an earlier case when minutes of a meeting convened by the CM had been sought the reply by the PIO was that there were no minutes available. The IC had also accepted the ridiculous statement on affidavit and dismissed the appeal! It is pertinent to mention that the Delhi High Court had held that ICs can order probe in cases of missing files!

Next, an application was submitted for copies a high court and apex court order each, in the matter of holding bandhs illegal. The PIOs in the office of the Home Minister of Kerala have been passing the buck from one to another and one of them also sent the application to the PIO of Kerala HC. The reply by the PIO HC was that since the order pertained to judicial proceeding it was exempted from disclosure under the High Court RTI rules!

Even when the Delhi HC has repeatedly made it clear, through a couple of its orders, that mere pendency of investigation cannot be a valid reason for denying information police authorities have been routinely denying info on this ground. But where even RTI Act has failed media has been successful in bringing information in public domain. In one case even the original of a vigilance inquiry report recovered from the premises of an accused had been reported by the media!

In the Central Information Commission I have appeals pending since July 2010! On an application seeking certain details of appeals filed it has come to pass that these

documents are not even perused by anybody in the Commission, leave alone the ICs. Two appeals against the same public authority-State Bank of India- had been filed on the same day under a proper covering letter indicating the references of the two appeals. One appeal was disposed of within five months but the other appeal is pending till now. On trying to find out its status it was revealed that it could not even be traced. And the order of Shailesh Gandhi, the only RTI activist who had been appointed an information commissioner and provided the opportunity to implement the law, dismissed the appeal saying that all information available had been provided! (Readers may go through the blog 'RTI Act-Shailesh Gandhi and Schopenhauer's Law of Entropy' at <http://raviforjustice.blogspot.in/2012/06/rti-act-shailesh-gandhi-and.html>)

When the RTI Act itself seems not to have percolated down to the last public authority an illegal office memorandum by the DoPT seems to have gained enough ground. This OM, issued on 24 Sep 2010, directs PIOs not to comply with Sec 6(3) of the RTI Act and if the PIO knows where part of the information sought would be available, he can direct the applicant to file a separate application to the PIO of that public authority! To add credibility to its direction it has also stated that the CIC had been consulted. On pursuing the matter through an application under the RTI Act, CIC confirmed that there is no record of any such consultation! But this circular still remains and PIOs have been using it to harass applicants. In one case an application was submitted to the office of the District Collector seeking information on two issues - one, on UID or Adhaar

and the other on computerization of land records! The first part was transferred to another public authority under Sec 6(3) but for the latter part the applicant was asked to file separate applications to the various tehsildars! The IC upheld this decision of the PIO. When this issue was raised at a seminar on RTI an IC of the CIC said that they were only bound by the law and the rules framed by the competent authority and not by any circulars! Also, Shailesh Gandhi in his decision No CIC/SM/A/2011/000278/SG/12906 dated 16/6/2011 has given a detailed explanation why Sec 6(3) applies not only to just one other public authority but to as many as would be needed.

A similar problem persists with the implementation of Sec 5 of the RTI Act. While most of the central public authorities can be accessed through CAPIOs designated at certain Head Post Offices, it appears not all central public authorities are served by them. But at the state level in Kerala almost all public authorities have designated SAPIOs but none of them provides access to other state public authorities!

And then there is this order dated 12 Dec 2011 of the apex court in Civil Appeals Nos 10787-10788 of 2011 which bar the ICs from giving any directions to a public authority to provide information while entertaining a complaint under Sec 18 of the RTI Act! The net effect of the order is that if an applicant files a complaint without availing the opportunity to appeal under Sec 19(1) the only thing the IC can do is to impose penalty under Sec 20 without ordering the public authority to provide the info sought. Incidentally, Sec 19(1) can be availed

(Continued on Page 10)

Against Commercialization and Communalization of Education

The All India Forum for Right to Education's March to Parliament, starting from Ramlila Maidan at 9:30 am and culminating in a Jan Sansad or People's Parliament at Jantar Mantar from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm., was held in Delhi on 21st October 2013. More than 2500 educationists, educators and activists representing 52 organizations from 18 states and 20 organizations from Delhi came together in this action against the commercialization and communalization of education and unanimously passed the following resolution:

The Peoples' Parliament held on 21st October 2013 at the Parliament Street, New Delhi and attended by the members of various organisations of students, youth and teachers and trade unions; parents' associations and school-level committees; organizations engaged in the struggle for Fundamental Right to free holistic early childhood care and cost-free education of equitable quality from pre-primary to Class XII and further for equitable access to free higher education as a democratic Right; groups fighting for equal educational rights with dignity of dalits, tribals, OBCs, religious and linguistic minorities, various gender identities and disabled people; scientists, educationists, writers, artists, journalists, researchers and other intellectuals/ professionals drawn from 18 states of India, note with grave concern the following developments in the field of education since the year 2000:

i) The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 liquidated the Supreme Court's historic judgment (1993), making education of children up to the age of 14 years a Fundamental Right. This amendment denied Fundamental Right to early childhood care and pre-primary education to 17 crore children under the age of 6 years, made the Fundamental Right of the children in the 6-14 year

age group conditional to the requirements of the market and shifted the obligation to provide education to the parents/guardians.

ii) The Right to Education Act, 2009, embedded in the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act was designed neither to develop government schools nor to regulate private schools. The Act cynically provided for inferior quality schools and discrimination through multi-layered school system. Further, it had provisions to deregulate fees in private schools and siphon public funds to private bodies through fee reimbursements. Expectedly, the Act has led to large scale closure of government schools and increased pace of commercialization.

iii) Six Higher Education Bills were introduced in the Parliament from the year 2010 onwards to commercialize and commoditize higher education. These, by their short names, are 1) 'The Foreign Educational Institutions Bill – 2010'; 2) 'The Educational Tribunals Bill – 2010'; 3) 'The National Accreditation Bill – 2010'; 4) 'The Prohibition of Unfair Practices Bill – 2010'; 5) 'The Higher Education and Research Bill – 2011'; 6) 'The Universities for Research and

Innovation Bill – 2012. The Bills listed above, if enacted, would a) open floodgates to Foreign Direct Investment in higher education and reduce education into a tradable service; b) tribunalise justice in the field of education and marginalize access to courts; c) privatize assessment and accreditation process resulting in widespread corruption; d) reduce the misleading concept of 'education service' to one of transparency which allow transparent plunder; e) establish an 'Independent Regulatory Authority' in Higher Education (IRA in HE) in line with WTO guidelines, though with a different name viz., NCHER. This NCHER will be independent from democratic pressures of the people and regulate 'trade in education service' in the interest of foreign and domestic corporate houses.

iv) Government of India made 'offer' to the World Trade Organisation in Higher Education Sector which eventually will become 'commitments' if not withdrawn before the conclusion of Doha Round Trade Negotiations. All the reforms in the field of education, the government intends to bring about, will only establish a legal and institutional framework for operationalization of agreements related to education under

General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) – WTO regime.

At executive level, the governments in different states are taking measures to outsource/ lease/auction government schools; close/merge government schools; undertake successive budget cuts in public higher education system and open private universities; corporatize policy making; thwart democratic structures and functioning in universities and restrict freedom of student and karamchhari unions and teachers' associations; increase pace of contractualisation of teachers and non-teaching staff and refusal to fill up vacant posts; and dismantle public education system with Right to Education Act, 2009 and Public Private Partnership (PPP).

The Peoples' Parliament expresses its deep concern with regard to the communal, casteist and patriarchal ideas; prejudices rooted in language, region and disability; and irrational and superstitious content being promoted through the curriculum in general and text books and supplementary texts in particular; it calls for building an education system that fosters democratic, secular, egalitarian and scientific outlook and values.

The Peoples' Parliament is of the opinion that the policies of the various governments at the Centre and in the states are rooted in the following anti-people ideas: a) the state cannot and need not spend its resources for secondary and higher education, even though this will lead to denial of education to the disadvantaged and deprived; b) private agencies, compared to public institutions, can render better, efficient and cost-effective services and, therefore, the limited government funding should go

to private agencies rather than to public institutions, even though such perceptions regarding private educational institutions stand against this premise; c) the Constitutional principles of equality and social justice can be replaced by the neo-liberal principle of inclusion, and, therefore, the goal of 'free education of equitable quality for all' from 'KG to PG' can be replaced by the scheme of either 'fee reimbursement for few' or 'scholarships/ freeships for the few'; d) education is a tradable service rather than being a Right or an entitlement of every child and youth and, therefore, equal provision for all need not be ensured; e) since education is to be viewed as a tradable commodity, profiteering through education is a legitimate objective, just like in any other trade; f) education is a private good and, therefore, it is valid that opportunity for and quality of education one receives is proportionate to one's capacity to pay; g) education is an industry for producing human resources for corporate and market needs, rather than a social process for building socially harmonious human beings for a democratic, egalitarian, secular and humane society; h) the character of knowledge should be determined by market, rather than by the internal requirements of the discipline or the economic, political and cultural needs of the society. Based on such misconceived premises, the various governments are introducing these so-called 'reforms' in favor of trade in education sector. The people of India reject these neo-liberal policies and contend that education cannot be spread in the medium of commerce and trade. Reducing education to tradable service not only denies education to the disadvantaged sections, but also that those who are able to access education do

not receive education worth the name. Trade in education develops servile attitude in the youth and such youth will not be able to protect the nation and its democratic polity from external and internal threats. Trade in education reduces society to market, instead of developing education as a process of social development and transformation.

The long overdue pro-people reforms in higher Education require to be directed at a) abolition of trade in education, b) abandoning the so-called Public Private Partnership (PPP) designed to siphon public funds and transfer public facilities and assets to private agencies, c) strengthening government universities and colleges by providing necessary infrastructure and appointing qualified teaching and non-teaching personnel in adequate numbers, d) democratizing and decentralizing administration in the field of education, e) universalizing school education upto age 18 years and constantly increasing opportunities in higher education to meet the aspirations of the youth and needs of the society, f) building an education system in conformity with the basic values of the Constitution, and g) last but not least, allocating adequate resources to fill up the cumulative gap of public expenditure building up since 1986 through Union and State Budgets.

The Peoples' Parliament resolves to struggle for building a fully state-funded and entirely free public education system from 'KG to PG' in conformity with the values enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution and compelling the State to reconstruct the education system for promoting a democratic, socialist, secular, egalitarian, just and socialist Republic of India!

(Continued from Page 7)

only if the applicant does not receive a reply from the PIO or the reply received is unsatisfactory. If, say the application is not even accepted by the PIO then the applicant can only prefer a complaint under Sec 18, which the IC can inquire into and stop short of issuing any executive order, because by the same logic of not being competent to issue a direction to provide the info sought Sec 18 does not empower the IC to do anything in the nature of issuing an executive order!

Tailpiece:

'The crucial failure is the innate resistance in governments and governmental processes to the fundamental article of democracy, viz. that all power and all authority flows from the people and that all public institutions are meant solely to serve the public interest. The assurance of the dignity of the individual enshrined in the preamble of the Constitution has remained unredeemed; From this fundamental breach of the constitutional faith flow almost all our present ills. The first and the foremost need is to place the citizens of this country at center-stage and demonstrate this prioritization in all manifestation of governance'.

—Report of the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution!

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Disruptive Innovation of Democracy

Uday Dandavate

While the Congress party and the BJP are preoccupied guarding their own turfs and aiming to encroach rival territories during the forthcoming elections to Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram state assemblies, the true importance of these election will be revealed by the ripple effect they could cause leading up to the Lok Sabha elections early next year.

Studying the emerging patterns of the results of state assembly elections over the past two decades it becomes clear that issues of governance and regional identity increasingly influence endorsement or rejection of the party in power by the electorate. The BJP has already discovered from the recent Karnataka assembly elections that the Modi factor was not able to salvage the reputation of a government sullied by corruption - issue of governance in their own state was more important for the people of Karnataka than the Gujarat model marketed by Narendra Modi in Karnataka. If this pattern were to hold true the electorates of Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram should be expected to vote on the performance of their respective governments and along the issues of identity playing out in the respective regions. However, the election in Delhi is promising to be a different one.

Since 2011 Delhi has been at the center of global media attention due to various spontaneous protests by

citizens, reminiscent of the Arab Spring. Be it the Lok Pal movement or the spontaneous outrage against the rape of Nirbhaya, it is clear that citizens are increasingly getting frustrated by established political parties. They are taking to streets to affect change through spontaneous mobilization.

There are differences of opinion amongst intelligentsia about the significance of Anna Hazare's emergence on the national scene as a catalyst of disruption in the political space. His detractors scoff at him for simplistic thinking, lack of long-term vision and for his inability to grasp complexity of making a democracy work. When a group led by Arvind Kejriwal decided to pursue electoral battles to bring about change, Anna himself dissociated from this option and instead decided to stay focused on grass root level outreach to educate and inspire youth to participate in nation building. The parting of ways between Anna and Kejriwal was touted by the skeptics as dissipation and disintegration of the movement. No matter where one belongs in relation to one's opinion of Anna Hazare or Arvind Kejriwal, one fact remains - that citizens of remotest parts of India have watched with great interest the upsurge of popular protests in Delhi. The ripples of the events in Delhi have resonated with masses in remotest corners of India.

The restlessness and eagerness witnessed during these protests is

a perfect opportunity for those of us who feel stifled by the Congress party and BJP's machinations of reducing our electoral options to electing Narendra Modi or Rahul Gandhi as a Prime Minister. One aspect of the protests in Delhi was significant - established political leaders were either absent or were driven away by the protesters when they tried to join the bandwagon. It is clear that people are craving for a future that does not involve parties and leaders who have a vested interest in preserving the current corrupt system. People in the street were particularly appalled by near unanimity amongst the political parties in bringing to the parliament a bill that overturned Supreme Court judgment disenfranchising criminal politicians from contesting in elections. For many of the progressive individuals who are involved in grass root level movements and institution building, Delhi elections provide an opportunity to demonstrate to the established political parties, that when offered a choice, masses are ready to dump the politicians who have been party to building a corrupt system of governance.

Recent opinion polls indicate that, with two more months to go, Delhi election is likely to see emergence of Aam Adami Party with significant presence. The support for the party is growing amidst Delhi voters. It is going to spoil the prospects of both the Congress and BJP. If elections were held today the party would win 18 seats in a 70-member house. This support to the AAP has grown significantly within a month of two polls and will very likely to continue as the campaigns of all the three parties

gain momentum over the next two months. Additionally, largest percentage of voters want Arvind Kejriwal to be the Chief Minister of Delhi, followed by Vijay Goel of the BJP, with the Congress Party candidate Shiela Dixit trailing behind both.

Another significant opinion poll conducted nationally suggests that the Congress party will face a historical route if Lok Sabha elections were held today. Though the BJP would emerge as the largest party, the regional parties together will be the largest block in the Parliament.

Both these polls are indication of simmering discontent of masses against the established national political parties. No matter how the parties spin their media messages, no matter how many last minute government largesse is dished out to people, the nation is ready for change. The nation is ready to test the untested and established political parties should have reasons to be afraid.

What are the implications for those of us who want to reject the corrupt, dynastic, top-down model of the Congress party and the Hindu nationalism packaged in unsustainable development offered by the RSS? Delhi elections offer an opportunity to unsettle the appletart. It provides the opportunity to clear the way for people's juggernaut. It's time to look closely at every candidate for his or her individual merit rather than to vote for minions of the two dictatorial leaders. It is time to make a statement that there can be a future alternative that does not include either the Congress or the BJP. Let Delhi

election be the catalyst of change that we all want to see in the long term. It is a perfect moment for "Disruptive Innovation" of democracy in India.

We have received a copy of a representation made by advocate Dr. Sushil Balwada the Home Secretary and the Chief Election Commissioner demanding inquiry into the foreign funding received by Aam Admi Party. The representation suggests that the fiscal laws of the land are apparently being flouted by a party claiming to be for the good of the common man, which has set a budget of Rs 20 crore for the upcoming Assembly elections and is stated to have received Rs 12 crore in donations from overseas sources..

We in Delhi have roughly 1 crore 13 lakh voters - 63.68 lakh male and 51.19 lakh female voters). Yet their extent of popular support is reflected from the number of 'local supporters' which shows that despite their process of collections having begun in February apparently only 36,627 people have contributed to the election funds of the AAP so far, with the highest number of donations received only last month in September — 6,793 people.

In the circumstances the issue of foreign contributions and help - in cash or in kind - requires full exposure and debate.

—*Socialist Party (India), Delhi*

Globalization and Gender Justice*

Lorraine Michael

Before going into my lecture I should explain where I come from in Canada because it does colour my experience. Newfoundland is an island on the east coast of Canada sitting in the North Atlantic. Between the northern tip of the island and the mainland there is a fairly narrow strait that separates us from Labrador. Together Newfoundland and Labrador form a province of Canada and prior to 1949 Newfoundland was a colony of Britain.

I should also explain our political system since I am going to be making reference to it quite frequently. Canada is a federation of 10 provinces and three territories which are in the far north of the country. We have a federal government on the national level and 13 provincial and territorial governments. We have a number of political parties. Most exist both federally and provincially. There are some that are only provincial. We are a relatively small group of people, approximately 35 million, spread out over a vast territory.

When I first got involved in social justice issues in the 1970's, even though that work was not just local but national and international, globalization wasn't a word that we were using though that is what we were dealing with. Globalization in the way we are using it today is fairly new. We just didn't use that term for other long standing human ventures that can come under that term such as exploration, colonization, or

trading – all of which are aspects of globalization. The very act of reaching out beyond our borders in order to find something new to own, or conquer or just plain use for our own purposes is an act of globalization.

We can have discussions about when exactly globalization began to happen and might never come to an agreement. The most important thing is the realization that globalization has had many iterations and whether we agree that the origins go back to the 20th century, the 19th century or the third millennium BCE it is not a new phenomenon. It is part and parcel of the human experience.

I'm going to tell you a couple of stories to illustrate how we experience globalization without even realizing that's what's going on. In the early 1970's I was teaching in my home province of Newfoundland. Actually I was a junior high school principal at that time as well. One day a poster came across my desk advertising a conference that Oxfam Canada was putting off in my home city of St. John's. It had to do with the role of multinational corporations and their impact.

It was a wonderful weekend, full of information about what multinationals were, how they operated and what was the nature of their control. The most exciting thing for me was the realization that while I may have learned some facts

and figures that were revelations, I didn't learn something that I didn't already know when it came to the power that was exerted by corporations.

I was born and lived in a province that had only become a part of Canada in 1949. I was not born a Canadian. I was actually born in the Colony of Newfoundland. I knew the history of how the people of Newfoundland had been controlled and dominated for centuries by the merchant class of England. So, to learn the role of multinationals in 1973 was only to learn how far corporations had advanced in gaining more and more control over production and trading. In actual fact it was to learn what globalization is all about, whether we used that term or not. I went away from the conference on fire with the desire to start working to make this reality known to others. So, I became involved with Oxfam Canada and became an activist in the whole development education world. We began an arm of Oxfam in St. John's and began to bring global issues into our reality. We did use the word global in that sense, meaning issues bigger than us and happening in other places.

My second story: A couple of years after that conference St John's Oxfam, and the newly formed fishermen's union of Newfoundland held a conference. This time the conference had to do more specifically with how multinationals controlled

* Edited extracts from Maharshi Karve Lecture delivered at SNTD Women's University, Mumbai on October 17, 2013

production and those who toil in production – the workers. The conference was actually going to be in the form of a participatory workshop that a group in Toronto was experimenting with. The starting point of the workshop was a description of coffee workers in South America and how they and their lives were being exploited by multinational coffee companies. Now the main participants in the workshop were fish harvesters. Part way through the workshop these men – because they were all men – expressed their discontent with how things were going. They pointed out to the facilitators of the workshop that they really didn't know a lot about coffee growers and the corporations they dealt with, but they certainly knew about how they the harvesters were for the first time, since the formation of the union, beginning to get some just treatment in an industry that had for centuries been totally in the hands of the investors. So, the workshop turned around, started with the experience of the people in the room and developed an intricate mural depicting how the harvesting of fish in Newfoundland over the years did not belong to the people but to the corporations mainly in the UK and also how Newfoundlanders were also up against the other countries who fished in their waters and got to take that fish away to the UK, to Spain, to Portugal without any benefits going to the Newfoundlanders.

At the end of the workshop, these fish harvesters from Newfoundland understood what coffee growers were going through in South America. Those harvesters didn't use fancy words, they didn't use jargon and most of them had not even finished high school but they

described globalization and its effects more eloquently than people with ten times more the formal education than they had.

I've told those two stories because what I want to do today is to give you some idea of what has formed me over those years and how I have come to the point of where I am as I talk about globalization today and how women are affected.

Back in the early 1970's when those two events happened I had not initially articulated for myself what I believe strongly now – I am the starting point of everything that I know and that is true for all of us. As I continued my work it didn't take me long to realize that if I didn't connect my social justice work with what I knew and experienced as a woman that what I would do and say would not be authentic. Just as I agreed with Paulo Freire, the Brazilian philosopher, that there is a class analysis at the heart of the relationship between the one who colonizes and the one being colonized, I also believed that there is a gender analysis to be had as well.

So when I say I am a feminist I also mean I am a socialist and when I say I am a socialist I also mean I am a feminist. I do not believe that I can truly be one without being the other. And I think it is essential for us to believe that, if we are going to truly understand what is happening to women today in this new era of globalization.

I am going to take the late 1980's as the starting point for the globalization that I am going to talk about. In 1988 Canada signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States. In 1994 Canada,

the U.S. and Mexico launched discussions that led to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA.) Since then our country has signed other such agreements.

Free trade was a major turning point for us. As a result of FTA and NAFTA we lost manufacturing plants; industries such as textiles and clothing were effectively shut down; our piece of the North American auto industry became much smaller. We no longer had the right to demand, for example, that if a U.S. company wanted to benefit from our resources and gain access to our markets that they could not do so without building plants in our country, creating employment for Canadians. Consequently with the free trade agreements thousands of jobs were lost. Basically trade was free for everyone but the workers.

None of that happened without a major reaction from the labour sector, the feminist movement and social justice activists. The free trade debate was fiery and everything that the opponents feared would happen, did eventually happen.

One of the things we feared was that the free trade agreements would be more than economic. We saw the possibility of our social programs being seen as benefits that could decrease a non-Canadian corporation's competitive edge. We feared that there would be many effects that would be more than job loss. Time proved that the signing of these agreements was tied to a change in the mentality of the Canadian federal governments who signed and then followed the signing of the agreements. While they were of different political stripes (Progressive Conservative

and Liberals) ultimately the free trade mentality was infectious and was leading to a change, at least on the part of the federal governments, in the understanding of who Canada was and what we were to expect in terms of a social programs infrastructure. 1994 and 1995 brought us federal budgets that marked a major turning point for the people of Canada. They resulted in job losses in the public sector and program cuts because of a major focus on deficit cutting. One of the significant things the federal government did was to make major cuts to the money it would transfer to the provinces of our universal health-care program. This was a major turning point.

At the time, women in Canada were well organized under the umbrella of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) which came into existence in 1971 as a result of the 1970 report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. By the 1990's NAC had become a powerful voice on the political scene dealing with issues that were essential to the struggle for equality of women including racism, poverty, same-sex rights and violence against women. At that time it claimed membership of about 700 feminist organizations and its funding came mainly from the federal government.

The Progressive-Conservative government that brought in free trade in 1988 was the first one to make major cuts to NAC operations. The Liberals, when they came into power in the early 1990's, continued the cuts. Ultimately all funding for NAC ended and Canada, I am ashamed to say, no longer has a national

umbrella body that represents the concerns of women in the country. The operational cuts that NAC experienced cut its legs out from under the feminist movement that brought a gender-based analysis from the grassroots to government policies in our country.

I was involved at the heart of NAC when all this went on. It was blatantly obvious that government wanted to define what issues women could speak to. They did not want us to be the powerful voice that we had become. They did not want us at the table discussing the major economic, social and political policies that were confronting us in the 1990's. They did not want us to point out that so much of what they were doing meant a loss of gains for women that had happened between 1971 and 1991.

At the time when the feminist movement was celebrating 20 years of the existence of NAC and the breakthroughs, small though they might have been, in areas such as employment equity and violence against women, we were finding out how little we had accomplished. There was no doubt that we had crossed a line that the male-dominated capitalist establishment was defining.

The new attitude of federal governments continued and extended to some of the provinces. In my own, for example, there is very limited operational money for the groups who work on the various issues at the heart of the struggle for women's equality. We have women's centres in our province that have to continually seek for project funding in order to maintain staff. But the project funding is always controlled by

the government agencies who define what will be funded. So, this funding does not help the centres work on policy development with women in the issues that still most affect them – under-employment, working in short-term and part-time jobs for low wages, poverty, violence from their partners, inadequate housing, and the list goes on. The advocacy aspect of the status of women organizations has been completely removed from them by governments on both levels.

Governments have been continually cutting health and social services that are needed by women. Consequently the women's centres are overwhelmed with trying to be present to women in their needs. They do not have adequate resources to do the work that has been downloaded on to them by governments who continue on the road of cutting social programs.

In my role as leader of a political party I try to stay in touch with the women's centres. But I get quite upset when I hear women talk about the same issues that the Royal Commission identified in 1971. Poverty, inadequate housing, violence from spouses, inability to do paid work because of the lack of government-supported childcare. These issues continue for them. I hear it everywhere I go in Newfoundland and Labrador. Yes there are gains that have been made, but they are gains for the few not for the many.

It is true in Canada that the numbers of women have increased in the ranks of the medical and legal professions, in the political sphere and as leaders in the corporate

sector to name a few significant areas. Women now outrank men in the numbers of medical general practitioners, for example, though men still dominate in the areas of specialists. And while the numbers of women politicians have increased, the percentage of women in the provincial assembly that I am a member of, for example, is only 12 per cent. Interestingly enough, though, 50 per cent of the provincial premiers are women and there are three women leaders as heads of opposition parties, myself being one of those three.

In the House of Commons on the national level, the percentage of women is approximately 25 per cent, ranking us 52nd in the world. This is the highest percentage in our history. However, we are falling behind in ranking as other countries take more aggressive measures to even out the gender balance.

I would like to note that the increase on the federal level was made mainly in the federal New Democratic Party, my own party, where almost 40 per cent of the Members of Parliament are women – the highest in our party's history. And provincially in Newfoundland and Labrador women are 40 per cent in the New Democratic Party caucus which I lead.

So, over the past 20 or so years in Canada we have been making strides for women on some levels, but these represent a minority. What has been happening in the ordinary daily lives of the majority?

Before going there I need to look back again. Twenty years ago I was working on a project co-sponsored by the National Action Committee on the Status of

Women (NAC) and an organization called the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice (ECEJ) – a very interesting partnership. I was part of both, being a member of NAC as part of a feminist organization and a staff person with the Ecumenical Coalition researching the impact on women of globalization of the economy. The project we undertook was the Future of Women's Work and how women's work was being impacted by globalization.

That project looked at women in the paid workforce, their opportunities, women in part-time and temporary positions, the type of jobs filled mainly by women, the average wages paid to women and the barriers to women's being in the paid workforce, among other areas. It was a participatory project that involved focus groups throughout the country, including academic researchers. The picture wasn't pretty.

Here are some of the things that we found. Women were among the lowest paid workers; women in full-time permanent jobs were earning, at that time, 72 per cent of the salaries earned by men; women were among the largest group of workers in part time and temporary positions; women found it difficult to consider entering the paid work force because of lack of affordable childcare; workplace sexual harassment was a continuing problem for women.

At that time it was also clear that the future for women didn't look good. The direction in which things were moving in Canada pointed to more part time and temporary work, for example. Serious conversations had been going on with the federal government in the

early 1990's regarding the need for a national child care strategy. Promises, which turned out to be loose, were being made that the government would turn its attention to a national childcare program. Then came the budgets of 1994 and 1995. Those hopes were dashed. And then, with the loss of NAC's ability to carry out research on women's participation in our society and eventually the loss of that national organization's very existence, a feminist and gender-based analysis slowly disappeared from government policy-making.

So, where are we today in Canada? Has the new free trade economy brought a better life to women over the past 20 years? As we move more in the direction of ownership of major industries by multinational corporations instead of Canadian-based companies, which process has been facilitated by free trade agreements, what has been happening for women? Do we see a concern for gender justice evident in government policies and practices? Are women better off today than when we fought the free trade agreements?

To help answer those questions I am going to use statistical information that has been gathered by Trish Hennessy, researcher with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA). It is contained in Hennessy's Index, a monthly listing of numbers, produced by Ms. Hennessy, about Canada and its place in the world. The CCPA is one of Canada's leading sources of progressive policy ideas. Its policy research and analysis is rooted in the values of social justice and environmental sustainability.

(to be concluded)



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janata

Vol. 68 No. 43
November 3, 2013

For and against

S. Viswam

Signs of fundamentalism
Kuldip Nayar

Who needs Article 371-D?
K. S. Chalam

**Globalization and
Gender Justice - II***
Lorraine Michael

**Sangh Parivar and
Communal Riots**
Irfan Engineer

The Gold Rush in Unnao
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If you go by the day's newspapers, the run-up to 2014 has already begun though there are still six months to go before the battle is well and truly joined. Also, there seem to be subtle and patent undercurrents indicating that public opinion is slowly crystallizing in regard to the issues that will figure in the polls. For the present, only one issue is the hot potato: which of the two prime ministerial candidates do you prefer, as of date? Narendra Modi or Rahul Gandhi?

There is some difficulty in expecting a straight answer to this simple question. It is only Narendra Modi who has been officially declared by a political party to be its prime ministerial candidate. Actually, we all know that Modi is the chosen nominee of the RSS, but since RSS does not meet the criteria set by the Election Commission for a formation to be registered as a political party, the honour for sponsoring him has gone to the BJP. At the same time, there is no other "official" candidate in the field so far though the name of Rahul Gandhi is being bruited about to fill the bill. The problem here is that Rahul Gandhi is neither an official nor an unofficial nor a probable nor a

certain candidate. It is however taken for granted that he will be fielded when the time comes. For now, he is the reluctant and shy candidate. This places him in the position of not running if he chooses and running if he chooses. There must be something unique about this gentleman, apart from his being privileged to be a scion of the Gandhi-Nehru family and hence being a cut above the other less privileged Indian mortals.

The two are always in the news. Modi hogs more space nowadays since he is the officially declared PM candidate of the BJP. Such publicity as Rahul Gandhi gets, and unfortunately it is substantial, he gets in his capacity as firstly, Sonia Gandhi's son, secondly as a Congress Vice-President (second to the President Sonia) and third as PM-candidate-designate (unofficial). And the substantial news coverage he gets is unfortunate (in this scribe's view) is because he opens his mouth only to put his foot in it!—or it seems from the controversies his utterances unleash. Rahul Gandhi, may his tribe increase, has yet to utter a single profound thought that has a bearing on India's past, present or future. He has yet to lift the ongoing debate on

Between the lines

Signs of fundamentalism

Kuldip Nayar

the issues before the 2014 polls to any meaningful level, nor has he identified any specific issues that have the potential of being game-changers. In other words, Rahul Gandhi carries an image today of being a non-serious person who is definitely not prime minister material, more so since he has been evading every kind of responsibility sought to be thrust on him or on his broad shoulders.

Who wants Narendra Modi as India's prime minister? Well, that is an easy question. Himself first and foremost, then the entire saffron parivar, and then the fence-sitters who have not yet had the benefit of acquaintance with his rival or rivals or other sponsored or independent candidates. He is the only candidate in the field so far and hence there is an impression that he has no challenge or challengers. He has a field day. As against this, who does not want him as India's PM? Again, easy to answer. All those in India and the world, who have not forgotten the carnage against the minorities in Gujarat in 2002 and the fact that Modi has yet to show any remorse for his role in stoking the fires of anti-Muslim hatred. This constitutes a large segment of the population and this section does not wish to see him occupying the highest public office in India after having trashed the Constitution which he was committed to uphold.

Who wants Rahul Gandhi as India's prime minister? The prime minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, the first and foremost. He has already shot off the first application for a job under him! Who else? Frankly, we do not know. The Congress party naturally, it cannot say 'no'

Fundamentalism is rearing its ugly head once again. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has openly said that it would take part in politics. On the other hand, even the liberal Jammiat Ulma-i-Hind has talked about the Muslim vote. The impending parliamentary elections may be compelling the political parties. Yet the polarization they are trying to effect is telling upon the co-existence of the Hindus and the Muslims, something which they have come to accept.

Take the RSS first. Apparently, it is not happy with the working of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), its political wing. The RSS had its way in imposing the Hindutva poster boy, Guajrat chief minister Narendra Modi, as the BJP's candidate for the office of Prime Minister. Maybe, the RSS is upset over leaders like L. K. Advani, Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley who are seen as the liberal elements in the BJP.

By entering politics, the RSS is going back on the undertaking it gave to Sardar Patel, Union Home Minister, after partition of the country. The RSS promised and wrote in its constitution not to participate in political activities. This was the price it paid to have the ban lifted following the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. Nathuram Godse, the assassin, was found having links with the RSS.

True, Patel, known for his pro-Hindu views, did not think that the

RSS had a hand in the Mahatma's murder. He said so in his letter dated January 27, 1948 to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Yet Patel believed that the Sangh's "violent" ways had contributed to the climate in which the Mahatma was killed.

The then Saranghachalak, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, pleaded not guilty. Nor did his telegrams to Nehru and Patel, expressing shock over the murder, make any difference. The Sangh had to specify in its constitution that it had "no politics" in mind and would remain "devoted purely to cultural work."

Yet the ranting by Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS chief, that it would directly participate in politics is the violation of the promise given to Patel. However, this is one case which the Election Commission would have to ponder over. How can a cultural organization jump into the political arena? Even if the RSS changes its constitution, how justified is it when it gave an undertaking to the central government to have the ban lifted?

Take the statement of Mahmood Madani, chief of Jammiat Ulma-i-Hind. He asked the so-called secular parties not to invoke bogey of Narendra Modi to create fear among Muslim voters. He said that the parties should instead seek votes "on the basis of promises fulfilled during their tenure and the promises they would make through election manifestoes."

(Continued on Page 7)

I have no exception to the statement Madani made except his invoking the phrase of "Muslim vote." There is no Hindu or Muslim vote, but only the Indian vote. What holds good for one community holds good for the other community. To single out the Muslims is exactly what the RSS does for Hindus. And I have not been able to comprehend Madani's love for Modi. He should have said in the same statement that his remark should not be misunderstood and that he was opposed to Modi's parochial politics. In fact, he let the Congress and Samajwadi Party too off the hook.

The Congress got the opening and said: "We do not make strategy keeping in mind any individual. Our strategies are with regard to the policies and programmes of the party." However, this self-virtue does not convince anyone. It is a fact that the Congress has decided to attack Modi alone. And this can be seen in the manner in which the union ministers are taking turns to criticize Modi. It is unfortunate that the Congress has not raised any substantial issue like development and has played into the hands of Modi who has converted the 2014 polls into a presidential form of election. He, instead, is talking about development and covering up his Hindutva ideology.

The Achilles' heel of the Congress is non-governance as well as the incumbency factor. I wish there had been early elections so that the new government would have planned something for the country for a long tenure. But the six months between now and the elections will be without any serious work. Ministers will be

(Continued on Page 13)

Who needs Article 371-D?

K. S. Chalam

The battle for unity and demerger of Andhra Pradesh seems to have come to a logical end as of now. The Government and people of the State are taking a sigh of relief with the 66 days strike called off by NGOs. The 'Akanshalu' of Telangana and the 'Manobhavalu' of Seemandhra appear to have been smothered for the time being. However, both the parties have come to a common understanding involuntarily on an important issue concerned with the NGOs. It is about the Article 371-D that came in to effect from July 1, 1974. We know the background of the Article. Jai Andhra movement and the Mulki struggle forced the Union Government to make this adjustment to douse the fire at that time.

Sometimes, the struggles of people lead to unsolicited solutions and in that process bring some relief to problems that are not considered by the ruling elite as serious. Article 371D is an important provision that takes care of the economic inequalities built into our system due to several historical and political factors. A dispassionate analysis of the 1972-73 struggles brings out the fact that the development model pursued by the ruling dispensations did not provide enough opportunities to the people who fought against two different formations and consequently came together under an emotional note. The post-independent India crafted some policies to create opportunities for socially marginalized groups and the same were extended in the newly formed state. But, disillusioned with the slow process, people were waiting for an occasion to wreck their vengeance against the system,

grabbed the occasion to rally round. If we are willing to accept, it is not opaque to note that the desire to capture power by some social formations in Andhra region about that time led to a different political milieu by 1980s.

The situation in Telangana region is different. The region as part of Nizams' province was an independent country when the British declared independence in 1947. Therefore, they joined the present state at different levels. First as a part of Indian union through police action on September, 17, 1948 and then as a Telugu speaking chunk dispersing from the Marathi and Kannada speaking regions by merging with Andhra Pradesh in 1956. The people had several apprehensions due to the feudal oppression and got some assurances in the form of Gentlemen's Agreement. But, the agreement was not comprehensive as there were no social clauses or assurances for the Bahujans of the region. Naturally both in the Telangana and in Andhra, the newly emerging groups found the situation hostile. The leadership in political parties being opportunistic did not recognize the discontent. Hence the hostility continues.

Keeping this context in mind, we can now ponder over the Article 371D. There is interesting debate over the issue by different interested parties and they need to be considered seriously to avert another dissent soon. If we carefully examine the Article, it is kept as Part XXI consisting of 'Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions'. Someone has already remarked that the President was given powers,

“having regard to the requirements for the State as a whole, for equitable opportunities and facilities for the people belonging to different parts of the State, in the matter of public employment and in the matter of education, and different provisions may be made for various parts of the State”. There are 10 clauses in the Article clearly dovetailing about the local areas, jobs, Administrative Tribunals and other legal provisions that are upheld by the Apex court on several occasions. Therefore, some people are anticipating possible intimidation/abatement if the Article is retained under the Telangana/Andhra State Act.

The special or transitory provisions under Article 371 were used in the context of Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1960, Nagaland and others later. It is only in relation to Andhra Pradesh, the issue of reservation of jobs; admissions, appointment and allotment of posts etc. are indicated. It appears to be a farfetched and elaborate composition that has resulted in litigation, heart burning among some groups. However, this is a deft note that should be considered here for settling disputes in anticipation. This is in no way a hurdle for the bifurcation or trifurcation of the existing state as it is not going to change the basic structure of Constitution. This will remain as a part of the State Act or can be modified keeping in view special needs of the regions within the newly formed states. The demands of the NGOs in both the regions want the Article to be retained, adds strength.

Article 371D is specific to Andhra Pradesh. Apropos the unique socio-economic conditions of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh (regions within), it is incumbent on the part of the GoM or some other authority to conduct an exercise as to what are the ‘divides and despairs’ that would

likely to contrive future disquiet. The Andhra State Act 1953 for instance contained several clauses and 9 schedules. Interestingly, the Act had provisions relating to caste based reservations for SC, ST and OBC categories to give legitimacy for the castes of Madras Presidency in the newly formed Andhra Pradesh. Now the same issues might recur and require elaboration of Article 371D in the light of the above to satisfy the demands of Bahujans in both the states. The NGOs might be thinking that it would protect their jobs, but the article is so elaborate that it would protect the weak from the dominant who have grabbed positions and power disproportionate to their place in the districts, castes, religion, etc. For instance, some castes in Telangana need to be recasted as the equivalents in the combined list may not appear in Telangana, quota for minorities, EBC, etc. to be considered to

meet the demands of social justice (SamajikaTelangana). A composite index of deprivation needs to be developed to protect the interests of the deprived and to shun the corrupt officers who rule the roost.

At the regional level, Uttarandhra is left in the lurch. Telangana is likely to be an independent state and the two regions Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra have joined as Seemandhra keeping aside the voiceless North Andhra with typical socio-political and economic problems. If Article 371D is left untouched or modified to provide protection to the weak and oppressed groups, North Andhra would survive. Otherwise, the region that is already occupied by outsiders would turn out to be another battle field in the making. Therefore, Article 371D being an all pervasive and safeguarding provision, should be retained to meet the needs of the disadvantaged.

Conditions for another disaster

On 16-17 June, 2013 Due to Vishnuprayag HEP (400 MW) a big flood washed away properties in Lambagarh, Pandukeshwar, Govindghat, Vinayak chatty, Pinola ghat villages and areas downstream. Properties included homes, hotels, livestock, forest, fields, and several others. It is very much established that the destruction in these villages has been caused by the Vishnugad HEP on Alaknanda.

Agitations are going on for the restoration of the villages and for the proper/full compensation of the losses occurred due to the calamity that occurred between June 16-17, when dam gates were not opened in time. Despite heavy rain, dam gates remained closed and this led to the devastating floods.

Four months have passed, but no inquiry has been set up by any

ministry. The situation is worsening. The Jaypee Group is removing all the muck/debris from the dam reservoir, but putting everything in the Alaknandaganga river bed. These actions will create the conditions for another disaster.

Thus, dumping muck in the river is criminal activity for environment and sensitive ecology of the area. The act of dumping also puts villagers’ lives in danger. Downstream of this dam and in the same river due to Srinagar HEP on 16-17 June the muck which was dumped at the river bank ruined more than hundreds of private and government buildings.

In this very alarming situation Ministry of Forest and Environment has to take urgent action and stop the project proponents from dumping debris in the Alakanndaganga.

–Vimalbhai and Dinesh Panwar

Globalization and Gender Justice - II*

Lorraine Michael

Here are some of the latest facts about women's status in Canada according to information in Trish Hennessy's index:

- on average a Canadian woman now makes only 68 cents for every dollar a man makes.. Twenty years ago it was 72.
- a Canadian woman will have to work 15 additional years to earn the same pay which a man earns by age 65. I have seen women in their early 70s still working in the retail sector, for example.
- 62 percent of university undergraduate students in Canada were women in 2008 – and I suspect that number has gone up since the last census. However, it is important to note that even though women are more likely than men to go to university or college, they don't necessarily end up getting better paid jobs once they're in the work force."
- Seven out of ten part-time workers in Canada are women. Women are more likely to hold multiple part-time jobs in order to make an adequate income.
- In Canada we have a minimum wage policy on both and federal and provincial levels. About 60 per cent of minimum wage workers in Canada are women.
- Canadian women with children earn 12 percent less than women without children.
- Sixty seven percent of women

in Canada work in occupations such as teaching, nursing, clerical, admin or sales and service jobs which have been traditionally, and continue to be, dominated by women, and are less highly paid than male-dominated jobs.

- Twenty percent of Canadian women are in low-wage jobs, compared to 10 per cent of men.
- A startling, though not surprising, fact is that poverty follows women into their retirement: women 65 or over are twice as likely as men to be low income.
- And if I were to add a race-based analysis to these statistics, which I don't have time to do, I would show you that in Canada everything that I have just outlined becomes even worse for aboriginal and visible minority women.

In 2005 a report of the Royal Bank of Canada estimated that the annual lost income potential of Canadian women as a result of unequal income and labour force participation rates was \$125.8 billion. The implications of such a loss of potential income is that women, families, communities, and the economy suffer when there is pay inequality.

So, we've reached the point for asking a significant question - has the globalization that Canada embraced in 1988 in the form of free trade created greater equality between men and women. Do women on average have a better place in the

economy vis-à-vis men than they did 20 years ago when we were carrying out our Future of Women's Work research? All evidence says on average they do not. There is also growing evidence that such is not the case either when it comes to things like violence against women.

Yet governments go on acting as if women have gained - that the improved economy must mean that everyone, including women, are better off; that there is no need to take special actions to deal with women's equality from access to well-paid work to social programs that deal with barriers and the effects of inequality.

These same governments believe that benefits of global economic policies automatically trickle down the line. That big profits for industry benefit the whole, not just the controllers of industry. That those who are given carte blanche in the world of trade are going to make sure that people in a country that they trade with will benefit from their enterprise.

What I want to do now is use an example that shows it takes policies aimed at a problem to solve it and that those policies can benefit everyone, not just the needs of those at whom they are aimed. One of the barriers that I mentioned earlier to women's entering the workforce in Canada is the lack of a universal, publicly administered childcare program.

* Edited extracts from Maharshi Karve Lecture delivered at SNTD Women's University, Mumbai on October 17, 2013

In the late 1990s, Quebec, one of the provinces in Canada, decided to go it alone without participation of the federal government which, as I have mentioned, had reneged on its promise of a national childcare program. Quebec began a staged in program that began in 1997 and by the year 2000 had every child from birth to age five covered for childcare.

An analysis done two years ago by a Quebec economist, Pierre Fortin, shows that not only does the daycare regime in Quebec not cost the government money, it has also resulted in a significant boost to the Quebec economy because of the almost 4 per cent increase of women in the paid workforce. According to Fortin's analysis the economy in Quebec gained \$5.2 Billion dollars as a result of the increased participation of women in paid employment. So, let's look at the results. Children are in daycare where they are socialized and educated according to their age level; mothers are in the paid workforce; and, the economy benefits. I ask, why wouldn't a government choose to put such a program in place?

So, what is my concern about globalization and its effects on people, because that's the bottom-line question? Let's look at our free trade experience again.

Canada has a very good history as a country that is built on social democratic principles. We believe that it is government's responsibility to provide a social safety net for people; we believe that rights like access to education and health care are so basic that government must provide them universally for everyone; we have had a vibrant labour movement that has won great

achievements for workers over the decades; we believe that women's equality is essential in a society and took great steps for awhile to work towards that; we believe that human rights are also essential to a society and it is government's responsibility to protect all rights; we believe in a democratically elected and operating system.

I fear that governments that put protecting the type of corporate interests that drive globalization ahead of their responsibilities to protect people are in danger of losing touch with what is happening to women, to children, to the elderly, to the vulnerable. That they are in danger of forgetting the principles that have been at the heart of the country that has helped form me.

I understand that corporations have one major goal and that is to make money - that is the bottom line. I don't blame them for doing what they were created to do. But it is government's responsibility to make sure that people are protected and taken care of. We have to be watchful when the corporate sector pushes for tools of globalization such as free trade, and it was the corporate sector that did the pushing.

Corporations are not thinking about how they are going to help communities or individuals, they are not thinking about justice for women. They are thinking about: how can this system help us be more profitable. How can we gain more control?

Profitability drives the closing of plants in Canada in order to open plants in Mexico or southern United States where they don't believe in workers' rights. It is also what drives the closure of textile and clothing

plants in Bangladesh and movement by corporations to other countries in the region that have lower wages. Being able to pay lower wages is more important than maintaining plants in a place which may have a better track record on human rights and therefore women's rights, or in a place where workers are starting to demand more, as they are beginning to do in Bangladesh. Rather than having as a goal the raising of levels of living, the goal is to make more money by benefitting from the low level of living where lower wage expectations in a developing economy mean more money for the corporation.

Some corporations that come into Canada from a place where they haven't had strong environmental or labour regulations expect to be able to get expectations lowered at the workplaces in Canada. We're experiencing this dynamic, for example, in the mining industry.

Some industries are better than others, but globalization has meant that we can't take our gains over the years for granted.

Today's expression of globalization in Canada has meant a reneging on the commitment to childcare; an increase in part-time and temporary work, especially for women; an increase in the wage gap between men and women; decreases in and even cessation of funding for equity-seeking advocacy work; no new money for activities and services to combat violence against women - to name just some of the negative effects that work against gender justice. So, what are my own personal reflections on all of what I have shared?

Globalization in one form or another is always going to be with

us. We can't change it. But let's explore where it could go.

Your country and my country are part of a global entity that many people forget about on a daily basis. We are part of the United Nations. We are also affected by other global realities such as the World Bank. There are many global entities that are outside of our daily realm and our control.

When it comes to the UN we have a very interesting phenomenon. Our countries take part in discussions and deliberations there that set up the highest ideals and expectations for us. We should be proud as inhabitants of this planet to have the wonderful U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. We know who we want to be and where we want to get. But then we allow another realm, the world of business, to operate outside of those ideals.

Because of the focus of corporations on making money they place the onus on nation states to develop the principles and guidelines under which they operate. It is not up to them, for example, to determine whether or not a particular country is faithful to the UN Human Rights Code. Corporations will do what they have to do to operate in a country. They will abide by whatever regulations that are part of a country's regime. But they don't make demands for the country to improve their labour and environmental standards.

So, there is a responsibility on us, the citizens to demand that our governments live up to international agreements and covenants. It is also up to those of us who are educators and policy makers to turn things around and globalize the principles

that on paper we all hold in common through agencies such as the U.N.

The UN has put and continues to put a lot of effort into trying to get member states to agree to goals regarding the status of women globally. At one time I was part of a powerful organization that monitored how our federal government behaved at the UN and at how it was living up to commitments to the Platform for Action developed at the UN Conference on the Status of Women in 1995. As I prepared this lecture I had to wonder where is that happening now in my country? Who is doing it? How are the Status of Women groups in my province connecting with women in other parts of the country, let alone in other parts of the world. Why is it that as economic globalization has run rampant the globalization of the struggle for women's equality and women's rights is almost invisible? Who represents the voice of grassroots women now at UNIFEM meetings? Who from grassroots women's organizations have the resources to monitor the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?

I have been challenged in preparing this lecture to examine the position of my own political party with the globalization of women's struggle. Are we concerned and taking action to make sure that women can connect both intra- and inter-countries? Strengthening the globalization of women's common struggle in order to make the impact of economic globalization on women more visible is maybe the only way that we can fight back.

I know, and have always believed, that governments have a vital role to play in creating change. If we are

going to ensure that gender justice is a consideration of the drivers of economic globalization it will only happen if governments are committed to that goal.

There's an expression that we use in English that perhaps is used in other languages because the image is so powerful. We say let's fight fire with fire. I am going to do a twist on that expression as a result of delivering this lecture. I'm inviting you to join me in looking at how we fight corporate-driven economic globalization with people-driven social globalization. Let's fight globalization with globalization.

(concluded)

(Continued from Page 2)

to the Boss' son. Who else? The alliance partners of the UPA? Beg pardon, not a single leader or party or group has issued any statement expressing willingness to sponsor/support him. Any Muslim or other minority group? No, sir. In fact, the Muslims are angry with him right now for making unpalatable remarks against Muslim youths. Who else? No one else to our knowledge. Not even Sonia Gandhi. She is yet to commend his candidature to the country. So, pray, what is Rahul Gandhi's locus standi???

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Sangh Parivar and Communal Riots

Irfan Engineer

In an attempt to hide their culpability in communal riots, the BJP often argues that more communal riots have taken place under Congress regime as compared to their regime. The argument is fallacious as the Congress has ruled the country and various states much longer than BJP. Secondly, Congress ruled state governments are practically throughout the length and breadth of the country. Therefore one is comparing longer term of the Congress in wider geographical area with shorter term of the BJP. It is like comparing apples to oranges.

However, more important point is the BJP spokespersons' attempts to obfuscate and invisibilise the real role of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar attached politicians in raising the communal temperature of the country by incessantly polarizing every possible issue on communal lines. Since its inception, the RSS has used communal violence as a tool to strengthen its organization, as indeed the Muslim League orchestrated communal violence in 1946 and used it as a tool to achieve its objective of Pakistan. The RSS continuously propagates that Hindus are in danger and/or injustice is being done to the Hindus. In the pre-Independence era, Jinnah did a similar propaganda and saw every action of the Congress with a jaundiced eye and interpreted every measure to be anti-Muslim. Followers of Hindutva ideology continuously propagate that all terrorists are Muslims even though the proposition is false to their own knowledge. Advani's rath yatra smilarly propagated distorted

history and falsehood about existence of Ramjanmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya; claiming the temple to be on a precise spot which was birth place of Ram; that the temple was demolished by Babar; that Babri Masjid is a symbol of subjugation of Hindus by Muslim regime. As Jinnah unfortunately succeeded in persuading a section of influential and propertied class Muslims that they would not get justice in united India, followers of Hindutva ideology similarly have succeeded in convincing a section of upper class and upper caste Hindus that indeed their interests are inimical to those of the Muslim community (as if the community is undiversified and share same interests), that Muslims are anti-nationals, polygamous, a bunch of criminals, violent, etc. etc.

Communalists, like the followers of Hindutva ideology, ratchet up tension between the two communities over an issue which may seem insignificant and even routine, e.g. the murder of two mathadi workers in Mumbai in January 1993. Shiv Sena ratcheted up the issue and through its news paper Samna, continuously propagated as if the routine sounding murder amounted to huge injustice on the entire Hindu community. Even before investigation conclusion was drawn that Muslims are guilty and that entire Muslim community was guilty of the murder. Or take the recent Muzaffarnagar communal riots. The riots occurred under the SP regime. However, the SP is at the most guilty of omissions – of allowing the “Jat Mahapanchayats” to take place with

the attendees armed with deadly weapons in a charged atmosphere where communally inciting speeches were likely to be given and were given. The riots were not a natural reaction to the incident of killing of Sachin and Gaurav. Attempts to create communal tensions were going on much before even before the incident. The incident of murder of Sachin and Gaurav was used to ratchet up tensions by widely circulating a fake video of an incident that happened in Pakistan. The BJP MLA is alleged to have done that. The fake video inflamed the sensations and emotions and mobilized the people to Jat Mahapanchayat who could then be incited to take revenge leading to communal riots. There would have been no riots without the circulation of the fake video; without the Jat Mahapanchayat; without collecting and distributing arms; without mobilizing funds for movements of the emotionally charged crowds and without pre-marking the targets to be attacked during the riots. Whom would you hold more culpable for the riots – the SP government for their omissions or the planner, organizers and executioner of the riots in Muzaffarnagar?

Of late, routine inter-religious love affairs are declared by the Hindu Nationalist forces to be “love jihad” without an iota of evidence or truth in it. Continuously repeating the falsehood umpteen times using the media and pamphlets escalates the conflict between the two communities. The other issues that have been utilized to ratchet up

the communal conflict are a cow being shooed away by a hawker, who happens to be a Muslim, or non-payment of a hotel bill or by insisting on a particular route for a religious procession, deliberately playing loud music near places of worship during religious processions, etc.

Eruption of a riot takes place, according to psychologist Sudhir Kakar after a considerable degree of tension between the two communities has been built up by communal organizations. Riot is then bursting of a boil, the eruption of pus, of 'bad blood' between Hindus and Muslims which has been accumulated over a few days and even weeks in a particular location. In riot prone cities like Ahmedabad, the boil is more like a festering sore. Besides the ultimate cause, a riot has immediate tension and precipitating incident. Immediate tension occurs when religious identities come to the forefront because of a perceived threat to this particular social identity. For example constant propaganda that injustice is meted out to the Hindus in "their own country" or that minorities are being appeased in the country that belongs to Hindus. The threat may be a constructed one based on collective distortion of the meaning of a real event, which makes them act as Hindus or Muslims. Demonstration of this religious identity on part of one community causes, as a response, the other community to mobilize based on their religious identity. This spiral of perceived or misperceived threats and reactive counter postures raises tensions between the two communities. During the period of tension, religious identity of the individual is heightened and they increasingly think themselves as Hindus, or Muslims or Christians. When group salience becomes high,

the individual thinks and behaves in conformity with the stereotypical characteristics of the category 'Hindu' or 'Muslim' rather than according to her or his individual personality dispositions. Thus social identity dominates in the period of social tensions and individuals conform to their stereotypes leading to homogenization and depersonalization. The tension is also constituted of strong effects and emotions and raw passions.

Rowena Robinson in her book – Tremors of Violence – Muslim Survivors of Ethnic Strife in Western India – reproduces the text from leaflets of Vishwa Hindu Parishad openly circulated after Gujarat Violence in 2002 and signed by the state general secretary Chinubhai Patel "We will cut them and their blood will flow like rivers. 'We will kill Muslims the way we destroyed Babri mosque'. This is followed by a poem '[t]he volcano which was inactive ... has erupted. It has burnt the arse of miyas and made them dance nude. We have untied the penises that were tied till now. We have widened the tight vaginas of the bibis...'

To measure communalism of a political party based merely on number of riots or number of casualties during the communal riots under their regime, as the BJP spokespersons persuade us to do, will therefore lead us to fallacious conclusions. The source of communal attitudes is equally culpable for the riots that take place.

This is not to argue that Congress led Governments are not culpable whenever riots take place under their regime. The culpability of the ruling party may be of different nature. The culpability of the administration is

that of omission, i.e. failure to take timely, appropriate and necessary actions to prevent riots when there are early warnings of the riots as the tension is being ratcheted up over incident of ordinary nature. The culpability is compounded further if there is a failure to control riot immediately after it breaks out by immediately arresting the communal goondas, imposing curfew and using minimum necessary but effective force on rioting mobs. However, in the case of Gujarat 2002 riots, the interest of planners and conspirators of the riots culpable for offence of commissions and the interests of the ruling regime committing the offence of omissions and commissions became identical.

The Inquiry Commissions Reports

The Inquiry Commissions appointed to give their reports on the causes of riots have, after properly appreciating the evidence before them more often than not, blamed the communal organizations following Hindutva ideology and having Hindu Nationalism as their political goal. If Congress led regimes were blamed for offences of omissions, the Commissions also blamed the sister organizations of the then Jan Sangh and now the BJP. Let us look at the observations of some of the Inquiry Commissions very briefly for the lack of space.

The Raghubar Dayal Commission appointed to give its findings on the causes of communal riots in Sholapur, Maharashtra, in September 1967 observed that the Hindu Maha sabha and Muslim league were active in the incident, as they wanted to use the incident for their political purpose.

The same commission was appointed to study the communal

disturbances in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, between 13 to 15 October, 1967. The Commission found that Jan Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha and other communal minded Hindus were involved in the agitation and had contributed to communal tensions just before the Jaganath temple incident. Jana Sangh workers were found to be participating in riots. According to the Commission, the Jan Sangh workers and communal minded persons created trouble and spread rumors.

The D. P. Madon Commission, investigating Riots in Bhiwandi, Jalgaon and Mahad, in the year 1970 found that the following organizations were operating in Bhiwandi which fomented communal tension in the said places: 1) The Bhiwandi Branch of the All-India Majlis Tameer-E-Millat, 2) The Bhiwandi Branch of the Shiv Sena, 3) The Bhiwandi Branch of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, 4) The Bhiwandi Seva Samiti, 5) The Rashtriya Utsav Mandal.

The Madon Commission found that Bal Thackeray, made a communal speech about Bhiwandi and its Muslim inhabitants at a Shiv Sena meeting held in Thane on May 30, 1969 in the course of which he referred to Bhiwandi as a second Pakistan and said that such shameful incidents were taking place in Bhiwandi that he was ashamed to speak about them in the presence of ladies.

The Madon Commission further found that the news of the Bhiwandi disturbance and exaggerated rumours were circulated in Jalgaon, inflaming the communal passions of the Hindus against the Muslims. As the tension heightened, an ordinary quarrel which took place at the 'Pan'

shop at the Rath Chowk between a Muslim and some Hindus at about 2.45 pm on May 8, 1970 triggered off the riot.

The Madon Commission also held the communal activities of the Jalgaon City Branch of the Jan Sangh and the Shree Ram Tarun Mandal managed by the Jalgaon City Branch of the Jan Sangh responsible for the communal riots in Jalgaon in the background of impending Municipal politics. Stones were thrown on the

Jumma Mosque situated in Maniyar Wada usually at the time of the night prayers to heighten tensions...

The Joseph Vithayathil Commission appointed to study the communal Riots in Tellicherry on 28th December 1971, observed that the underlying cause of the riots was the propaganda carried on by Jan Sangh against the Muslims league after the league became a partner in the government that the league was taking undue advantage of its

For many young Indians — the census suggests that much of India is young — the bloodbath in Gujarat is a distant memory and most were not born when Sikhs were slaughtered in Delhi. But in the last one year, both massacres have clawed their way back into public memory. A BJP minister from Gujarat was sentenced to life imprisonment for her role in the 2002 violence, and court cases against two Congress leaders have resurfaced in connection with the 1984 massacre.

Both Gujarat 2002 and Delhi 1984 have often been dismissed as spontaneous riots. There is much to suggest they were neither spontaneous, nor riots, but systematic acts of ethnic cleansing targeting two of India's minority communities.

Recent debates focus on the impact of both pogroms on the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. But can we reduce crimes against humanity to an election campaign? Is that all that genocide means to us? How do we decide which genocide to vote for and which to vote against? Is there any foot-ruler or weighing scale that can help us measure two acts of barbarism to figure out which one is worse?

Or maybe we could use the response to the Delhi gang rape as a benchmark for how justice should be sought. We did not compare the Delhi rape case to other rape cases in order to judge the extent of brutality committed. We did not say that, since many rape victims have been denied justice, we should deny this young girl justice too.

So why should we pit Gujarat 2002 against Delhi 1984? Can we not, as a nation, use the 2014 elections to demand justice for both genocides?

Much has been said on the need to move over the massacres, and focus, instead on "the development plank" which refers, among other things, to building roads, highways and efficient transport. But can the denial of justice for genocide be substituted with good roads? Is that the price of human life? If so, how many dead bodies are equal to one good road?

—Anahita Mukherji in *The Times of India*

political power in the state created a general feeling among the Hindus that they would not get justice in the hands of police in cases in which Muslims were on the opposite side. The Vithayathil Commission further observed that the statements made by the politicians contributed to the cause of the disturbances. The Jan Sangh and the R.S.S were always attacking the Muslim league. A part of their Political propaganda was that the league was interfering in matters of administration.

Jitendra Narayan Commission appointed to give its findings on Jamshedpur riots on 11th April 1979 records its findings that the communal passion aroused amongst the Hindus by the intractable and domineering attitude of the Hindu Communalist over the question of the route of the Dimna Basti Akhara procession which expressed itself in various overt acts was the pivotal cause of the riot that broke out in Jamshedpur during the Ramnavami Festival 1979. Militant communalist Hindus were demanding that the procession be permitted to pass through the disputed Road No. 14 a narrow road largely inhabited by Muslims along its sides with a mosque on its way. The Commission further records that the RSS played their role in this matter, motivated by the long-term political objective of gaining strength for their political wing, simultaneously with propagating their doctrine, by arousing the communal sentiment of the large majority of Hindus. A leaflet was circulated of in the name of Shri Ramnavami Akhara Samity, which emerged as a call to the Hindus in the name of the religion, to force the procession through the prohibited route whatever the consequence may be.

The RSS challenged the secular concept of life as enshrined in the Constitution, noted the Commission. Shree Balasaheb Deoras the then Sar Sanghchalak (Chief) in his speech at the Regal Maidan on 1.4.79 said that in Arab countries the Hindus were not allowed to construct Hindu temples but here in India where the Hindus are in great majority the Muslims and the Christians were not only free to raise the mosques and the churches but they were free to propagate their religion.....'. The Commission squarely blamed RSS for the riots stating that the R.S.S had raised evocative religious issues there by rousing communal passion and recommended that holding of meetings of communal organizations such as the RSSS and the Jamat-I-Islam be prohibited.

Justice V. S. Dave Commission looked into the communal disturbances in Gujarat in the year 1985 which followed the anti-reservation agitation. Simultaneously, it was being propagated that mosques and shrines of Muslims in Ahmedabad were built on Hindu monuments, and the proverbial last straw on the camel's back was refusal by Muslims to close their shops on the call of bandh on March 18, 1985 which had marked the start of communal riots in Ahmedabad.

It will be relevant to mention here that there had been several pamphlets issued by Hindu organizations and Muslim organizations. Some have been attributed to VHP and the circulars issued by Navrachna Nirman Samiti led by the ABVP. A perusal of the pamphlets showed that they tend to increase the gulf between sawarnas and backward classes and Hindus and Muslims. The captions of the said pamphlets had been

quoted while dealing with the role of press. Similarly, the Muslim organizations distributed pamphlets every effort was made to incite the people of rival sections and rival communities. Thus, the press and the pamphlets contributed too much to the fanning of the riots and the course of riots.

Justice Malvankar Commission appointed to look into the communal riots in Umapur (District Beed) opined that the immediate cause behind the riot was that on May 10, 1986 at about 6.30 p.m. when Shiv Sainiks came to Abdul Hamid Chowk, they first garlanded the Ganesh Idol and then went to Shri. Gaulum Gaus who was selling milk at Dudh Katta. They demanded money and he gave them Rs. 20. After some time again, some people including Rajendra Bagul, Shyam Kankaria and others demanded money but he refused. At that time, they assaulted him and Gulam Gaus fell down unconscious. There was a scuffle between Sakil and Javed on the one hand and some Shiv Sainiks on the other. In that, Sakil and Javed were assaulted and were chased by a Hindu Mob. Immediately after this incident, Hindus and Muslims started pelting stones at each other. A few more incidents where Shiv Sainiks abused Muslims, they had removed the wooden poles of the compound of Muslims and had thrown them in the bonfire on account of Holi.

L K Advani's rath yatra left a trail of communal riots behind – some say, 3000 riots as provocative speeches were made during the rath yatra. Shri R H Heera Man Singh Commission found that arrest of Shri L.K. Advani in the State of Bihar on 23.10.1990 started communal incidents in parts of Ranga Reddy District and twin

cities of Hyderabad & Secunderabad. The riots went on from October to December 1990.

During the 1992-93 communal riots in Mumbai, the Congress Government found itself helpless, more than responsible for the communal riots. The Chief Minister Sudhakar Rao Naik was twiddling was wholly unprepared for the demolition of the Babri Mosques and its aftermath. Turning to the events of the January 1993, the Justice B N Srikrishna Commission's view was that "though several incidents of violence took place between 15th December and 5th January 1993, large-scale rioting and violence was commenced from 6th January 1993 by Hindus brought to fever pitch by communally inciting propaganda unleashed by Hindu communal organizations and writing in newspapers like Samnaa and Navaakal. It was taken over by Shiv Sena and its leaders who continued to whip up communal frenzy by their statements and acts and writings and directives issued the Shiv Sena Pramukh Bal Thackeray. The attitude of Shiv Sena as reflected in the Time magazine interview given by Bal Thackeray and its doctrine of 'retaliation', as expounded by Shri Sarpotdar and Shri Manohar Joshi, together with the thinking of Shiv Sainiks that Shiv Sena's terror was the true guarantee of the safety of citizens', were responsible for the vigilantism of Shiv Sainiks. Because some criminal Muslims killed innocent Hindus in one corner of the city the Shiv Sainiks 'retaliated' against several innocent Muslims in other corners of the city." The Commission further observed that "from 8th January at least there is no doubt that the Shiv Sena and Shiv Sainiks took the lead in organizing attacks on

Muslims and their properties under the guidance of several leaders of the Shiv Sena from the level of Shakha Pramukh Bal Thackeray who, like a veteran General, commanded his loyal Shiv Sainiks to retaliate by organised attacks against Muslims".

Justice B N Srikrishna appropriately observed that the Ayodhya Controversy was heating up where the Hindutva leaders were strongly appealing to the Hindu sentiments of the people. L.K. Advani's Rath Yatra, which started from Somnath Temple, was on its way to Ayodhya, wherein it gathered a huge crowd along with it. On 6th December 1992, the worst day in the post partition era, Babri Masjid was demolished and it sparked off what were the bloodiest days Mumbai had ever witnessed before. Shiv Sena organized celebration rally as the news of demolition of the Babri Masjid percolated on 6th December, the day of demolition.

Conclusion

Justice Ramanand Prasad (Hon'ble Chairman), Justice Ram Chandra Prasad Sinha and Justice S. Shamsul Hasan (Hon'ble members), of the 5 member Commission of Inquiry appointed to look into the 24th October 1989 communal riots in Bhagalpur made some pertinent observations – "We have set out extensively various factors which attributed to the ultimate outbreak of the communal disturbances. There were sufficient indications since more than a year before the commission of the riot. From what we have stated above, atmosphere of suspicion and hatred had been created between Muslims and Hindus of Bhagalpur in the sphere of the communal hatred, political aggrandisement and religious fanaticism and unjustified misunderstanding. The District

administration as we have said, suffered from culpable amnesia deliberate indifference and patent communal bias, incompetence in not anticipating the riot. Lack of impartiality in the District Administration also compounded the problem."

These observations broadly sums up the respective roles played out by the administration and the communal forces. Communal forces convert incidents of ordinary occurrence to build communal tensions and hold the entire community responsible for the incident in question. The build up goes on for days, and sometimes for months. Without the build up, there are no communal riots. It is here that Sangh Parivaar is culpable. Paul Brass suggests that an institutionalized riot system have been created since independence in certain regions, particularly in north and western states in India, which can be activated during periods of political mobilization or at the time of elections. Communal violence is far from being spontaneous occurrences. The production of a riot, Brass argues, involves calculated and deliberate actions by key individuals, like recruitment of participants, provocative activities and conveying of messages, spreading of rumours, amongst other specific activities. There are frequent rehearsals until the time is ripe and the context is felicitous and there are no serious obstructions in carrying out the performance. If the Congress party is guilty, it is for overlooking the existence of institutionalized riot system in various towns and cities of India. The Ramanand Prasad Committee aptly brings out the failure. Each riot and thereafter failure of the criminal justice system to punish the guilty strengthens the riot system and the organisation that

nurtures and sponsors it. Communal disturbances produce communal divide where there is none and deepen and widen the prejudices where they exist. Post communal disturbances, the RSS and the Sangh Parivaar work continuously to deepen the wounds and turn it into a festering one. Over the years the Parivaar has developed and perfected its institutionalized riot system. The riots too have become more lethal and destructive from minor and localized and urbanized incidents to regular cyclical events that can be sustained for over 72 hours and in case of Nellie, 1983 take lives of 3000 innocent citizens, Gujarat, 2002, that continued for over a month and caused loss of about 2500 lives and Kandhamal that was sustained for more than a month in a rural theatre killing 70 people.

There is no gainsaying that more communal riots under the Congress regime as compared to the BJP regime is a proof that Congress is communal. The BJP's double standards are exposed when they refuse to take any responsibility for riots that occurred under their regime, particularly under Modi in Gujarat in 2002. If the BJP is not to be blamed for the riots under their regime, how can the Congress Party be termed as communal on the basis of number of riots that occurred in their regime? Modi refuses to offer even regrets, let alone take the blame for the riots. On the contrary he uses the metaphor of "kutte ke pilley" (puppies) for the survivors of the 2002 pogrom. This is not to say that Congress is exactly secular.

It is only sustained effort for justice along with efforts to build peace that we shall overcome this deadly virus and build peaceful India

with meaningful development – but that is herculean effort to counter the prejudices and communal attitudes –

(Continued from Page 3)

only crossing the T's and dotting I's. Consequently, the economy is going haywire. If the ventures in the private sector can register a phenomenal growth, why not then the public sector undertakings?

Yet the worst is what the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the BJP are doing at Ayodhya. They were responsible for the demolition of Babri Masjid and the killing of hundreds of Muslims. They are trying to create a similar atmosphere by wanting to stage a rally which the state government has rightly banned. I wish the two parties were to show the same verve in getting justice for the Dalits, who are Hindus but undergoing all indignities and humiliations. They are not getting their due even in law courts.

The recent case is that a Bihar village, Laxmanpur, where the members of Bhoomihars (the landlords) killed 58 Dalits, including 27 women and 10 children. An upper caste judge has released all the 16 accused on the plea that there was no evidence. It is a travesty of justice. The lower court had sentenced the accused to life imprisonment.

If the High Court judge did not find any evidence he could have constituted a special investigation team (SIT) to work under its supervision to hold a fresh probe. The result of his judgment is that the Dalits have migrated from the village where they and their forefathers lived for years. What

not an impossible goal. The journey begins from realizing the true culprits and obstacles in the process.

Secular Perspective

has happened at Laxmanpur is the fate of Dalits all over the country. The equality before law, enshrined in the Constitution, is a farce.

Attention is now focused on the Supreme Court where an appeal has been filed against the High Court judgment. The Supreme Court would do well if it were also to look into the functioning of the Bihar High Court which is dominated by the upper caste.

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The Gold Rush in Unnao

Uday Dandavate

The events unfolding after the Archeology department of India started excavation work at the fort of Ram Bux Singh to dig out a hidden gold treasure, which a seer, Shobhan Sarkar, dreamt is buried under the fort make for a perfect Bollywood plot. It reminds me of the 1969 comedy Mackena's Gold. I hope someone in Bollywood is closely following a series of absurdities, ironies, and flat out opportunism of all the key stakeholders that is being unfolded on a daily basis in the media.

It's worth reversing the clock and taking a close look at the events of the past few days. The story unfolded when the seer said the spirit of King Rao Ram Baksh Singh, who was hanged in 1858 after rising up against British colonial forces, told him in his dream to take care of the 1000-tonne treasure hidden under the late king's fort in the northern part of Uttar Pradesh. Charan Das Mahant, a disciple of the seer and also India's Minister of State for Agriculture and Food processing industry, in the Congress party government immediately visited the area on September 22 and October 7 and asked the Archeological survey of India to begin excavations. Residents of the impoverished Daundia Khera village, who have no access to electricity, said they have long known about the treasure from stories told by their elders. A host of interested parties have already lined up to stake a claim to the treasure, believed to be in gold and silver.

Locals are hoping that Swami Sarkar's vision turned out to be real, as he is revered as God in this area because he has done a lot for this place.

Sensing an opportunity to ridicule the Congress government Bharatiya Janata Party's Prime Ministerial candidate took a pot shot at the Congress government by proclaiming, "The whole world is making fun of us. Someone dreamt and the government has gone hunting for gold. You bring back the money that the looters have stashed in Swiss banks. That would be more than the value of 1,000 tones of gold."

Offended by Narendra Modi's ridicule of the Congress party as an insult to his vision, the seer wrote and email to Modi asking "So much money is being spent by BJP on your branding and portraying you as the next PM. Where is all this money coming from? Is it white or black?"

Narendra Modi found himself in a jam. As a champion of "Hindu Nationalism" he could not afford to antagonize the religious community (Sadhu Samaj). A reprimand from a widely respected seer could, Modi realized, damage his prospects more than the political advantage he was hoping to gain from ridiculing the government.

After realizing his misstep, Modi embarked on a damage control exercise by publicly clarifying, "lakhs of people have reposed faith in seer Shobhan Sarkar over last

many years. I salute his austerity and renunciation". After paying his obeisance to the seer Modi tried to direct media attention to the second half of his original comment- giving importance to the need of getting back black money stashed away abroad, Modi demanded that the Centre should come out with a white paper on it. He conveniently dropped the "rather than listening to the dreams of some saint" from his clarification.

Well, Modi has proved to be a bull in the China shop for the BJP. Watching subsequent commentaries on the TV, it is hard to imagine the precarious situation both the Congress party and the BJP find themselves in, who are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. They would like to criticize each other, but in doing so they need to stay clear of offending the religious sensitivities of Indian population and the influence of the Sadhu Samaj over the electorate.

Will the hunt for gold go on? Will Modi have to do more than the words of respect he has expressed for the seer to assuage the feelings of the Sadhu Samaj? How will the story unfold? While the gold rush in Unnao does not seem to ebb, media is having a great time making political leaders squirm in front of the cameras by asking them hard questions.

In the recent weeks Mr. Modi has realized the need to woo the youth and culturally diverse India with progressive sounding rhetoric. In the

Rewari Rally he called the Indian army most secular community, later he tried to put people at ease on the Ram Mandir issue by proclaiming “We need to construct toilets first and then temples”, and now with a growing fascination with secular rhetoric he put his foot in the mouth when he indirectly heaped ridicule on

his core constituency- the religious fraternity.

The BJP must be rethinking if it did the right thing in dismissing Mr. L.K. Advani’s advise of not exposing Mr. Modi as a Prime Ministerial candidate too early. Let us hope that the Unnao fiasco will

only be a beginning of exposing the true contradiction between Mr. Modi’s public posturing and his real politics of harvesting the religious sensitivities and superstitious beliefs.

Bollywood should thank everyone in this unfolding story for laying out a script for a blockbuster movie.



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Vol. 68 No. 44
November 10, 2013

Let all flowers bloom

S. Viswam

Nehru vs Patel
 Kuldip Nayar

**The truth of
 the Indian economy**
 Pannalal Surana

RSS unmasked
 Qurban Ali

**Emerging dimensions of
 Disaster Management**
 K. S. Chalam

**A decadent society
 looks for treasure**
 Sandeep Pandey

A Call to Trade Unions
 D. K. Giri

A law for human dignity
 Harsh Mander

**Another SC Judgement
 in the Right Direction**
 Mahi Pal Singh

Whether we like it or not (most of us are apt to like it) we are caught up these days in the high jinks and high euphoric hype unleashed by and in the media over what is being termed the Sachin Tendulkar Farewell Tour. This means that our cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar is about to play in two matches which will be his 199th and 200th tests after which he will “retire”. We will not see him perform hereafter in any test matches in which India is a serious and official participant. He will be seen and heard and admired only in the margins and not on the pitch. The Sachin Tendulkar era in Indian Test Cricket is about to fade away into the dead sands of history.

A cricket fever and a Sachin fever have taken over Kolkata since the time Sachin landed there to play his 199th test. He will play his 200th, and last test match on his favourite pitch at his favourite home ground, the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai mid-November. Sachin has had an “illustrious career.” Over the years and decades, Indians have got accustomed to the “overboard” coverage that the national and international media have extended to him. The mere mention of his name is enough to send the media into a

state of high excitement and thrill. The extensive coverage that is being lavished on his farewell tour is proof that where Sachin is concerned, the media observes no rules, no limits and no restraints. Unsurprisingly, the general public does not grudge him this unique honour and position. He has contributed immensely and uniquely to the game of cricket and to Indian cricket. Nothing illustrates this better than Saurav Ganguly’s comment: “It is the way he played that set him apart from the rest.”

India has ever been a cricket-loving country. There is a historical reason for the partiality Indians show towards cricket. It is no secret that cricket is sport number one in all the countries liberated from British colonialism. Since cricket was the Englishman’s chosen game, the colonies were also willy-nilly forced to adapt to and adopt the game as their own. In a sense, it will be correct to say that Indians are as crazy about cricket as they are about film stars and celebrities. There is no bigger celebrity in cricket in India than Sachin and none bigger than Amitabh Bacchan in the film world. It is thanks to such celebrities that developments in the sports world and

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the film world rivet public attention the way they do in India.

Between the lines

Nehru vs Patel

Kuldip Nayar

Indian cricket has had many celebrities in the past who were as popular in their time as Sachin is today. Sachin has been “something and someone” different. As Ganguly said, he has been unique. The fact remains, however, that the contribution of the cricket celebrities to the game over the decades has converted India into a one-sport nation. For Indians, cricket is an obsession while all other sports are just that. No one grudges cricket the popularity it enjoys, but one would like opportunities to be created where patrons of other sports also produce stars. When one talks of cricket in India, many names come to mind, but one is stuck for an answer when it comes to other sports. We are sure only the closest students of Indian sports scene can name the leading Indian soccer, hockey, or volleyball stars. This is because an unfortunate combination of officialdom, general public and politicians who run various non-cricket sports organizations have neglected in the past and are neglecting today the promotion and development of non-cricket sports. Cricket also would have suffered a similar fate had not Indian cricket become a part of the international cricket grid.

Let the fuss we are making over Sachin’s departure from cricket remind us that while cricket and cricketers and cricket organizations/organizers are thriving, non-cricket sports are languishing. How long will they be allowed to occupy second or third citizen status? Let cricket thrive and prosper and flourish, but let other sports also advance and make a mark in the national and global sports world. Let many flowers bloom!

India’s interests would have been served better if Sardar Patel, in place of Jawaharlal Nehru, had been the country’s Prime Minister. This hypothetical possibility had been voiced by Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi as a poll campaign for the Bharatiya Janata Party’s prime ministerial candidate in the 2014 parliament elections.

Of all the leaders, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Nehru’s friend, guide and philosopher, came to the same conclusion after watching Nehru as an administrator. Azad was in Nehru’s cabinet and saw him from close quarters. Azad told his secretary, Humayun Kabir, that they should have made Nehru the country’s president and Patel its prime minister. Kabir and I were close friends. He recalled Azad’s observation when Kabir was the education minister in the Nehru cabinet.

By no stretch of imagination, Azad can be linked with Patel or his philosophy. During the national struggle, both ardent participants, were poles apart and made no secret of their stances. Patel was a pro-Hindu but strictly adhered to pluralism. Azad was secular through and through and boldly faced the charge of “Hindu show boy” that the Muslim League made against him. He did not flinch even for a second to say publicly that the formation of Pakistan would be injurious to the health of Muslims.

He would say before partition that the Muslims could walk proudly in the country with their heads held high that they were equal partners,

even though they were fewer in numbers. Once India was divided on the basis of religion, the Hindus would tell the Muslims that “you had taken their share and should, therefore, go to Pakistan.

Patel may not have commented on pluralism in unequivocal term in which Azad did. But I recall that when after partition I sought shelter in Delhi, journeying from my hometown Sialkot, part of Pakistan, I heard Patel warning Pakistan against the exodus of Hindus. He said that India would send out the Muslims in proportion to the Hindus ousted from Pakistan.

It was a strange logic of pushing the innocent Muslims living in India for the sins of Muslims in Pakistan. Even after 67 years of division, this approach has not been disowned either in India or Pakistan. Pakistan has ousted practically all Hindus. But the Muslims are around 18 crores in India. When there is a tension between the two countries, many Hindus refer to Muslims as Pakistanis. Little purpose will be served in pursuing this point because the wounds of partition are far from healed and the people in both the communities continue to be exploited in the name of religion.

Left to Patel, he would have had an exchange of population before accepting partition. Nehru was different. He did not mix religion with politics or the state. The distance in separation in their approach made Mahatma Gandhi, who led the war

of independence, to nominate Nehru as his successor. The Hindu-Muslim unity was a matter of faith with Gandhiji, not part of the policy.

Gandhiji and Patel came from the same state, Gujarat, ate the same food and represented the traditions of the state in many ways. Yet Gandhiji preferred Nehru to Patel. Gandhiji knew that Nehru even dreamt in English and that he was too much engrossed in world affairs. But Gandhiji also knew that Nehru would interpret his philosophy of Hindu-Muslim unity more faithfully and employ such methods to implement it that respected scruples and were non-violent and fair.

Patel's biggest achievement is that he got 540 odd princely states integrated to the Indian Union. Hats off to him for what he did. But he believed in the ends, not the means. Some states volunteered to join the Indian Union. But some of them showed resistance. Patel's secretary, V.P. Menon, had no compunction in admitting in his memoirs that the show of force brought round even the most recalcitrant.

The typical example is that of Travancore. It announced its independence and initiated the process of seceding. VP had an extra man in khaki when he went to the Travancore maharaja. The maharaja signed the instrument of accession. He explained subsequently that he did not want his family to suffer and spend years in jail.

Gandhiji was also confident that his secular ideals would be safer in the hands of Nehru. This was proved when Patel refused to release Rs. 64 crore to Pakistan. The sum was part of assets which India had agreed to transfer while agreeing to the partition details.

(Continued on Page 16)

The truth of the Indian economy

Pannalal Surana

P. Chidambaram, Finance Minister of India, beamingly announced on the eve of Diwali that the economy has turned around the corner. Welcoming the rise of about 50 points in the Sensex, he expressed relief on upward movement of Rupee in Dollar market and boastfully announced that both the current account deficit in foreign trade and fiscal deficit have been lowered to 4.80 per cent.

The very next day, official figures disclosed that during the first six months of the fiscal year 2013-14, fiscal deficit was 76 per cent of the total projected figure for the whole year. There was decrease of 0.1 per cent in the exports while imports increased by 0.5 per cent. The Finance Minister also went on expressing hope that amendment to Insurance bill to raise cap for foreign capital from 26 to 49 per cent will be passed in the winter session of Parliament. He is sticking to the belief that bringing in foreign capital is the panacea for all ills of our economy.

It seems our Finance Minister has not read the report of the speech of Dr. Man Mohan Singh, our Prime Minister, delivered before the General Assembly of the UN on 24th September last. He had said, "Till a few years ago, the world had taken for granted the benefits of the globalization and global interdependence. Today, we are being called upon to cope with the negative dimensions of those very phenomena." In a clear indictment of free market policies and deregulation which have brought the world to the present financial meltdown, Dr.

Singh added, "Economic, social and political events in different parts of the world have coalesced together and their adverse impact is now being felt across the countries and continents." The Prime Minister warned that "the world economy is in trouble." (Telegraph, 25-9-2013).

In parenthesis, it may be noted that a joke 'Singh visited the US and the American Government also shut down' is doing the rounds all over the world.

Finance Minister's esteemed colleague, Anand Sharma, Minister for Commerce, had to cancel appointment given on their request, to the representatives of the global player Wal-Mart, because the latter had terminated their partnership with Bharati Enterprises and were always raising issues one after another for getting more and more concessions. (Indian Express, 1-11-2013) This is not an isolated case. During the last few months, a number of multinationals have been indulging into similar practices.

With good monsoons, performance of the agricultural sector is expected to be good, about 8 per cent rise in production. Performance of manufacturing sector has improved a little, from 2.3 per cent of last year to 3.3 per cent this October. But the services sector is crumbling down. President Obama has extended Diwali greetings to the Indians all over the world but he has been exhorting the US businessmen to give priority to American youths in preference to the Asians. Looking from his point of view, it is good

(Continued on Page 7)

RSS unmasked

Qurban Ali

It's now very clear and evident that Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS) is no more a cultural organization as it used to call itself. It has now come out in open to compel its political wing, Bharatiya Janata Party to select its choice of prime ministerial candidate, i.e. Narendra Modi, and has started nationwide campaign to support him.

A just concluded three-day meeting of the national executive of the RSS held discussions on issues that would form the "core" of the electoral campaign to help the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) come to power in the 2014 general elections. According to a daily, *The Hindu*, "RSS (is) going all out to campaign for Narendra Modi in next general elections." The meeting of the all-powerful body of the RSS, opened on Friday, 26th October, 2013 at Kochi, held for the first time in Kerala, did brainstorming session prior to the next year's Lok Sabha polls.

The Hindu further reports "After securing the mandate within the BJP to name Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi as the prime ministerial candidate, the RSS is gearing itself to put its machinery to the best use in the coming general election. According to some RSS functionaries, the Ram Janmabhoomi row and building a temple in Ayodhya could emerge as key issues in the poll campaign. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has already stoked the emotive fire in U.P. by taking up programmes in and around Ayodhya, aggressively taking on the State government

and the administration. Indications are that the RSS, the ideological mentor of the BJP, may mobilise major Sangh Parivar organisations to actively campaign in the 2014 elections, which is being dubbed as a "make or break" effort by the RSS after having fully thrown its weight behind Narendra Modi. It was at the insistence of the RSS that Dr. Harsh Vardhan was named the BJP's Delhi chief ministerial candidate, dumping Vijay Goel, who was being projected as the party's face in Delhi where assembly polls are scheduled for the first week of December.

RSS Sarakaryavah (general secretary) Sureshbhaiyyaji Joshi issued a statement on the concluding day of ABKM (national executive) meet in Kochi and answering a question about RSS's involvement in electoral politics, said that 'RSS is not a political party and the organisation does not get involved in election politics, hence ABKM did not discuss the electoral politics. But, RSS believes that every voter is responsible and liable to vote. Therefore, Sangh workers will go for active campaign in this respect. That is the RSS view about the election.'

When Bhayyaji's attention was drawn to Congress leader Digvijay Singh's statement that RSS should join politics since they are openly supporting Modi, he said that RSS is a responsible organisation of the people hence decisions are taken accordingly; and BJP had selected Narendra Modi as their prime ministerial candidate. Answering a question regarding RSS's support to BJP, he said that "Sangh does not get

involved in day-to-day politics; but we have got some national missions for protecting the interests of the country and her men."

Now it's time for all those who believe in democracy, socialism, secularism, Constitution and values of the Indian national movement to think as to what would be the shape of Indian state after the election? Will it remain a democratic, socialist, secular republic or will it be converted into a 'Hindu Rashtra' of RSS's choice? What will be the status and fate of minorities? Will they be treated as equal citizens?

It is known to everybody that RSS does not believe in the composite culture of the country, in the ideology and legacy of our national movement, the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the Constitution created by the Constituent Assembly on the basis of values of national movement. During the national movement, the major difference with the RSS was over the issue of nationalism. Freedom fighters under the leadership of Gandhiji believed that every citizen had equal rights in the Indian nation. But the RSS and the Savarkarites came up with their notion of Hindu Rashtra. Mohammad Ali Jinnah too was a victim of a similar world view. He believed that India was made up of two nations, the Muslim nation and the Hindu nation. Savarkar too said the same thing.

The other major difference between the nationalist and RSS, was that nationalists dreamt of the birth of a democratic republic while the RSS claimed that democracy

was a western concept and that was not appropriate for India. In those days members of the RSS were full of praise for Adolf Hitler. Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, popularly known as Guruji within the Sangh Pariwar was not only the Sarsanghchalak (the head) of the RSS. He was its ideological guru as well.

There is amazing similarity between the thoughts of Guruji and the Nazis. One of Guruji's books, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, ran into several editions, its fourth edition having been published in 1947. At one point in the book, Guruji says, "The non-Hindu people in Hindustan must adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age-old traditions but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead – in a word, they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment – not even citizen's rights."

In other words, Guruji wanted to see millions of Indians treated as non-citizens. He wanted all their citizenship rights taken away. Incidentally, these ideas of his were not newly formulated. From the time (in the mid-1930s), members of the RSS were inclined to follow Hitlerian ideals. In their view, Muslims and Christians in India deserved to be treated the way that Hitler treated Jews in Germany.

The extent of Guruji's sympathies for the views of the Nazi party is evident from the following passage from *We or Our Nationhood Defined*: "To keep up the purity of the race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic races – the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by"

One may say that this is an old book, of a time when India was in the throes of the struggle for independence. But then there is his second book, *Bunch of Thoughts*. Here is a classic example from this "popular edition" which was brought out in November 1966: while discussing India's internal security problem, Guruji identifies three internal dangers. One is Muslims, the second Christians and the third Communists. In Guruji's view, every Indian Muslim, every Christian and every Communist is a danger to the nation's security. Such is the RSS ideology.

Now what is Guruji and the RSS stand on the caste system. They are supporters of the caste system while communists and socialists are its greatest enemies. There is a consensus in the country and majority of the people are of the firm view that there can be no economic and social equality in India until the caste system and the inequalities based on it are demolished. But Guruji says: "Another unique feature of our society was the *Varna Vyavastha* (caste system, the former occupation-based classification of society) which is today vilified as

Jati Pratha (a rigid caste system)." He adds, "Society was conceived of in the image of an all-powerful god, of four aspects, who was to be worshipped by different people in their own ways as determined by their different capabilities. The Brahmin was considered great because he was the purveyor of knowledge. The Kshatriya was considered equally great because he destroyed the enemies. The Vaishya was no less important than others because through agriculture and commerce he fulfilled a social need. The Shudra too was important for as he served society through his workmanship." Here it is very shrewdly being asserted that through his workmanship the Shudra is fulfilling an important social need. But Chanakya's Arthashastra, from which Guruji takes his inspiration, clearly states that it is the religious duty of the Shudras to serve the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas. In a clever subterfuge, Guruji replaces service of the upper castes with "service of society".

The fourth issue is that of language. Constitution favours promoting the languages of the people. All regional languages, after all, are indigenous. But what does Guruji have to say on this? Guruji says that for now Hindi should be made the common language for all while the ultimate objective should be to make Sanskrit the national language. He says in his *Bunch of Thoughts*, "For convenience, Hindi should be given primacy as our link language until such time as Sanskrit is adopted as our national language." Thus Hindi is merely for convenience, the ultimate link language is to be Sanskrit.

Lokmanya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and several other national

leaders were always in favour of the regional languages and never wished to impose Hindi on anyone. They would like to see Tamil as the prevalent language in Tamil Nadu, Telugu in Andhra Pradesh, Marathi in Maharashtra and Bengali in West Bengal. If the non-Hindi speaking states wish to adopt English, it should be up to them. But Sanskrit is the language of a handful of people, the language of a particular caste. Making Sanskrit the national language means the supremacy of a handful of people over others, something definitely to be condemned.

Fifth, the national movement for independence had accepted the idea of a federal state. But following partition, in a bid to strengthen the centre, the Constitution stipulated a concurrent list. As per this list, several subjects were made concurrent - subjects over which both the centre and the states have equal jurisdiction. What was originally meant to be under the domain of different states was included in the concurrent list only to strengthen the centre. Thus the federal nation-state with somewhat limited powers to the states came into existence. However, the RSS and its chief ideologue, Guru Golwalkar, have been consistently opposed to this basic constitutional provision.

These people ridicule the very concept of 'a union of states' and maintain that this Constitution, which envisages a confederation of states, should be abolished. Guruji says in his *Bunch of Thoughts*, "The Constitution must be reviewed and the idea of a unitary state should be written into the new Constitution." Guruji wants a unitary or, in other words, a centralised state. He says that this system of states should be

done away with. What he wants is one nation, one state, one legislature and one executive. In other words, he wants to abolish state legislatures and state ministries. That means they wish to see the rule of the stick. If they were to capture power, they would doubtless bring into existence a centralised state.

Just as Guruji rejected the concept of a federal state, similarly, he had no faith in a democratic system. He was of the firm view that democracy was a concept imported from the West and the system of parliamentary democracy did not jell with Indian thought and Indian civilization. As for socialism, that for him was a totally alien idea. He repeatedly said that all isms, including socialism and democracy, were alien ideas which should be rejected, that Indian society should be founded on Indian culture. In other words he has no faith in Constitution, parliamentary democracy, in socialism consistent with Gandhian principles through peaceful means.

While Guruji were against democracy and adult franchise, he was dead against giving any rights including voting rights to women. When Indira Gandhi became the country's first women prime minister in January 1966, M. S. Golwalkar wrote a nasty article in RSS's mouth piece *Organiser* dated 30th January 1966, and said "it is now evident that giving voting rights to women was a wrong and a futile decision. Being a Hindu, I am compelled to believe that we are going to face more difficult time in coming days. It is a historical fact that wherever a country is governed or ruled by a woman, there is bound to be lawlessness, inequality and anarchy". He further says "if a woman becomes ruler and she is a widow too, then

the destruction of the country is inevitable."

Another issue was of the National flag *Tricolour*, the flag chosen by the national movement. Hundreds of Indians sacrificed their lives, thousands bore the brunt of lathis for the honour and glory of chosen national flag. But surprisingly, the RSS has never accepted the *Tricolour* as the national flag. It always swore by the saffron flag, asserting that the saffron flag has been the flag of Hindu Rashtra since time immemorial.

Mahatma Gandhi and Congress party's apathy towards communal organization like RSS, the Hindu Maha Sabha and the Muslim League was not sudden. As far back as 1934, when it was in its infancy, the AICC had passed a resolution forbidding Congressmen from becoming members of the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha.

RSS has started exhibiting new love for the country's iron man, Sardar Patel and considering him an ally. But do they endorse or agree with the views of Sardar Patel about the RSS? Patel refers to communal poison spread by RSS that Golwalkar then headed. Patel told Golwalkar "As a final result of that (communal) poison, country had to suffer the sacrifice of the invaluable life of Gandhiji." In fact it was Sardar Patel who banned RSS after Gandhiji's assassination.

After the ban was imposed the then RSS Chief Guru Golwalkar was making frantic efforts to personally meet the prime minister Nehru to convince him of the innocence of his organization. Jawaharlal Nehru evaded meeting him in person but wrote to him "the central government

and provincial governments have received a mass of information in regard to the objectives and activities of the RSS. This information does not fit in with what has been stated by you in this behalf. Indeed it would appear that the declared objectives have little to do with the real ones and with the activities carried on in various forms and ways by people associate with RSS. These real objectives appear to be completely opposed to the decision of the Indian Parliament and the provisions of the proposed constitution of India. The activities, according to our information, are anti-national and often subversive and violent. You would appreciate, therefore, that mere assertions to the contrary do not help very much."

(Continued from Page 3)

politics. But our rulers should learn a lesson from him and return to the policy of self-reliance as preached and practiced by the Mahatma whose Samadhi is at a stone's throw from the palatial mansions of all these ministers.

It is reported that our PSUs have accumulated savings of about 2.5 lakh crores while those with the India Incorporated is 7.5 lakh crores of rupees. If the goal of full employment is adopted while planning development programmes and increasing public investment in agriculture and forestry enough demand for commodities will be generated which in its turn will stimulate activity in the manufacturing sector.

Most important issue demanding urgent attention is that of the inflation. Continuously rising rate of inflation is a consequence of increasing import of oil at similarly rising prices. Cutting down import as also consumption of fossil fuel is urgently called for.

A decadent society looks for treasure

Sandeep Pandey

What is going on in Unnao is atrocious. The ASI believing a Sadhu has started excavation for gold. People who have received modern education are supposed to behave rationally and possess scientific temper. They are not supposed to believe in superstitions or hearsay. Now without any justified reason ASI is acting on prophesy of a Sadhu. If this is how decisions are going to be taken then we don't need modern educated people in government. Sadhus can give directions for doing various things and employees with normal intelligence can follow that. We don't need experts on various subjects.

Although the ASI is saying that it is not acting on the prediction of Ssadhu and it is not digging for gold, it is carrying out the excavation for archeological reasons, message has gone out that we're looking out for gold. From the local Gram Sabha to the state government - all have already made plans of what to do with the gold when it is discovered. Some people are saying that we'll be able to get rid of the poverty of state and country with this gold.

Only a society which has lost faith in itself can resort to such things. We are besieged with various problems: poverty, unemployment, corruption, communalism, law and order, etc. And the government is not able to find solution to most of these. In fact, in many areas, situation is becoming worse. People have lost hope of redemption. The poor especially see no hope. In spite of a democracy and numerous poverty alleviation

schemes the condition of poor has not changed much. Because of corruption nothing reaches the real poor. Benefits are siphoned off by the undeserving people. Now corruption has become institutionalised and the black economy finances the politics of this country. All major parties have got accustomed to this system.

In such a situation a fatalistic society like ours starts believing in miracles. In fact, people think that only a miracle would solve their problems. The system cannot deliver results for them. They curse the government and curse their fate. The poor know that even if gold is discovered they are not going to get any portion of it. Like all the benefits of society it'll be cornered by the well-off and powerful. Even then they are expectantly waiting the announcement of gold discovery.

For the government it is very convenient. Citizens curious about gold would forget their own or society's problems. For example, the Unnao drama has diverted people's attention from the large scale displacement of Muslims which has occurred in Muzaffarnagar or from the possible involvement of Prime Minister in coal block allocation scam. So, it suits both the central as well as state governments. Once people's imagination is captured by the excavation process they forget about the non-performance of government. Since they have tremendous faith in religious personalities they tend to focus less on politicians for the time being.

Emerging dimensions of disaster management

K. S. Chalam

Another dangerous trend that is obvious is increasing mindset of religiousness. So much so that blind faith is also getting recognition. There is an atmosphere being built that people's (read majority community's) faith should be respected however irrational it might seem. There has been an increase in Hindu religious activity and celebrations. For example, one sees more Kanwaris on road now and people compete to set up stalls offering food as prasada on Bada Mangal (Tuesdays). Or when cyclone was to hit Odisha the various TV channels in addition to showing the preparations of the meteorological department and the military would also show people performing yagnya to stall the storm. These trends are blunting the rational thinking of people. The idea of promoting the opium of masses is that they don't question actions of the government, the rich and the powerful. The masses learn to accept everything as a matter of fate. Is it a coincidence that the increasing religious mindset has a growth parallel to Hindutva politics?

It started with Ganesh statues drinking milk. Once that experiment was successful the religious fundamentalists have laid out a plan to slowly convert the rational thinking of people into faith based mindset. This suits the ruling elites. Nobody will question their wrong doings. Aasaram Bapu's case is a good example. Most of his followers still continue to trust him. They think he has been falsely implicated. Even his women followers are not raising question on his sexual exploits. This is how the religious people will numb our minds.

(Continued on Page 9)

The recent Phailin super cyclone that created havoc on the East coast of India was tackled with ease by government agencies. There was little causality, probably limited to around 20. We must congratulate our Disaster Management agencies like the NDMA, IMD and Revenue departments of state governments in making the incident one of their routine tasks performed with alacrity. This has attracted the attention of the so-called advanced countries, including the UK and the USA where hundreds were killed in a recent cyclone. The Prime Minister met the functionaries of NDMA on 28th October and assured that some amount in each department of the government would be earmarked for disaster management. This augurs well for the country.

We had an opportunity to interact with some DGs of IMD in our official work in Delhi and learned that the job of a scientist in the division is very challenging given the resources. However, our experts excelled in the art of prediction by changing the methodology, using data of 30 to 100 years of observations and with the support of satellite communication. Andhra University being on the East Coast is one of the earliest to have started an independent Department of Meteorology and Oceanography contributing to the knowledge base on forecasting. Now our scientists are able to predict exactly when and where the cyclones would strike our coast. But, the post-cyclonic relief, rehabilitation and management seem

to be under criticism.

Cyclones and super cyclones are not new to the people of East Coast as they have been experiencing the harsh conditions from time immemorial and acclimatized themselves to such disasters. It is noted in some of the research studies (Odisha) that the fishermen of East Coast are more knowledgeable than the so-called civilized Europeans in the science of oceanography and had developed indigenous techniques during the ancient past. Some of the remnants are preserved in the naval museums with little attention paid to them by our historians.

The present torrential rains and heavy loss of property not only in Andhra's coastal districts but in Telangana and Rayalaseema regions of the state also call for a rethink on our cyclone preparedness and the approaches to mitigate disasters.

The present disaster management method to lessen loss of life and property seem to be short of latest developments connected to our situation and conditions. It seems the NDMA and other agencies are geared to diminish the impact of cyclones but not prepared enough to tackle the issues that arise after floods, landslides, etc. It is reported that the casualties during the post-cyclone scenario in the state has gone up to 50 and the loss of property worth Rs 3500 crores. The infrastructure, particularly road and rail links got devastated and passengers stranded at different

places undergoing colossal suffering. It is a regular feature on our East Coast that needs to be addressed to wholly protect not only precious lives but the livelihoods that sustain life and living.

Disaster is defined as the occurrence that causes wide spread destruction and distress. It is divided into manmade and natural. It is now difficult to clearly demarcate between the two as most of our wicked human activities in pursuit of wealth and luxurious living are resulting in erosion of natural resources leading to sudden outbursts due to imperious environmental load. Experts have identified around 60 categories of disasters spread into areas like space, ocean, land, technology, etc. for the World Congress on Disaster Management in Hyderabad to be organized next year. The Government of Andhra Pradesh in consultation with the NDMA has done an exercise on mitigation plan. Yet, the present floods and storms have resulted in loss of crops in 29 lakh acres and 2176 tanks, 9000 kms of roads damaged as per preliminary estimates. This brings us to the basic facts relating to the environmental capacity of the East coast and its subsequent wreckage.

Nature has developed its own protective system and people living on the coast have also equipped themselves with traditions and customs that relate to their environment. Fishermen living on the coast knew the importance of mangroves, a salt tolerant plant that remained as a protective stratagem. The Colonialists brought cashew and planted on the coast to arrest soil erosion along with other plantations to reduce the intensity of cyclones. Our modern policy makers found that they are outdated and useless techniques that seize precious

wealth and therefore advanced western models of development. They prescribe methods perhaps on the basis of their study tour of Amsterdam or Rotterdam or some dam-thing in Europe to replicate in India. The industrial, refinery, recycling, trade and other activities are prescribed on the coast by those sitting in a land-locked place like Delhi without perceiving the consequences in a tropical country.

The damage done to mangroves as per the latest Forest Survey Report is the greatest on the West coast particularly Gujarat coast and on the East coast in Andhra Pradesh. It is reported that we had 495 Kms of mangroves in 1987 and they have been reduced to 354 kms by 2005 and may be much lesser amount by this time after several SEZs planned on the coast. The consequence of this is experienced with surge in intensity of cyclones and floods. We could discern this from the data that show reduction in casualties while the value of physical damage increased from Rs 765 crores in 2003-4 to Rs 10000 crores in 2006-7.

It seems, the mandate of NDMA or the wings of disaster mitigation units of state governments have limited jurisdiction in the formulation of development policies. If it is not possible to provide a proactive role to NDMA and other mitigation machinery, why not they be instructed to conduct and or coordinate research for alternative sources of reclamation of resources? For instance, Rice Research centers are working on varieties that can survive in flood water; DRDO must be working on technologies that survive in floods, identifying vulnerable areas and sincerely rehabilitating the inhabitants, etc and propagate them. NDMA is not averse to original ideas. I have a curious

experience with the organization. I sent a proposal through National Human Rights Commission (as SR) when heat waves in Andhra Pradesh killed hundreds in the month of May-June to consider it as a natural disaster to enable governments to give calamity relief to victims. It was forwarded to the Prime Minister and the GoM seemed to have considered its inclusion under national calamity and the same was communicated to me recently.

Andhra Pradesh has the second largest coast and therefore prone to regular cyclones. One can hope that this unique setting could be innovatively planned to help benefit the people in general and fishermen in particular, devoid of impairing its bounty.

(Continued from Page 8)

The people who'll tell us about buried gold will get recognition not only by the people, including political leaders, but also by the government and Narendra Dabholkars will get killed. This doesn't bode well for society.

The other worrisome trend is deteriorating work ethics. A sense of commitment towards one's work and a sense of accountability towards society are decreasing. The educated are using their knowledge not for the benefit of society but for individual aggrandizement of wealth. This is the basic cause for corruption. When work takes back seat and easy money becomes driving force, the culture of hard work disappears. We don't want to set up our own factories or establishments. We want foreign direct investment in all areas of economy. We don't want to do the hard work. We just want to partake in the results. Such a society in interested in buried gold.

A call to trade unions

D. K. Giri

People all over the world celebrate work. Work is the basis of our living and livelihood. Work has many dimensions. In material terms, work gives an income which provides the means for living. Lord Buddha considered work to be noble, According to his teachings; work gives dignity, identity and contentment. According to Mahatma Gandhi, one of the seven deadly sins is wealth without work. It is said in some scriptures that work is worship and duty is God. Thus, work is the essence of life. Conversely, not having work or unemployment is worse than a curse. It erodes our dignity and makes us feel worthless.

Trade Unions are formed to defend workers and their interests. They demand decent working conditions along with the right to work. But the question to ask is: are they able to do so effectively? Looking at the rate of unemployment and the deplorable working conditions the answer cannot be a satisfactory one. Therefore, it is necessary that we identify the reasons for trade unions' ineffectiveness. It is also time to call upon them to reflect on their strategy for they are supposed to be the custodian of the very basis of our lives, the work.

Decent work is becoming scarce all over the world. Despite the fast creation of wealth in a globalised economy, unemployment is endemic in most parts of the world. Too many are unemployed or not paid properly for the work they perform. Many are working for their living in the so-called informal economy;

many are in precarious jobs, stripped of basic rights and any form of social protection. About 170 million children under the age of 15 are working instead of being in schools, and in some regions forced labour and even slavery are still happening. To defend people against such atrocious anomalies, we need trade unions. But only seven per cent of the workers are organized the world over. The trade union support base through membership is not growing, and therefore is clearly inadequate to defend the workers.

India has the second largest population in the world with 1.2 billion people. About 30 per cent of the world's working population is in India. But only about 27 million workers are unionized. As per the official records, over 10 million people are unemployed. Over 94 per cent of Indian workers are not organized or are in the informal sector. The number of child labour is over 60 million in India.

The main reason for the decline in power of trade unions is their lack of a strong political arm. The second reason is trade unions' inability to expand the scope of their activities and adopt a new paradigm. A Swedish social democratic party leader responsible for building trade union-political party interface in South-east Asia said: "it makes no difference how good you are at educating trade union activists, if the legislation in the labour market is not in favour, and if you are changing laws and structures, there is only one arena where you can do it, the

political arena. And if you have no political party that listens, you have to form your own. That is what we did in Sweden and that is what they have done elsewhere. Only then the change can be achieved throughout society."

Trade Unions have been active politically in the developed democracies. In Sweden, trade unions realized that the struggle at work place was not enough to change the society. The working class needed a political voice that could represent them and secure political decisions in their favour. So, the trade unions joined together to form the Social Democratic Party in 1889. The party, in turn, nine years later, in 1898, helped establish the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO). On the formation of the Trade Union Confederation, Hjalme Branting, chairman of the Swedish Social Democratic Party had said: "social democracy and the trade unions are the two sides of the same large underclass movement." In Norway, the Norwegian LO closely cooperated with the Labour Party. Now, LO makes financial contributions to the Labour Party and the Socialist Left Party. The Labour Unions in Denmark have had a close cooperation with the Social Democrats. Both Danish LO and the Party had the formal right to appoint two members each for each other's organization. In Britain, the trade unions played a big part in formation of the Labour Party in 1900. In fact, the trade unions controlled the party until the 1990s through their 'block voting system', which meant that

the trade union representatives could vote collectively on the basis of the size of their membership. That is how, at the Labour Party Congress, the trade unions outnumbered the other delegates, including the elected representatives, and influenced decisions.

It may be noted that the cooperation between the trade unions and the parties in Europe has thinned out for various reasons. Norway LO has a new approach called Trondheim model, named after a town in Norway. According to this model, the trade unions present their political demands and then give their backing to the political parties that support those demands. Although other Scandinavian countries remain committed to the political parties on a long term basis, there has been a gradual dilution of cooperation between trade unions and political parties. The reasons for erosion in relationship are many and varied. One major reason is that the nature of work has changed, so has the relation between the employer and the employed. It is no longer only that of confrontation; but is now based on cooperation and mutual understanding between labour and management. Moreover, current issues facing the workers require an expanded approach, not just 'collective bargaining' by the trade unions on wages.

In India, the trade unions work as the front organizations of political parties, not the other way round. They are like the farmers' bodies or women and youth organizations of political parties. The trade unions do not create or control politics. They do not also show much political interest or provide leadership to the parties. A few politically active trade union leaders are co-opted by political

parties. That trend has not helped the growth of trade unions or made them effective and visible. Only about 6 per cent of the workers in India are unionized. In a highly politicized country like India, political activism and affiliation is the key to individual and institutional growth.

Major trade unions like INTUC, BMS, CITU, and AITUC are front organizations, respectively of Congress, BJP, CPM and CPI. Only one of the big trade unions, Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) is unattached, although it has sympathy for and an informal association with Social Democrats. It has invited social democrats to be its presidents and so on. But is that enough? Talking only of HMS, a credible and experienced labour union like HMS should prop up and actively support a political party. With its discipline and credentials, it could make efforts to bring about the much-needed unity of social democrats in India. Social Democracy, the most credible and viable ideology is party- politically weak in India as its adherents are fragmented, unfortunately, on non-political grounds. HMS could play a major role in reuniting and consolidating the social democratic forces in the country.

A new Global Deal between Capital and Labour is advocated globally by the Progressive Alliance, created last May as the new incarnation of Socialist International. This gives progressives in India the opportunity to be a part of the international campaign and to attempt a new political alignment in India. The objectives of this campaign are: to fight against the illegitimate and indecent working conditions, to redefine the interface between the capital and labour,

and to expand the scope of their interaction. The principle guiding the campaign is that decent work is basis of decent life, and of social justice. The campaign requires the campaigners to be focused on: creations of productive and decent employment, respect for workers' rights, implement social protection for all, and realize the potential of social dialogue. The last one relates to the expansion of scope of work for trade unions that go beyond the traditional approach of collective bargaining. Stakeholders in politics and economy need to commit themselves substantially to social dialogue and follow up on its outcomes and recommendations. It is evident that in many crises -situations, social dialogue not only contributes to peace and harmony, it has visible effects on stabilizing the economy and communities.

The Progressive Alliance, an international body of social democratic political parties, think tanks, trade unions, and civil society organizations, is leading this campaign world over. It suggests that the guiding principles of decent work agenda should not only be applied to national level, "they should be an integral part of the policies of the main actors of global economic and social governance". Will the trade unions in India respond to this call?

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Books

M. N. Roy simplified

Niranjan Haldar

The two books by M. N. Roy, which were out of print for decades – *From Savagery to Civilization* and *Materialism* – have been summarized and simplified by Vinod Jain for general public, having lesser command over English and published by Renaissance Publisher Pvt. Ltd, 15 Bankim Chatterjee Road, Kolkata- 700 073. Shri Jain has put the summarized material in Roy's own words as far as possible.

The first book is the history of scientific, philosophical and technological development that moved man from the primitive society to modern-day civilization. The book begins with the description of Aryan civilization of India – the development of slavery and caste system, the rise of Buddhism, of the merchant class and the advent of machinery. Shri Roy has narrated how the scientists, mathematicians, Astronomers and philosophers in Europe faced the hostility of the church. Bacon was sent to jail, Bruno was burnt alive, Copernicus escaped punishment because of his death earlier. The contribution of Galileo, Descartes, Archimedes, Leonardo de Vinci and Newton, etc. are described in detail. The development of science and technology changed the society as well as social thinking.

For the Euro-centric background of the book, M. N. Roy, could not be blamed. Because, at that time, the concept of the world was Euro-centric. In 1900 AD, Europe produced 77 per cent of the world's manufacturing output. The renaissance and the subsequent development of scientific theories in Europe suppressed the knowledge of Arab Civilization and its contribution to mathematics and medical sciences, though Roger Bacon was

influenced by Arab philosophers. Ancient civilizations in Asia, Maya civilization in South America, and old African civilizations were hardly known in Europe at that time. Basil Davidson's "Old Africa Rediscovered" was published in 1960.

Like other Marxists, Roy described Karl Marx as the only person who understood the process of the capitalist development. Two German economists Max Weber, and Warner Sombart, and an Indian economist – Dadabhai Naoroji had also explained the process of development of capitalism from different perspectives. Their views are partially valid. It may be mentioned that Marx himself wrote in a Russian magazine in 1877: "My historical sketch (in Kapital) was the genesis of Capitalism in western Europe." He did not consider it as universal theory. (Quoted in Soviet Russia by Jacob Miller, London., 1953, p. 154)

Roy described Owen as a reformist (p.51), which is not correct. Like Marx and Engels, Roy at that time could not consider 'cooperative' as a form of ownership, apart from private and government ownership. Owen wanted to replace capitalism by cooperative enterprises (*The New Groundwork of British History* by Warner Marton and Muir, 1943, p. 830). He was the first British Socialist.

Shri Jain's addition of 10-pages of references to 66 thinkers in this book is testimony to his scholarship. He really did an excellent job.

The second book, *Materialism*, contains nine chapters: Philosophy, Metaphysics and Theology: the

origin of Materialism. Materialism in Indian Philosophy: Rationalism: Rationalism and Idealism: Post-Hegelian Philosophy: Modern Materialism; The Crisis of Materialism: Materialism and the Twentieth Century Physics: Materialism and Practical Idealism.

From the origin of materialism in European thought. Roy writes: Descartes liberated philosophy from the fetters of theology. Nothing should be accepted as true until it was proved and the standard of proof was not authority, but reason. In its fight with Religion and Theology, Rationalism has developed into Materialism.

The readers may question why the Theory of Relativity found a place in this book. Roy answered: The Theory of Relativity reduces the entire cosmic scheme including Space, Time, Mass, Motion, Force, and Energy into one single category-Matter".

Shri Jain added 54 references in nine pages of this book which would help the readers to know the short life-history and the contributions of scientists and philosophers of Europe and Asia. Unfortunately, Einstein's name is missing from the list of references.

What was said about the contribution of Shri Jain in the first book, applies to the second book also.

The two books help to understand why Einstein described M. N. Roy as a Physicist in his letter to the British Government, when Roy was in jail.

A law for human dignity

Harsh Mander

More needs to be done to enforce the law banning manual scavenging.

This monsoon, India's Parliament passed a law of enormous social significance prohibiting and punishing manual scavenging, which remains the most degrading form of untouchability and caste discrimination in the country. This is not the first time this practice was outlawed: untouchability and forced labour were forbidden in the Constitution itself and, in 1993, a law was first passed making the employment of people to clean dry latrines with their hands an offence punishable under law with a fine and imprisonment.

However, this law was weak in letter and poorly implemented. Governments themselves flouted the law with impunity by operating public dry latrines and employing manual scavengers to clean these. They falsely reported full abolition of manual scavenging and almost no one has been punished in 20 years of the law. If this humiliating practice has declined, it is because organisations of manual scavengers themselves have bravely battled the practice, publicly burning baskets that they deployed to carry human excreta on their heads, and demolishing dry latrines.

One of the demands of organisations of manual scavengers was for a more stringent law, in which ending this practice was acknowledged to be a matter of human dignity and not merely of sanitation. Introducing the Bill in Parliament, Minister Kumari Selja described the practice as 'dehumanising', 'inconsistent with the right to live with dignity' and a 'stigma and blot' on society. She also admitted that all State governments

were in a 'denial mode' about the persistence of this social evil. The law passed by Parliament on September 7, 2013, corrects some of the infirmities of the earlier law, but still has many gaps.

The strength of the new law is that it is a central law, binding on all States, and not a State law requiring endorsement by State legislatures, which sadly took 18 years for the 1993 law. It recognises the 'historical injustice and indignity' caused to people forced for generations to perform this degrading work, and imposes strict penalties for its further continuance and a package of rehabilitation.

This law is more comprehensive than the past one, and brings in both the Railways and sewers into the ambit of its definitions and prohibitions for the first time. The earlier law did not cover cleaning of excreta from railway tracks, nor hazardous and demeaning practices in which sanitary workers were forced to enter sewer lines and wade in human excreta. Technical options exist today which can ensure that no human contact with excreta is necessary. But Railways and municipalities have refused to make the investments necessary for human dignity of the sanitary workers, and the new law does well to bring them under the law. However, there are still many escape clauses built into the new law, which allows governments to continue these old practices as long as they introduce 'protective gear'. There should be no compromise that both Railways and municipal administrations must upgrade technologies to ensure that no human being is forced to come into contact with human excreta as they perform their duties.

The new law requires every local authority to carry out a survey of unsanitary latrines and manual scavengers within its jurisdiction. However, the experience with the 1993 law has been that State governments have greatly under-reported the prevalence of manual scavenging, and mostly continue to be in denial. Having declared that manual scavenging has been eradicated, officers reject community findings that these latrines and manual scavengers exist, even when confronted with strong evidence. If government and community activists conduct separate surveys, it is most unlikely that they will agree on most of the findings, and the time-bound eradication of the practice will be impossible. Therefore the rules should mandate a joint survey of dry unsanitary latrines and manual scavengers by designated teams of both officials and community members. There should also be provision for self-declaration by manual scavengers.

The new law provides that the employer shall retain full-time scavengers on the same salary and assign them to different work. It does not extend this protection to the large proportion of manual scavengers — including those employed for sewers and the Railways — who are contract and casual workers. The rules should clearly lay down that no person who is employed in casual, contract or regular employment in any of these tasks will be terminated, and instead will be redeployed in non-manual scavenging related tasks.

Finally, the law is still weak in specifying the duties of the State to rehabilitate with education, housing in mixed colonies, pensions, grants and soft loans, vocational

(Continued on Page 15)

Another SC Judgement in the Right Direction

Mahi Pal Singh

In a significant judgement on 27 September 2013 in the PIL case filed by the PUCL in 2004, "PUCL vs Union of India", the Supreme Court of India has upheld the right of the Indian voters to reject all the candidates in the parliamentary and state legislative assembly elections if they feel that none of the candidates fielded by various political parties deserve their vote. Accordingly the Court has directed the Election Commission to provide a "NONE OF THE ABOVE" or (NOTA) button in the Electoral Voting Machines (EVMs) through which the voter can register his displeasure regarding the fielded candidates. The Election Commission has also taken steps to include this NOTA button in the EVMs from the next assembly elections to five state assembly elections due in November/ December 2013. With this an important milestone in electoral reforms empowering the citizens of the country to elect clean and untainted representatives to the legislative assemblies and the Parliament has been achieved.

The judgement has been welcomed by the civil society and others who have been agitating for electoral reforms to make our democracy truly representative of the will of the people which the political parties and our elected representatives have been neglecting with impunity sometimes reaching the stage of sheer arrogance of power. Now the political parties will have to take note of the will of the people as expressed through the NOTA button if they persist in fielding candidates with a record of serious criminal cases like dacoity, murder, rape and corruption. The Supreme Court has observed in its judgement that "Negative voting would gradually lead to systemic

changes as political parties will have to respect the will of the people in selecting their candidates." In a democracy the will of the people as expressed through the voting machines is of paramount importance because it is the expression of the will of the ultimate sovereign and neglecting this will of the people can be detrimental to the interests of the political parties who dare to do so. It is also hoped that more and more voters will come out to vote, who did not do so earlier because of their disgust of the candidates fielded by the political parties, and who felt completely helpless to express their dissatisfaction and disgust against such candidates because they had only two options - either not to take part in the electoral process at all, which deprived them of their legitimate right to elect their representatives or, worse still, to vote for one of the candidates however strongly they felt against him/her. The 'right to reject' existed earlier also under the Conduct of Election Rules 1961, Rule 49-O, but the voters had to lose their privacy of vote because they had to make a declaration to that effect in form 17A, which could even endanger their lives as they could become victims of the ire of candidates who would feel EDITORIAL: Another SC Judgement in the Right Direction - Mahi Pal Singh (1) Inside : ARTICLES, REPORTS, AND DOCUMENTS: A Half-Baked Measure - Judicial Appointments Bill Needs A Calm Discussion -Rajindar Sachar (5); PUCL Jharkhand FF Report on Alleged Mango Encounter (7); Army's Right to Rape and Kill Must Go if Northeast is to be Part of India - T J S George (12); Civil Liberties & The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act: Mahi Pal Singh (13); Foeticide and dowry real killers of women in western

Uttar Pradesh - Ashish Tripathi (16); Report of NCHRO Public Hearing at Jola Camp at Muzaffarnagar (18); NCHRO Preliminary Report of Fact Finding Inquiry on Muzaffarnagar Riots (20). PRESS STATEMENTS, LETTERS AND NEWS : PUCL Press Release on Supreme Court's Judgement on 'NOTA' (3); You cannot take the voter as a dummy: Sanjay Parikh (3); People's Movements Welcome Supreme Court Judgment on "Right to Reject" (4); Message read out in the Conference against Repression, Allahabad, on behalf of V. Suresh (6); Seminar on "Human Rights and Fake Encounters": Nishant Akhilesh (11); CRPP Statement on The Arrest of Jayeeta Das (17); NOVEMBER 2013 Rs. 10 PUCL BULLETIN, NOVEMBER 2013 2 outraged at their rejection by the voters. The SC judgement provides for the protection of the privacy of the voters' 'expression of will' which was also very important given the number of anti-social elements contesting elections at present. Besides, to vote according to his/her free choice is the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression of the citizen under Article 19(1) and Article 21 grants him/her protection of life and personal liberty which can be ensured only if he/she is able to exercise the right to vote in secrecy without any fear or risk of losing that protection.

Some skeptics question the utility of the right to reject - maybe their experiences with the political class have been too bitter in the past. Some people had also questioned the utility of the earlier judgement of 2003 in another PIL filed by the PUCL in which the Supreme Court had ruled that all the candidates contesting an election to the Parliament or State assembly would be required

to declare his/her financial assets and criminal anecdotes. It is true that in spite of that provision of declaration, the political parties have continued to field tainted candidates with serious criminal charges against them. These parties may not have changed their process of selection of their candidates, but today the voter has an informed choice at the time of voting. At least the voter knows who and what the candidates presented before him/her are even if his/her hands have been tied so far to vote for one of them even though that candidate also has serious criminal charges against him/her. Within a period of ten years since 2003, the question of the presence of criminals in politics and legislative houses has acquired gigantic proportions in public discourse and reached its culmination in another earlier SC judgement of 10 July 2013 whereby the Court ruled that if an MP or MLA was convicted in a serious offence and sentenced to two years of imprisonment or more, he/she would lose his/her seat immediately. Today, Rashid Masood, Laloo Prasad Yadav and Jagdish Sharma have lost their membership of Parliament after being convicted in corruption cases. Things move slowly in a democratic system but it cannot be said that they do no move at all. The latest SC judgement on the right to reject is another step forward in the right direction, a pathbreaking judgement, and its effect may take a few years to become visible. If the political parties do not mend their ways and provide clean candidates, a time will come when more and more voters will exercise this right and the day more than 50% voters reject all the candidates in the fray, the Election Commission, the government of the day and the Parliament will have to consider framing laws to countermand that election and to debar the participating candidates from re-contesting that election, because that will be a clear and incontrovertible evidence of the

'expression of the will of the people' done in a constitutionally legitimate manner which nobody will be able to neglect. Of course, such a law does not exist today. But it cannot be said that such a law will not be framed in future. We have to remember that public pressure has forced the government to pass a strong Act for the protection of women in the wake of the powerful and widespread mass protests across the country against the 16th Dec 2012 gang-rape case of Nirbhaya in Delhi, to introduce the Lokpal and Food Security Bills in Parliament, and to withdraw the ordinance which was brought to circumvent the SC order of 10 July in an attempt to enable convicted MP and MLAs to continue as legislators till the final rejection of their appeal by the highest court, This is the power of the people that democracy grants to them and that has to be respected by all political parties and the government.

People ask: "What next after the 'right to reject'?" Obviously, it will be the 'right to recall', the next and logical step forward. A time will surely come when people will demand accountability from the ruling class. The 'right to recall' will empower the citizens to withdraw the nonperforming legislators, unlike at present when the elected representatives do not care to know the 'will of the people' who elect him, and the citizens feel helpless and at the mercy of the very persons they elect, till the next elections when they get a chance to show their satisfaction or anger against the acts of omission and commission by their elected representatives. They do not know whether the next representative will care for them, or they will have to wait for another five years to express their will again. The 'right to recall' will empower them to punish those elected representatives who betray their faith. The argument of non-viability of holding re-elections and the cost of holding re-

elections, in case of mass rejection of candidates through the exercise of the 'right to reject' or the 'recall' of the non-performing representatives, by politicians and the government is a lame argument because the cost of holding elections/re-elections is the price which the people pay in exercise of their right to live in a democratic polity. Has any politician ever questioned their right of contesting election from more than one constituency and vacating of more than one seats from where he/ she gets elected, thereby forcing the cost of holding re-election in the constituencies thus falling vacant? Does that not put an extra and avoidable burden on the people? If a proposal were to be made that a candidate can contest an election from one constituency only, all politicians would cry foul and say that it would deny them their democratic right to seek election. Then the cost factor would not come to their mind. By the same argument, it is the right to every citizen of this country to have a clean representative of their choice and to recall him/her if he/she does not perform according to their aspirations. The cost of holding re-elections in such cases will be negligible compared with the dividend of holding the political parties and the elected representatives 'accountable' to the voters without which a democracy is phony and not real.

—PUCL

(Continued from Page 13)

and computer education. These entitlements should be spelt out in careful detail, if the transition of manual scavengers and their children to a life of social equality and dignity is to be accomplished.

They have waited far too long for the fulfilment of the promises of India's Constitution, of equal citizenship. They should wait no longer.

—The Hindu

(Continued from Page 3)

Patel argued that how could he release the money when India and Pakistan was engaged in a war over Kashmir. Gandhiji had to go on fast unto death to make Patel relent.

The extremist Hindus had vitiated the atmosphere of amity over the sum of Rs. 64 crore. The society was sought to be polarized. They criticized Gandhiji again and again for being anti-national and anti-Hindu. The RSS, the fallout of Hindu Mahasabha's philosophy of Hinduva, hatched a conspiracy and shot Gandhiji dead.

Patel was quite right in banning the RSS and blaming it for disturbing the atmosphere of secularism. Once again the slant of Patel towards the RSS made him withdraw the ban once the organization changed its character to become a cultural organization. This was only a smokescreen behind which the RSS used the Jan Sangh-BJP for its political activities. Modi is its candidate. In fact, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has openly said that the outfit would be participating in politics. Nehru had many a time exposed its duplicity.

When Azad thought Nehru's suitability for the office of President, he was confident that the communal forces had been crushed. He commended Patel's quality of being pragmatic and practical. Azad had come to have full faith in Patel's secular aptitude. That Modi is using Patel's image for polarizing the society is unfortunate. Practical as Patel was, he would have understood that India's destiny lay in a democratic, secular polity. He, as prime minister, would have deepened its foundation more firmly than Nehru.

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Vol. 68 No. 45
November 17, 2013

Expensive jingoism

S. Viswam

Relief after Kayani's retirement
Kuldip Nayar

Capital market frauds in India
K. S. Chalam

**Rahul Gandhi
hoist with his own petard**
Nitish Chakravarty

A new politics for development
D K Giri
Nivedita Giri

Why the RBI is a failed doctor
Bharat Jhunjhunwala

**Identity and Citizenship:
An Indian Perspective**
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There were more reasons favouring Indian participation in the Commonwealth summit in Sri Lanka at the prime ministerial level than those supportive of our Prime Minister's decision to skip a trip to Colombo. From all accounts, Dr. Manmohan Singh decided not to attend the meeting against his own better judgement. Left to himself, and his Office and the External Affairs Ministry, he would have gone to Colombo. But, unfortunately, he responded to calls of political expediency and decided to sacrifice India's national and regional interests, including strategic, and stayed away. India is of course represented in Colombo at the Chogm by the foreign minister, but it is not the same thing. Clearly India lost a good opportunity to assert its interests and concerns in an area where its major regional power status called for more than a symbolic or formal representation. The Prime Minister would no doubt have been aware that his decision to skip the Colombo meet would please China and Japan, and of course Pakistan, no end. It is precisely opportunities of this kind that open the doors to India's (and Sri Lanka's) neighbours to deepen their ties with the island nation and spread their influence in this part of the world.

Sri Lanka is supposed, by virtue of history and geography, to be in India's sphere of influence. Sri Lanka was able to play India against China and Pakistan and play the role of the clever monkey adjudicating between two pigeons. Nonetheless, New Delhi still was able to exercise some influence over Sri Lanka on the basis of shared mutual interests, and more so, because it was the immediate big power surrounding Sri Lanka which is strategically located. Now, after the latest decision, that hold is bound to weaken. Incidentally, that hold is already under strain following the heightened involvement of China in Sri Lankan economic development, a feature candidly admitted by the Minister in the PMO, Narayanaswami the other day. The political expediency to which Dr. Singh succumbed was the product of sheer opportunistic, short-sighted and votebank calculations of the two regional parties of Tamil Nadu. They vied with each other in indulging in competitive jingoism to raise the demand for "total boycott" of the Chogm session by the Government of India. Inspired by the ruling AIADMK, the state assembly passed a resolution calling for a total boycott, a demand which the DMK endorsed since not to do so would have been electorally

Between the lines

Relief after Kayani's retirement

Kuldip Nayar

suicidal. Ostensibly, the demand was in support of the political protest against the alleged atrocities against Tamils and the LTTE by the Sri Lankan army during the last stages of the LTTE-Government conflict. The Tamil protest was in fact counter-productive of the overall cause of Sri Lankan Tamil interests. It was largely under Indian pressure, and some delicate diplomacy by our foreign policy and national security establishments, that Colombo agreed to hold elections in September to the Northern Provincial Council. The Tamil National Alliance won the elections and has formed a representative government in Jaffna headed by Justice Vigneswaran. The election marked the effectiveness of the 13th amendment proposal in the India-Sri Lankan agreement on devolution of powers. For the first time, a popularly elected government is in power in Jaffna and signifies the beginning of ethnic reconciliation. The Tamil Nadu parties have ignored this most important development while pressing their demand for a boycott of Chogm. The wisest course for India, and one which had commended itself to all sections of the government before the Tamil Nadu assembly resolution, was for the prime minister to have attended Chogm and then responded positively to the Tamil National Alliance invitation to visit Jaffna. This would have served appropriate messages to both Colombo and the Tamil Majority provinces that India's interests in, and commitment to, Tamil interests in Sri Lanka are paramount and would not be compromised. Instead, India is having to be defensive about its decision. Predictably, newspapers have started speculating that China and Pakistan have sent congratulatory messages to Colombo hailing the Indian boycott!

Pakistan Army Chief Ashfaq Parvez Kayani's announcement to retire on November 29 was a lead story in his country's media. Some newspapers had bannered it. Opposition leader Syed Khurshid Shah welcomed the statement. In fact, there has been relief all over, including in India, that Kayani had announced his exit.

This was primarily because Kayani was considered an ambitious general. Moreover, it was believed that there might be another coup because such has been the practice in the past. But fortunately, Kayani had come out in the open on what his plans were. "I am grateful to the political leadership and the nation for reposing their trust in me and Pakistan Army this important juncture of our national history. However, I share the general opinion that institutions and traditions are stronger than individuals and must take precedence."

The perception about Pakistan is that the army can walk in whenever it likes. The coups first by General Mohammad Ayub, then by General Zia and finally by General Parvez Musharraf have given the impression that although the army goes back to the barracks, its influence does not wane.

This is true as well because even Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who has said that the PM is the 'boss', has been careful not to lessen the pre-eminence of the army. Since the Prime Minister, after election

through a democratic process, was thrown out by General Musharraf, Nawaz Sharif is understandably respectful to the army chief. Both the PM and Kayani are reportedly discussing who should succeed Kayani, a job which in a democratic country is settled by the government. Most pictures I see in newspapers show Kayani by the side of Nawaz Sharif.

Therefore, there was surprise as well as a sense of satisfaction when there was a cryptic press release from the Inter Services Public Relations that the chief of army staff would retire on November 29, when his extended tenure ends. In fact, when Prime Minister Yousuf Reza Gilani gave Kayani three years' extension there was rumours that Gilani had no choice as if the extension was at the point of gun. There was nothing like that. Gilani wanted a professional head to depoliticize the army, something which Musharraf had not done during the eight and a half years that he stayed in power.

Whether Kayani's retirement in a regular manner is enough of evidence to infer that there would never be a coup in Pakistan is not easy to say. But chances will lessen as the days go by because the people have more and more vested interest in election process. I find the leading politicians of different parties going on record as saying that the people would come on to the streets if ever the army tries to take over.

I wish it would be true. But my experience is different. When

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto assumed power in the wake of Bangladesh liberation war, he told me that “we have learnt from the history” and that the Pakistanis would revolt and hit the streets to stop the tanks if they ever came out. This was proved wrong when Musharraf took over.

The Pakistanis, like we Indians, want to rule themselves. But with almost a span of 50 years of military rule since the 66-year-old independence, democracy has not taken roots in the country. The people are too afraid. Today the situation has worsened because the army is the only force which has the wherewithal to fight against the menace called Taliban. The challenge would become bigger when the western forces leave Afghanistan next year.

I am intrigued by more or less the farewell statement that Kayani has made. He has said: “It is important that the military leadership in future also continues to play its unreserved role for strengthening of democratic system in the country.” That Kayani made the statement on October 12 to coincide with the military coup in which the elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was thrown out is significant. He announced his retirement on October 6 but delayed the statement by six days. I do not know what message he was trying to convey.

But Kayani’s use of words like military’s “unreserved role” for strengthening of democratic system conveys it all. The “unreserved role” means that the military is expected to act in a manner which is not written in any constitution, nor defined otherwise. The role is important to “strengthen democratic system” but not spelled out.

(Continued on Page 6)

Capital market frauds in India

K. S. Chalam

Indian economy of 2013 is different from 1953, and qualitatively even from 1993. The money market has slowly been transformed and the traditional usurers seem to have shifted their eye from pawn brokerage to stock exchange. In a short period they have reformed the capital market and the economy. The capital market is where buyers and sellers engage in transactions of securities like bonds and shares generally on a longer period of one year and beyond have now reached international standards. But, it was the government initiative and the Public sector that have provided the necessary background for industrialization and later globalization.

The year 1992 is a watershed in the capital market operations of the country. Harshad Mehta, a smalltime LIC representative turned sub-broker, was caught manipulating the Bombay share market. It was estimated that he got involved in manipulating around Rs 4000 crores in the share market, one of the earliest scams after globalization. But, Prof. Brahmananda who was given the responsibility to investigate and submit a report informed in one of his visits to Waltair that it was around Rs 70000 crores (more than one per cent of GDP and 76 per cent of turnover of market by one operator). Harshad could manipulate the market by trading in shares at premium with the help of a nondescript bank, Bank of Karad in Maharashtra, GDRs, diversion of funds and so on. He was in a way responsible for the establishment of Securities and Exchange Board of India, SEBI to oversee the operations of the share

market in India from 1993.

The volume of trade on SEBI and NSE has increased in leaps and bounds during the post-reform period. The market capitalization was Rs 188146 crores in 1992-93, had become Rs 912842 crores in 1999-2000 and Rs 12311459 crores in 2012-13. It means Rs 23 lakh crores more than our GDP. The market turnover of the share market was Rs 92461 crores in 1992-93, had reached Rs 2059219 crores in 1999-2000 and to Rs 2780968 in 2012-13 (rough estimate). The numbers are mind boggling, but that is the reality of our economy monetized and capitalized after 1992 with international corporates' participation and probably indirect control.

How does the share market operate and influence the economy is not even intelligible to economists who do not specialize in Finance (see Samuelson's remarks on derivatives). Therefore, the management experts or those brilliant engineering graduates who are squeezed into Finance through Management courses are now running the industry, yes industry. Most of the European and American Corporate Houses have almost given up industrial and manufacturing activities and are now concentrating on Finance. If one looks at the GDP accounts of these countries, one would notice that major part of their income comes from the service sector and within service sector, Finance and Banking activities in the world. We are told that the software business or services are a key activity relating to this sector and therefore, we quite

often see the honchos of IT hobnob with share market and financial sector. A few years ago a news item in English daily from Bangalore reported that Rs 800 crores were transferred from the city to a London Bank that was already closed and had stopped operations. We have not read anything about it thereafter.

It is not only through dubious operations of some MNCs including Indian companies that frauds are taking place, but some of the operations of these companies themselves are dubious. The chairman of SEBI, U. K. Sinha, in his address to the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Trade, Delhi last week spoke on corporate frauds in Share market. He has identified around five categories. They are 1. Structured trading where securities like, bond, loan, shares, etc are used in commodity finance by taking them as collateral is a non-standard trading, tends to involve in frauds. 2. Synchronised trading is dubious as the amount and orders on both the sides of buyers and sellers are identical. It is used to display the volume of trade. 3. Circular trading where particular scrip or scrips are traded by closely knitted entities to push the price. 4. Aggressive trading is done in large quantity and investment to capture the market. 5. Push the market by using market strategies of the product market (in share market).

Readers and T V viewers must have noticed the number of pages devoted to share market in regular newspapers, the time slots given to share market, media briefs. The whole infotainment today is really fantastic. The entire industry relies and survives on the corporate patronage connected directly or indirectly with big business houses. U. K. Sinha has narrated how the corporate world is involved in the

share business or IPO mislead the client/subscriber with wrong information by 'managing the media'. He has mentioned that some of them give specious information relating to the mergers, products, financial results, manipulation of balance sheets and several other innovative practices to dupe the customer. It is interesting to notice that Legal Firms are now very active in helping the corrupt through innovative ideas to avoid the present legal frame work. He said that every day SEBI gives around 100 alerts based on their sources and parameters on frauds but order investigations on eight cases. If we look in to the data of SEBI, only 102 cases of frauds like market manipulation, insider trading, takeovers, etc. were reported in 2102. However, SEBI could not cancel operations of any of the fraudsters except suspending 10-16 entities during the year 2012. It shows the vulnerability of the system.

There is another grey area that seems to have been responsible for the 2008 economic crisis in USA. It is called as the derivatives and forwards market. America became almost bankrupt due to the derivatives of the housing scam and is slowly recovering through Federal Fiscal policy intervention. India was one of the countries that were severely influenced by the trends and the impact seems to be now seen in the slowdown of growth. At the same time Indian operators and the Hedge Fund and money managers who were involved in this must have contributed to the knowhow of the business. It is reported in some section of the media (not prominently) that around Rs 7000 crores are involved in a forward market fraud where the poor and gullible farmers' money is locked - and lost. In fact, seven thousand crores is a paltry amount in a system

where one day's yield in wealth in the capital market (of some) is 1.2 lakh crores.

The size of our capital market in terms of operators consisting of brokers and sub-brokers is less than one lakh. There are about 7800 scrips out of which only 3000 are actively traded. We have around 1.8 crore investors who participate in capital market. The Sensex however is based on 30 scrips mostly the private corporates like Reliance, Tata, Infosys and ONGC. But the ordinary investor, the enthusiast, the villager, the NRI dependent, the pensioner, etc are not fully aware of the theatrics and the frauds that land them in bankruptcy and some of them sometimes silently commit suicides. How do the operators create frauds?

Public memory is very short and fails to recall that in the month of June, the NSE has issued a show cause notice to two brokers Inventure Growth and Securities and Prakash K Shah Shares and Securities who had put in orders 144 to 271 times their margin deposits. NSE has reported that one operator placed orders worth Rs 1083 crores and another Rs 960 crores when their annual income was Rs 40 to 50 lakhs. NSE seems to have initiated action that operators have contested and by now got relief in our wonderful emerging new judiciary. This is only an example and there are many such operators and companies that manipulate their accounts and records with designed data of mergers, innovations, financial results to influence the investor and get benefitted by the transactions in the share market. It is possible in India where only 25 percent of the scrips are available for trade and the rest are held by the companies or their proxies.

(Continued on Page 6)

Rahul Gandhi hoist with his own petard

Nitish Chakravarty

Rahul Gandhi is in a scrape with his quirky observations about Pakistan's ISI preying on Muslim youth in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar area in the aftermath of the communal disturbances a couple of months ago. Unlike many a politician Rahul has not trodden the familiar path of denying the remarks he made at election rallies in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan but stoutly defended them. Strange bedfellows as they are, BJP as well as self-styled defenders of Muslim interests were on the same page, disingenuously twisting the Congress vice-president's words to accuse him of baiting Muslim youth and fomenting anti-Muslim jingoism. The Election Commission, even while acknowledging that the underlying spirit of Rahul's speeches was to foster and promote communal harmony, has expressed displeasure at their "tone, tenor and content", and advised him to be "more circumspect in his public utterances".

The alleged violation of the Model Code of Conduct notwithstanding, the essence of what Rahul said is indisputably true. It is common knowledge that the ISI's mandate requires it to make use of every opportunity to create and nurture disgruntled elements for destabilising India. The Muzaffarpur disturbances provided such an opportunity and the ISI, true to its mandate, lost no time in seizing it. As a matter of fact the ISI's failure to do so would have invited retribution from the Pakistani establishment. Rahul Gandhi's remark about riot hit Muzaffarnagar turning into a hunting ground for the

ISI was a statement of facts. It did not have any trace of anti-Muslim bias and certainly was not intended to arouse hatred against Muslims and encourage non-Muslims [read Hindus] to attack fellow Muslim citizens.

Rahul was hoist with his own petard because of the vapid style in which he said his piece. By needlessly sourcing his information to an unnamed intelligence officer he himself added to his woes [ek intelligence officer aaye aur boley]. The facts are so obvious that everyone knew, without the aid of an intelligence officer, that the ISI would use the Muzaffarnagar riots to add fresh recruits to the army of terrorists it deploys against India. No one expects the ISI or other authorities in Pakistan to tell India about their moles in India. No government, India included, would identify its assets engaged in clandestine operations in another country.

Over the last ten years or so, especially since 26/11, Pakistan has consistently denied that ISI moles have any hand in terrorist attacks in India. On the contrary it says that instead of blaming Pakistan for acts of terror, the Indian authorities should look within for "home grown" mujahideen pledged to take revenge for all the "wrongs done to Muslims". It has never owned up responsibility for recruiting, funding, training and arming so-called home grown terror outfits such as the SIMI and Indian Mujahideen. Since the roots of many of these terrorists are

in this country, Pakistan's fib that it has no hand in stirring up trouble in India gains some legitimacy in the perception of foreign observers.

The "home grown" terror outfits have taken good care of Pakistan's interests and tried their best to conceal their links with Pakistan. According to *The Hindu* of November 9, 2013, the Indian Mujahideen, in a manifesto released in 2007, stated: "We are not any foreign mujahideen nor we have any attachment with neighbouring countries. We are purely Indian." Patently facetious, IM's claim conforms to Pakistan's policy decision to shift the onus for terror attacks in India to disgruntled indigenous elements and is clearly intended to pull the wool over Indian eyes.

Plenty of evidence is at hand about the involvement of Pakistanis in terror activities in India. Jishan Johar and Amjad Ali, who, along with Irshat Jahan, were bumped off by the Gujarat police in an "encounter", are suspected Lashkar-e-Toiba operatives sent from Pakistan for acts of terror in India. There are many others who have infiltrated into India from across the border. Key functionaries of terror outfits operating in India, even though of Indian origin, are all trained in Pakistan. But at the same time it is also true that a progressively increasing number of Indian citizens are swelling the ranks of jihadists at the behest of foreign terror outfits.

One must take with a pinch of salt the jihadists' argument that their

acts of terror are all for avenging the wrongs done to followers of Islam by so-called infidels/disbelievers. Nothing can be farther from the truth. The truth is that those who are consumed by the idea of jihad find it hard to co-exist with disbelievers, i.e., followers of other religions which, in their opinion, are no religion at all. Jihadists cannot put up with even liberal minded followers of Islam who do not share their time worn interpretation of Islamic laws nor can they adjust themselves to a democratic social and political milieu.

Even if one accepts for argument's sake that the terrorist attacks in India are acts of revenge, what about attacks on fellow Muslims in Pakistan and other Islamic states? Killing fellow Muslims in the name of true Islam has become a way of life in Pakistan and several other Muslim nations. When in early 2011 the Arab lands on the Mediterranean coast were swept by winds of change resulting in the overthrow of their dictatorial rulers - Zain el-Abidin in Tunisia, Muammar Gaddafi in Libya and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt - the world looked with awe. The Arab Spring was welcomed as the culmination of the urge for democracy and replacement of autocratic rulers with modern democratic states. But the mask was off in no time, for those who seized power were no votaries of democracy. Almost effortlessly they moved from despotism to Islamic obscurantism.

Can revenge justify the mindless bombings and killings going on for over a decade in Indonesia where followers of Islam constitute an overwhelming majority? Which infidel has trampled on Muslim rights in the Indonesian archipelago? No,

it is not revenge but a morbid desire to turn Indonesia into a country ruled by hidebound conservatives, who wish to keep women forever in bondage and where human rights are a utopia, that is driving the jihadists.

The ongoing civil war in Syria, the violence that is a daily affair in several West Asian countries, the revival of the cry for sharia laws in Pakistan, Indonesia and many other Muslim countries are signs that democracy as it is understood in India or Japan, Britain, Germany, France or the United States is anathema to jihadists. Only a naïve will agree that violence will abate if solutions were found for the major issues on the jihadi agenda or if the alleged wrongs done to Islam and its followers were undone. For Salafists and their ilk the war goes on and on against everyone who does not look at the world through their prism.

(Continued from Page 3)

Kayani has been concentrating on Kashmir. He has removed the demand for plebiscite and forsaken Musharraf's proposal to make the borders of Jammu and Kashmir irrelevant. During Kayani's time the violations of ceasefire have increased, as many as 100 in the last few weeks.

Kayani's vague words remind me of what General Zia told me during his dictatorial regime. General Zia-ul Haq argued that the army had every right to intervene if the situation went bleak. I told him you had come in whenever you wanted to do. Where did the worsening of situation arise and where was the justification?

Kayani should know that the elected government has the final word. Most of Pakistan's problems

are the doings of the military. The Taliban whom it is trying to eliminate in its own country is there because of the military's thinking that the group fired by the ideology of jihad would come in handy to keep India on its toes. Today Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has become such a Frankenstein that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has promulgated an ordinance of special powers to confront the Taliban.

Kayani's farewell advice to his successor, yet to be named, to back democracy is unsolicited and uncalled for. Kayani should realize that democracy is not a gift, definitely not from the armed forces. What he was saying from experience is that the Pakistanis are not prepared for another military rule. This has had a salutary effect of Musharraf's failure and people's loss of faith in a military rule. It is a plus point for democracy in Pakistan.

(Continued from Page 4)

There seem to be much bigger scam here than all the Colgate, 2G, etc. scams put together. We have not covered here the Banking sector that is directly in their operations and indirectly through operations in share market participate in some of the activities. It seems, the size and operations appear to be small for our friends in the West and therefore, wanted the sector to be opened up for private foreign operators so that the whole economy can be regulated.

There may be experts and corporate defenders who might argue that it is how money is to be accumulated for investment to usher in higher rates of growth and the corporates do no wrong. Can they do it without affecting the common man where too much money (artificial) is chasing (inflation) too few goods?

A new politics for development

**D K Giri
Nivedita Giri**

Despite over six decades of planning and impressive growth in the Indian economy over the last two decades, the development scenario leaves a lot to desire. The urban areas are somewhat better equipped for a reasonably decent life than the rural areas, mushrooming slums notwithstanding. There are several explanations and theories on the poor state of development in India. We would like to list some of these arguments and proffer a new paradigm for development.

One long standing debate is the rural vs urban, which is also called Bharat vs India, which in pre-independence India was often referred to as Hindustan vs Anglosthan. In 2008, in an interview, P Chidambaram suggested that 85 per cent of Indians would live in cities in the not-so distant future. It is easier to provide services in cities, and social inequities disappear in an urban setting. This shows an urban bias and an urban-based modernisation in development planning, which is a serious flaw. This trend towards modernisation based on industrialisation, technologisation, and urbanisation has been the driving force from the time of Nehru. Rural India was viewed differently by Gandhi and Nehru. The rural –urban dichotomy continues as a mind-set amongst policy makers. Added to this is the conflict between bottom-up and top-down planning. This is a false dichotomy. Many would argue that urbanisation is a function of rural

prosperity and a top-down approach is necessary to activate and maintain the bottom-up activities.

In fact, rural development and urbanised growth are a natural corollary to each other. Moreover, when we see that urban slums are worse than the undeveloped rural habitat, we begin to question if urbanisation alone can be the engine of growth and development. We would therefore like to make the proposition that rural development is not only a human imperative, but a preferred strategic option. In fact, rural development is synonymous with development in India.

To substantiate this argument: Gandhiji, used to say, India lives in her villages, and if villages perish India will perish. Even today, after considerable progress in industrialisation and modernisation almost 70 percent people continue to live in rural areas. But rural India remains neglected, deprived, and marginalised. The conditions in rural Indian life are simply pathetic. A single slice of statistics will show what we are bemoaning about. According to 66th NSSO report, 60 per cent of Indian rural population lives on less than 35 rupees a day. Out of this population, 10 per cent of rural people's monthly per capita consumer expenditure is 450 rupees. There are other indices of a sub-human life that people live in rural India.

This would beg the question why is rural India so poor and deprived?

Of late, India has produced several billionaires, a large middle class whose consumption patterns and life styles are of world-class affluence. The answer is not hard to find. One, it is the centralised government led development efforts that have been inadequate and in most cases leading to abject failure. Second, a senior politician with 40 years of his career in parliament suggested". Our top politicians have had an urban bias. One cabinet Minister confided to us, that he was too much of a Nehruvian. He envisaged India having a uniform pattern of development, industrialised and urbanised, with villagers being compensated in the process of their marginalisation that was an inevitable fallout of this process.

Without delving deeper into this prognosis, and the debate we just mentioned before, we would like to make a second proposition. It is increasingly beyond the capacity of the state, for that matter any single actor, to respond effectively to the magnitude and complexity of development challenges. The other two sectors, the civil society and the market have to be drawn into the process. It is another matter that both the civil society and the market engage in the process in their own interest.

What do these three actors bring to the table? What are their attributes? How should they contribute to the development process? The state or the government in this case is driven

by authority and has the legitimacy as an elected body in a democracy. It provides the legal framework and arbitrates in conflict and contentions. The market is driven by profit and material incentives. It produces goods and services and has the techno-managerial competence and capital resources. The civil society occupies the space between the state and the market. It has dual and contradictory functions. On the one hand, it can mobilise people to actively participate in the developmental programmes in order to contribute to governmental priorities, it can create consumers and markets for business. On the other hand, it can moderate the hegemony of the capital and determine the choice of the technology, moderate the authoritarianism of the state, and rapacity of the market, in other words, maintains the so-called logic of growth and demands of democracy. Civil society is driven by values, CSOs have proximity with the people, have autonomy in their operations, greater outreach and low-cost approach to projects and programmes. It is like a "magic bullet", you fire it any direction but it still hits the targets. It is also said, a CSO is like a virtuous David fighting the Goliath of famine, hostile climate, and social inequities and oppression. But we hasten to add that CSO is not a holy cow, it is rather like a curate's egg, good in part, rotten in the rest.

Now another question becomes apparent, if these three major actors, the main pillars of any country, have such wonderful attributes, why are they not delivering, not effectively impacting the development process? It is because they are not working in synergetic partnership, they are working independently while they

are interdependent in their nature and operation. And worse, their attempts at any collaboration are bedevilled by mutual mistrust and misperception. The state is seen as corrupt and coercive, the business as selfish and exploitive, and the civil society as rebellious and doctrinaire. Let us look at them in another way. The state produces citizens; the market produces consumers, and the civil society communitarians. These three categories of individuals behave and function as three separate entities and are often in conflict. But people can be three-in-one entities. They need to work unity. In fact, an individual ought to integrate the entire three in one individual in a successful society.

So our final proposition is that in order to promote development, village prosperity in India, and these three major actors will have to embrace a collaborative partnership. This is the new politics we will like the progressive parties, business community and the citizens to adopt. There has been a mismatch between politics and development. Or else, a state like Uttar Pradesh which used to send 85 Members and now 80 after the creation of Uttarakhand, to the Parliament, should be one of the most developed states in the country. That is hardly the case. Likewise, the Planning Commission in its much vaunted private-public partnership misses out the people around the table. Public in its partnership model is the government, not the civil society. It does condescendingly refer to the NGOs in delivering projects, but does not give equal status as a partner in action and progress. The government blows hot and cold on civil society movements. It spreads a red carpet to Anna Hazare, or Baba

Ramdev when they have massive popular support, the heat is turned on the government, but it would like to tire them out and ignore, or does a clamp down to divert and suppress the popular sentiments. This is old hat in politics, and may not work anymore. Let us embrace new politics where cooperation and partnership replace confrontation and manipulation.

Let us look at the stakes in this partnership for each of the actors. Economic growth can occur in stable political and social conditions, these in turn, cannot be achieved without economic prosperity. The CSOs have the vision and commitment, but not the resources to make things work. It needs the business and the government to provide the resources. The Business can no longer do the business with the government alone. It has become too exposed and the government too weak. CSOs can galvanise the consumers who have the power to influence corporate behaviour through their consumption preferences etc. Talking of the government and civil society interface, it is quite obvious in a democracy. The civil society puts pressure and even protests against the government, at the same time, it needs the government to provide the political framework to operate. The Government needs the civil society to mobilise people for its programmes, and peace and harmony in the society.

Therefore, we suggest that a partnership between the state, market, and the civil society is the way forward for effective governance, in particular for meeting the daunting challenge of rural development in India.

Why the RBI is a failed doctor

Bharat Jhunjunwala

If a sick person would go to the blood bank to sell his blood every week, he would soon become very weak. The doctor may pump him with vitamins or glucose; but his health would not improve. That is the situation facing the Reserve Bank today. It has raised the interest rates a tad in the recent monetary policy. This small increase indicates the helplessness of the bank. A bigger increase would have brought inflation under control, but hit growth rates. On the other hand, the reduction of interest rates would have pushed growth, but led to higher inflation.

Prices rise because the Reserve Bank of India prints money and the government borrows that money for meeting its expenditure. Say there is 10 kg wheat available in the economy and notes worth Rs 100 are in circulation. The price of wheat is Rs. 10 per kg. Now the RBI prints Rs. 20 and the government borrows these monies and buys out two kg wheat from the market and removes it out of the economy. Now, there is only eight kg wheat remaining in the market, while notes worth Rs. 100 are still in circulation as previously. The shopkeepers smell a shortage. They increase the price of wheat to Rs 12 per kg. This is how prices have been rising presently.

The RBI is printing and the government is borrowing huge sums of money for meeting its expenditures, such as increased salaries of government servants and for supporting leakage of revenue to preferred individuals. Much of this

money is sent out of the country But the RBI continues to mint notes and there is an increase in money supply, while the goods available are as before. The Reserve

Bank's hands are tied in this situation. The bank can increase the interest rates and reduce the money in circulation. People will borrow less at high rates of interest and money in circulation will reduce. But this will simultaneously increase the price of loans taken by industries for meeting their needs of working capital. The production will reduce and that will lead a reduction in growth rate, along with an increase in prices.

The second problem is the decline in the rate of economic growth. We had reached eight per cent, but are now struggling to even hold on to a rate of five per cent today The reason is a decline in investment by the government. Say, there is an auto-rickshaw driven who earns Rs. 1,000 per day. He saves Rs. 300 and manages his household expenses with Rs 700. He saves money and buys a taxi. Now he earns Rs. 2,000 and saves Rs. 600 and consumes Rs. 1,400 per day. His consumption has increased from Rs. 700 to Rs. 1,400 per day because initially he reduced his consumption. This is the natural process of growth-cut current consumption, increase investment and beget increased consumption in the next cycle.

But instead of cutting consumption and increasing investment, our government is borrowing to increase

consumption, like paying increased salaries to government servants, and spending on welfare programs like MNREGA, food security and midday meals. This is leading to the economy getting mired in debt. This lack of investment is the primary cause of decline in growth rates. The same borrowing would have a positive impact had the government used the money to invest in ports, highways and research.

The only thing the RBI can do in this situation is to increase the interest rates, so that it will become difficult for the government to borrow-and-consume. But it is doubtful whether even such a measure will deter the government from pursuing this disastrous policy because its eyes are fixed on the coming general elections in 2014. The government's effort is to use money to buy votes and also somehow manage to hold the economy together until the elections are over. The increase in interest burden will take place in future years only. If the RBI adopts the policy of increasing interest rates, it will adversely impact industry. Production will be reduced and that will lead to an increase in prices. So the RBI is essentially helpless in this situation.

The third problem is that of the Current Account Deficit (CAD). This is the difference between our export earnings and import requirements. Our exports are less and imports are more. There are two ways of meeting this deficit.

(Continued on Page 11)

Shun nuclear ties

Excerpts from a representation by the Jaitapur Anuvaj Prakalp Virodhi Abhiyan submitted on October 21, 2013 to the Prime Minister of Japan through the latter's Consul General in Mumbai urging Japan to shun Indo-Japan Nuclear Trade. It will be recalled that thanks to late Dr. Banwarilal Sharma and Neeraj Jain of Lokayat, the agitation against Jaitapur nuclear power plant by the local people become an all Maharashtra agitation and got linked to similar agitations against nuclear power plants all over India. Yusuf Meherally Yuva Biradari was a part of the widening of the agitation. The representation was signed by Madhu Mohite, Dr. Vivek Monteiro, Adwait Pednekar, Prakash Reddy and Arun Velaskar on behalf of the Konkan Bachao Samiti and by Shyam Sunder Narvekar on behalf of the Jan Hit Seva Samiti.

On behalf of the people of Konkan, the citizens of the state of Maharashtra and the Indian people, we express our profound sense of grief at events of March 11, 2011, the earthquake, tsunami and the ensuing nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. We express our solidarity with the Japanese people who are struggling to cope with this unprecedented crisis, which has no end in sight.

The Fukushima nuclear disaster, as recorded by the independent investigation commission in their report submitted to the members of the National Diet of Japan, is not only the outcome of natural calamity. It is also a "man-made" disaster and a result of the "collusion" between the government, regulators and TEPCO and a lack of governance.

Two and a half years later this disaster has reached epic proportions. It is slated to be a permanent Level 3 nuclear disaster. The radiation release from nuclear fuel, which has breached containment, is continuing uncontrollably and indefinitely into the ground water and surrounding ocean. The hazard is from both the reactors as well as the spent fuel accumulations. Three hundred thousand tonnes of radioactive water has accumulated in tanks at the site, with hundreds of tonnes being added daily. On October 9, seven tonnes of this highly radioactive water leaked into the open ground exposing several workers to doses of high radiation. The previous week, 430 litres of highly radioactive water spilled out of storage tank and flowed into the sea. In August 2013, a Level 3 nuclear accident occurred, with 300 tonnes of highly radioactive water leaking from a tank.

The huge accumulation of radioactive materials in the form of spent fuel in the spent fuel storage pool of stricken and structurally unstable Unit 4 pose a risk and hazard, not only to Fukushima and its surroundings, but to the whole of Japan, and indeed the whole world.

The Japanese people understand the severity of the crisis and have overwhelmingly demanded that all nuclear power plants be closed. We welcome the prudent and courageous decision of the Japanese government to close down all nuclear power plants, despite the dependence of your nation on nuclear power for 30 per cent of its electricity. The Japanese government of your predecessor arrived at the

progressive policy decision, like the German Bundestag, of phasing out hazardous nuclear power as demanded by the people of Japan. We hope you will continue with that policy.

We sympathise with the pain of tens of thousands of nuclear refugees, farmers, fishermen and others, from the surrounding areas who have been deprived of their livelihoods and are uncertain about the possibility of returning to their homes. Our sympathies are with all these Japanese brothers and sisters and children. We believe that Fukushima disaster is no longer a national issue of Japan but of the entire world. We welcome the decision to shut down the only reactor that was operational for stringent safety checks on September 16, 2013, without any time frame to restart.

In the 20th century, Japan underwent the horror of the first-ever atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that reduced these two cities to ashes, with long term effects of hazardous radiations through the generations. In the 21st century, the Japanese people are facing the Fukushima disaster saga unfolding endlessly and relentlessly.

The lesson of Fukushima is that this is not the time to expand nuclear power anywhere in the world. We view with deep concern the moves by the governments of India and Japan to enhance civilian nuclear cooperation. The business interest of Japanese corporations like Mitsubishi, which makes nuclear reactor components, cannot take precedence over the lives, and

livelihoods of the common citizens of our countries.

Against the wishes of the Indian people, despite Fukushima, our government has decided to take a quantum jump in nuclear power generation. Jaitapur nuclear power project - a gigantic project with six reactors totaling 10,000 MW – is proposed at village Madban, situated in the district Ratnagiri, state of Maharashtra, along the Western coast of India. This region is part of the Western Ghats mountain range which is globally unique and rich in biodiversity. The farmers, fishermen, landless and other toilers in and around the region are relentlessly opposing this hazardous, expensive nuclear power project as it will destroy this natural wealth and their sources of livelihood.

We express our deep concern for the impact of Fukushima on the livelihood of the fishing community in Japan, the banning of fish imports from Japan by South Korea and China. As in Japan, the Indian coast has many million families whose livelihood depends on fishing and fish exports. The entire fishing community of India is strongly against the setting up of nuclear reactors along the Indian coast, and expresses solidarity with their brethren of Japan, in their battle to save their livelihood against the tide of growing radioactive contamination of the ocean by the ongoing Fukushima disaster.

The Japanese government under your honourable leadership is now engaged in negotiations with the government of India to ink bilateral agreements on nuclear trade. These agreements may protect interests and profits of Japanese nuclear industry in the situation when the future

of business for them, in your own country looks bleak. But it would be unethical to proceed in this manner. We are sure that after Fukushima, the Japanese people would not approve of increased nuclear build anywhere in the world.

Hence the honourable prime minister of Japan, we, the Indian people, request you to shun agreements on nuclear trade with the government of India.

If our request goes unheeded, then please be cautioned that we would be forced to step up national and international pressure against this policy of your government and build public opinion in both our countries as well as all over the world against the double standards it represents.

(Continued from Page 9)

One way is to allot the rupee to depreciate. A cheaper rupee will make imports costlier. A Washington apple costing \$1, will sell in India for Rs 70, instead of Rs 50. On the other side, it will make our exports more competitive. Our imports will decline, exports will rise and the deficit will be gone. This is the policy that Manmohan Singh had adopted as finance minister in 1991.

This time around, he has adopted an altogether different and disastrous policy. He is trying to get the dollars from foreign investment to bridge the deficit. It is like the auto-rickshaw owner selling a ten per cent stake in his auto-rickshaw to another person. He can then use this cash to meet his increased daily expenditures. This is what Manmohan Singh is trying to do. Japanese investors bought out Ranbaxy. Dollars came into our economy - this money was

used to import Washington apples and French perfumes. But part of the ownership of India passed into foreign hands. Other Indian companies were-like wise sold. FDI was merrily coming in for some time, at least. Then this came to a sudden halt. Foreign investors realized that Indian companies were running at a loss. There are few buyers for them now. It is like the auto-rickshaw owner offering a 51 per cent partnership. He says the partner can be the master and he will be the servant. But there is no taker because the auto-rickshaw has not been repaired for a long time and is running at a loss. This is the reason why there has been no inflow of foreign investment despite the government increasing the limits in civil aviation, multi-brand retail and insurance. The RBI can do precious little in this situation. It can sell its forex reserves to hold the value of the rupee for some time. But these reserves will not last long.

The basic problems of the economy are bleeding of Government revenues via leakage and corruption; increased consumption by government servants and spending for buying of votes; and using foreign investments to meet consumption needs. The RBI is helpless. Inflation will be controlled, but economic growth will suffer if it increases interest rates. On the other hand, growth will be helped, but inflation will increase if it lowers interest rates. The RBI is trying to find a middle course between these twin problems. This is like a doctor trying to find a mid treatment for a patient suffering from diabetes, asthma and typhoid at the same time. The solution to these multiple problems lies in the hands of the government, not the RBI.

Identity and Citizenship: an Indian perspective

Mohammad Hamid Ansari

It is a privilege to be invited to address this august audience. Conscious of the gap between the immensity of the honour and the inadequacies of the speaker, I am humbled by the realisation that six decades earlier Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a very distinguished predecessor of mine as Vice President of India, was for long the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at this University.

A few years back, when I was in the vicinity of Oxford in a group dabbling in the unfathomable mysteries of the Iraq quagmire, Dr Nizami provided a welcome distraction by inviting me to see the site, and the plans, for the new building of the Centre. He also mentioned the debate on the proposed architectural design, and of the view in some quarters that it would change the inherited landscape of a hallowed community.

The change, as I understood it, implied an assertion of identity. It is now conceded, I am told, that the new structure did no aesthetic or spiritual damage to the skyline of Oxford. Perhaps, the injection of diversity has enriched it.

Speculating on the 'ifs' of history, Edward Gibbon had visualised a course of events that might have resulted in the teaching of the interpretations of the Qur'an at Oxford. He could not foresee a happier, intellectually more

rewarding, happening that the concluding decades of the twentieth century would bring forth. Among its manifestations is the establishment of this Centre.

This is a tribute to Oxford's capacity to accommodate the unusual.

Encouraged by this accommodative approach, I wish today to share some thoughts on the twin concepts of identity and citizenship and the manner of their impact on the building blocks of modern States.

Individual Identity

Needless to say, it is an Indian perspective and draws in good measure on the Indian experience. It may be of relevance to some of the objectives of this Centre, since India counts amongst its citizens the third largest Muslim population in the world and the largest Muslim minority anywhere.

It is a truism that the human being is a social creature and societies consist of individuals who come together for a set of common purposes for whose achievement they agree to abide by a set of rules and, to that extent and for those purposes, give their tacit or explicit consent to the abridgment of individual free will or action. They, in other words, do not get subsumed totally in a larger whole and retain their individual identity. This identity, as pointed

out by William James and sustained by more recent social-psychological research, is a compound of the material, social and spiritual self. Further more, and when acting together in smaller groups, they develop group identities and these too are retained. Thus in every society we have identities at three or four levels, namely individual, group, regional and national. We can also, in this age of globalisation, add an international dimension to it. The challenge in all societies, therefore, is to accommodate these layered identities in a framework that is harmonious and optimally conducive to social purpose.

Much has been written about identity, its theoretical framework and practical manifestations. An eminent sociologist has defined it as 'the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or a related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sources of meaning. For a given individual, or a collective of actors, there may be a plurality of identities.' The question is to determine how this identification is expressed in every day life of individuals who are members of such specific groups?

Multidimensionality

Conceptually and legally, citizenship of a modern state provides this framework and encapsulates the totality of rights and duties emanating from the membership

of the citizen body, inclusive of the right of representation and the right to hold office under the state. By the same logic, a certain tension is built into the relationship, even if the society happens to be relatively homogenous, in itself a rarity in modern times. Rabindranath Tagore described his family background as a 'confluence of three cultures, Hindu, Mohammedan and British'. Away from India but in our own neighbourhood, Abdolkarim Soroush depicted the Iranian Muslim as 'the carrier of three cultures at once' having national, religious and Western origins.

Thus instead of a narrow concept of a singular identity implied by the classical concept of citizenship, the need is to recognise and accommodate the existence of a plurality of social identities. The contours of this were explored earlier by Thomas Marshall, and more recently by Will Kymlicka, Manuel Castells, Charles Taylor, Gurpreet Mahajan and others. Put simply, it has been argued that identity encapsulates the notion of authenticity, the demand for recognition, the idea of difference and the principle of equal dignity.

Indian Perspective

What then has been the Indian approach to, and experience of, the concepts of identity and of citizenship in a modern state? What is the accommodative framework for identities in modern India?

A distinctive feature of Indian society is its heterogeneity. The historian Ramachandra Guha depicts our recent history as 'a series of conflict maps' involving caste, language, religion and class and opines that conflicts relating to these 'operate both singly and in

tandem'. Each of these also brings forth an identity of varying intensity; together, they constitute what the opening line of the Preamble of our Constitution depicts as We, the People of India.

In other words, the superstructure of a democratic polity and a secular state structure put in place after independence on August 15, 1947 is anchored in the existential reality of a plural society. It is reflective of India's cultural past. Our culture is synthetic in character and, as a historian of another generation put it, 'embraces in its orbit beliefs, customs, rites, institutions, arts, religions and philosophies belonging to different strata of societies in varying stages of development. It eternally seeks to find a unity for the heterogeneous elements which make up its totality'. It is a veritable human laboratory where the cross breeding of ideas, beliefs and cultural traditions has been in progress for a few thousand years. The national movement recognised this cultural plurality and sought to base a national identity on it. The size and diversity of the Indian landscape makes it essential. A population of 1.27 billion comprising of over 4,635 communities 78 percent of whom are not only linguistic and cultural but social categories. Religious minorities constitute 19.4 percent of the population; of these, Muslims account for 13.4 percent amounting in absolute terms to around 160 million. The human diversities are both hierarchical and spatial. 'The de jure WE, the sovereign people is in reality a fragmented 'we', divided by yawning gaps that remain to be bridged.' Around 22 per cent of our people live below the official poverty line and the health and education indicators for the population as a whole, despite recent correctives,

leave much to be desired.

The contestation over citizenship surfaced early and was evident in the debates of the Constituent Assembly. The notion of citizenship was historically alien to Indian experience since throughout our long history (barring a few exceptions in the earliest period) the operative framework was that of ruler and subject. There was, of course, no dearth of prescriptions about the duties of rulers towards their subjects and about the dispensation of justice but none of these went beyond Kautilya's pious dictum that 'a king who observes his duty of protecting his people justly and according to the law will go to heaven, whereas one who does not protect them or inflict unjust punishment will not'. The constitution-makers therefore had to address three dimensions of the question relating to status, rights, and identity, to determine who is to be a citizen, what rights are to be bestowed on the citizen, and the manner in which the multiplicity of claimed identities is to be accommodated. This involved addressing three aspects of the question: legal, political and psychological. The outcome was the notion of national-civic rather than national-ethnic, emphasising that the individual was the basic unit of citizenship whose inclusion in polity was on terms of equality with every other citizen. At the same time and taking societal realities into account, the concept of group-differentiated citizenship was grafted to assure the minorities and other identity-based groups that 'the application of difference-blind principles of equality will not be allowed to operate in a way that is unmindful of their special needs, and that these needs arising out of cultural difference or minority status will

receive due attention in policy, and that the polity will be truly inclusive in its embrace’.

Protection of diversities

The crafting of the Constitution was diligent and its contents reflective of the high ideals that motivated its authors. The Preamble moved Sir Ernest Barker to reproduce it at the beginning of his last book because, as he put it, it seemed ‘to state in a brief and pithy form the argument of much of the book and it may accordingly serve as a keynote’. The Constitution’s chapter on Fundamental Rights addresses *inter alia* the protection of identities, and accommodation of diversities. These identities could be regional, religious, linguistic, tribal, caste-based, and gender-based. The right to equality and equal protection of the laws and prohibition of discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth is guaranteed. Affirmative action is mandated by law in favour of those historically discriminated against on grounds of caste or tribal origin as well as all those who are identified as socially and educationally backward. Also guaranteed is freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion. Yet another section safeguards the right to have and conserve language, script or culture and the right of religious or linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The purpose of these, taken together, is to bestow recognition, acknowledge the difference and thereby confer dignity that is an essential concomitant of equality.

An inherent problem nevertheless was evident to the constitution-makers, or at least to some of them.

This was expressed candidly, almost prophetically, by Ambedkar in words that need to be cited in full:

‘On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up.’

Thus the objective of securing civic, political, economic, social and cultural rights as essential ingredients of citizenship was clearly delineated and the challenge squarely posed to the beneficiaries of the new dispensation. The dire prognosis of the last sentence, however, has not come to pass! The very complexity of the landscape impedes linear and drastic happenings. One serious student of Indian polity has noted that ‘the Indian model of development is characterised by the politicisation of a fragmented social structure, through a wide dispersal and permeation of political forms, values and ideologies’. As a result and in a segmented society and unequal economy, the quest for substantive equality and

justice remains work in progress. Nevertheless, the slowing down of the egalitarian social revolution that was envisaged by the Constitution-makers and the implicit social contract inherent in it, does give rise to wider concerns about its implications.

Two questions arise out of this and need to be explored. Firstly, what has been the impact of this on the perception of identity? Secondly, how has the challenge been addressed?

Identity assertion in any society has three sets of impulses: civic equality, liberty and opportunity. Identity groups are a byproduct of the right of freedom of association. They can be cultural, voluntary, ascriptive and religious. They are neither good nor bad in themselves but do present challenges to democratic justice. This is true of India also. The functioning of democratic institutions and the deepening of the democratic process along with the efforts to implement constitutional mandates for affirmative action induced higher levels of political mobilisation. These manifested themselves, most visibly, in demand groups each with its own identity. A multiplication of identities seeking social status and economic wellbeing through the route of politics thus emerged as a logical consequence.

It has been argued that ‘casteism in politics is no more and no less than politicisation of caste which, in turn, leads to a transformation of the caste system’. The same holds for religious and tribal minorities. In an evolving quasi-federal state structure, yet another imperative emanates from the requirements of regional or state identity. ‘The new politics of caste has also reinforced old, upper caste

solidarities. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Bramharishi Sabhas have reemerged and the logic of electoral politics has forced the forces of social justice to strike strategic alliances with them'. These, together, have induced political actors to develop narrower foci on their electoral management methodologies; these have been reinforced by the shortcomings of the first-past-the-post electoral system and the ability of a high percentage of candidates to win on a plurality rather than the majority of votes cast in an election.

Democratic integration

A society so diverse inevitably faced the challenge of integration. It was two fold, physical and emotional. The former, involving the merger of 554 large and miniscule princely states with those parts of the former British India that became the Indian Republic, was attended to with commendable speed and was almost completed by the end of 1949. Emotional integration, on the other hand, was a more complex process. As early as 1902, Tagore had cautioned that unity cannot be brought about by enacting a law and in 1949 Sardar Patel, the architect of integration of states, had laid emphasis on the process taking 'healthy roots' and bringing forth 'a wider outlook and a broader vision.' The challenges posed by it were aptly summed up by a political scientist:

'In the semantics of functional politics the term national integration means, and ought to mean, cohesion and not fusion, unity and not uniformity, reconciliation and not merger, accommodation and not annihilation, synthesis and not dissolution, solidarity and not regimentation of the several discrete segments of the people constituting

the larger political community

'Obviously, then, Integration is not a process of conversion of diversities into a uniformity but a congruence of diversities leading to a unity in which both the varieties and similarities are maintained.'

Unity not uniformity

Thus the Indian approach steers clear of notions of assimilation and adaptation, philosophically and in practice. Instead, the management of diversity to ensure (in Nehru's words) the integration of minds and hearts is accepted as an ongoing national priority. Some have described it as the 'salad-bowl' approach, with each ingredient identifiable and yet together bringing forth an appetising product.

The question of minority rights as a marker of identity, and their accommodation within the ambit of citizenship rights, remains a live one. It is not so much on the principle of minority rights (which is unambiguously recognised in the Constitution) as to the extent of their realisation in actual practice. A government-commissioned report on Diversity Index some years back concluded that 'unequal economic opportunities lead to unequal outcomes which in turn lead to unequal access to political power. This creates a vicious circle since unequal power structure determines the nature and functioning of the institutions and their policies'. This and other official reports delineate areas that need to be visited more purposefully.

How far can this to be taken? A Constitutional Amendment in 1977, adding a section on Fundamental Duties of citizens as part of the Directive Principles of State Policy,

carries a clause stipulating promotion of harmony and spirit of brotherhood "transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities." It is at this point that the rights of identity and the duties of citizenship intersect. The identification of this point, with any degree of precision, is another matter. The litmus test, eventually, must be the maintenance of social cohesiveness through a sense of citizenship premised on equality of status and opportunity so essential for the maintenance of democracy. The need for sustaining and reinvigoration of this sentiment is thus essential.

The Constitution of India was promulgated in 1950. The past six decades have witnessed immense changes in social and political perceptions in societies the world over. Theories and practices of 'assimilation', 'one-national mould' and the 'melting pot' have been discredited and generally abandoned; instead, evolving perceptions and practical compulsions led individual societies to accept diversity and cultural pluralism. In many places, on the other hand, a process of reversal induced by xenophobia, Islamophobia and migrant-related anxieties, is also under way. The concept of multiculturalism, pioneered to address accommodation of diversity within the framework of democracy, is being openly or tacitly challenged. An ardent advocate of multiculturalism concedes that 'not all attempts to adopt new models of multicultural citizenship have taken root or succeeded in achieving their intended effects' because 'multiculturalism works best if relations between the state and minorities are seen as an issue of social policy, not as an issue of state security'.

There is an Indian segment to the debate on multiculturalism. It has been argued that 'while a multicultural polity was designed, the principles of multiculturalism were not systematically enunciated.' It is asserted that multiculturalism goes beyond tolerance and probes areas of cultural discrimination that may exist even after legal equality has been established; it therefore 'needs to explore ways by which the sense of alienation and disadvantage that comes with being a minority is visibly diminished, but in a way that does not replace the power of the homogenising state with that of the community. It should therefore aspire towards a form of citizenship that is marked neither by a universalism generated by complete homogenisation, nor by particularism of self-identical and closed communities'.

These debates and practices vindicate in good measure the vision and foresight displayed by the founding fathers of the Republic of India. The vindication is greater when considered in the context of the size and diversity of India and the stresses and strains it has withstood in this period. And yet, we cannot rest on our laurels since impulses tilting towards 'assimilationist' and homogenising approaches do exist, suggestive of imagined otherness and seeking uniformity at the expense of diversity. Indian pluralism, as a careful observer puts it, 'continues to be hard won'. Hence the persisting need of reinforcing and improving present practices and the principles underlying them. Such an endeavour would continue to be fruitful as long as 'the glue

of solidarity' around the civic ideal remains sufficiently cohesive, reinforced by the existential reality of market unity and the imperative of national security. There is no reason to be sceptical about the stability of the tripod.

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janata

Vol. 68 No. 46
November 24, 2013

A gentleman in politics
Kuldip Nayyar

**Anatomy of a Riot:
What we can learn from
the Muzaffarnagar violence**
Nidhi Gupta

**What happened to
the Left Alternative?**
V. Upadhyay

**PPP Model School Scheme
and its reality**
Firoz Ahmad

**From the mouths of babes :
Street children share life stories
and script imaginary ones**

Protection of Western Ghats

The Last Signs of Slavery

Anti-women snooping

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What is a toilet?

S. Viswam

On the morning of November 19, which was being observed as World Toilet Day, several newspapers ran an advertisement on their front pages, announcing the launch of an “initiative” by Harpicindia and Save the Children to provide clean toilets and hygiene education to the people. The initiative is aimed at making “mornings happier.” God knows, not mornings alone, but entire days need to be made happier for all Indians whose lives, sad to say, are burdened by a variety of strains and stresses, not the least of them being the lack of toilets in their homes.

The advertisement was both informative and educational in that on the morning of World Toilet Day, half the country did not even know what a toilet is. Every morning, it enlightens us, more than 620 million Indians (according to Unicef) start their day by defecating in the open, putting their health and safety at risk. This means that they do not know what a toilet is, not having been given the opportunity and good fortune to use one to start their day.

Bemoaning the fact that Indians in many parts of the country, including the so-called “developed” urban metropolises like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai and most state

capitals, do not have toilets in their homes, is not new. Off and on, our politicians refer to the unfortunate fact and suggest something needs to be done to “change things”, which, the said advertisement also intends to do and its initiative, it claims, is a “little step” in that direction.

Some years ago, the UP kisan jat leader, Chaudhury Charan Singh, ran an entire Lok Sabha election campaign when he was prime minister for a short while, on the slogan of “sauchalaya for women.” His grouse was that women in India, particularly in rural areas, had to wait for nightfall, to answer their calls of nature since they could not do so in broad daylight because of the lack of toilets. Wherever he spoke during his campaign, he began and ended his speech with the promise that the first thing his Lokdal party would do on gaining power in New Delhi would be to order construction of thousands of sauchalayas (toilets), the bulk of them in villages. This was the least any government worth its name could do to uphold women’s honour and dignity in the country. Predictably, Charan Singh’s campaign did not take off, largely because the national media did not find toilets to be an interesting subject to stimulate and hold voters’ attention and hence did

not spare any space for the thought.

Between the lines

A gentleman in politics

Kuldip Nayar

Had the Lokdal won and had Charan Singh been elected prime minister things may have turned different. But history is not always helpful. Nobody talked of toilets after Charan Singh, even though the thoughts that occupied the lives of our honourable netas had loftier nation-building targets. Millions in India have been defecating in the open since decades, and if even the advent of independence has not changed things even in six decades, one wonders whether sporadic campaigns of awareness can help. Even so, any initiative aimed at improving the quality of life in urban or rural India needs and deserves support.

The talk of toilets figured in our public discourse recently when a perfectly valid comment by a Union minister (Jairam Ramesh) stating that India needed more toilets than temples landed him in trouble. The saffron lobby felt the comment mischievous and insulting and sought an apology from the minister. It is good that the minister refused to be intimidated and held on to his view, which, every thinking Indian would heartily endorse. Not, of course, the BJP which apparently thinks that more the number of temples the better for the people's health and morale. The same BJP and the Sangh had insisted that all India's problem would disappear the moment the Babri Masjid was brought down. The masjid was indeed brought down but problems remain and have multiplied.

The political class unfortunately is not interested in building toilets. It seems obsessed with spending crores on fanciful projects which might further and promote their political interests. Even a small fraction of the

At a time when politicians have come down to the level of street urchins, hurling abuses at each other and when the surveillance of even an individual is not considered an intrusion to privacy, the memory of the late Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral is like a fresh air. He was urbane, civil and never raised voice when an opponent lost his cool. This November 30 is his first death anniversary.

Throughout his political career, either as foreign minister or as prime minister, he tried to bring back the values of freedom movement into politics. As foreign minister, he advocated morality in dealing with big and small countries. He was opposed to taking action against Saddam Hussein, then heading Iraq. The West regretted the elimination of Saddam when it found that he had no weapons of destruction.

In his book, *A Foreign Policy for India*, Gujral says: "Indian foreign policy was not something which we read about in text books or heard about at the university. It was a product of the freedom struggle itself. Resisting oppression meant independence and was spelt out as the defining characteristic of an independent policy."

Gujral was particularly partial to India's neighbouring countries, something that came to be known as the Gujral Doctrine. I am certain that he would have accommodated Bangladesh on the Tiesta river water, a concession which would have helped Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to win in the elections due

in January next. Similarly, Gujral would have found a way to hold talks with Pakistan instead of sticking to Islamabad's guarantee to ensure the sanctity of the Line of Control (LoC). When Pakistan is itself in the midst of combat with terrorists, particularly the Taliban, it is difficult to guarantee no violation of the LoC because there are non-stake holders disturbing peace.

I came to know Gujral when he was a member of Indira Gandhi's kitchen cabinet after she lost to Lal Bahadur Shastri in the race to the prime ministerial gaddi. She demanded unstinted loyalty and Gujral was her confidante. Yet when Smt. Gandhi imposed the Emergency he refused to toe the line as Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Smt. Gandhi's son, Sanjay, an extra-constitutional authority was running the government. Sanjay phoned up Gujral asking him to propagate against Jayaprakash Narayan who was heading the movement to remove corruption and to resist the authoritarianism which Smt. Gandhi's rule had come to represent. Gujral told Sanjay that he was Smt. Gandhi's minister and not his errand boy. Gujral was transferred from the Information and Broadcasting ministry to the Planning Commission where P. N. Haksar, once Smt. Gandhi's principal secretary, was hibernating. He too had been punished for having joined issue with Sanjay Gandhi.

It was only the offer of ambassadorship to the Soviet Union that stopped Gujral from resigning from the government. Being a

(Continued on Page 10)

leftist - he was a camp follower of the Communist Party during his student days at Lahore - he did so well at Moscow that he was requested by Morarji Desai, then the prime minister, to continue as India's envoy. Gujral had ingratiated himself with the communist party and the government so closely that the Soviet Union was unsparing in supplying arms to India. Moscow also stood by the side of New Delhi on Kashmir.

Gujral, though, had a weakness - his love for Pakistan where he was born. He sincerely believed that a friendly Pakistan was an asset to India. He would have criticized the firing of Pakistan television channels for showing the Indian programmes more than permitted. Both countries are guilty of harming each other's credentials relating to the news and political censorship. Viewers are mature enough to separate the propaganda from happenings.

His first love was for Punjab. When he was prime minister, he wrote off the state's debt to the centre running into crores. He also sanctioned a Science City to be founded at Jalandhar where he and his family settled after migrating from Jhelum. And while out of office, he spanned the distance between the Hindus and Sikhs during the militancy years. He constituted the Punjab Group - I was its member - to talk to the Akalis on the one hand and the chauvinists on the other.

After the fall of Deve Gowda government, Gujral became the prime minister for a brief period. He undertook a tour of South Africa and Egypt in October 1977. I accompanied him as a journalist. My purpose was to see the country where Gandhi had experimented with his satyagraha, an antidote to the class struggle, because a

(Continued on Page 13)

Anatomy of a Riot: What we can learn from the Muzaffarnagar violence

Nidhi Gupta

The national conversation seems to have returned to the Congress-BJP binary, but only a few hours drive from the capital, tensions continue to simmer and grievances fester.

A couple of weeks ago, BJP MLAs Suresh Rana and Sangeet Som, accused of giving inciting speeches and circulating a video that sparked communal riots in Muzaffarnagar, were released from detention, absolved of the charges they were booked under the National Security Act.

The same period also saw eight-year-old Azra Mohammad, hailing from one of the riot-hit villages in Muzaffarnagar, being discharged from a hospital in Delhi - she was knifed in the stomach and her right hand had been all but severed during an attack on her home earlier in September. She survived, but she lost her grandmother, uncle and her 11-year-old cousin in the attack.

Azra, her father Aas Mohammad, and several other victims of the Muzaffarnagar riots (including two girls who had been raped on September 8 and October 2), appeared at a day-long convention in defense of communal harmony and democratic rights, organised by the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA). Earlier in the day, they met representatives of the Minorities' Commission, where they put forth their plea for assistance with rehabilitation and legal action.

At the Constitution Club, they recounted horrific incidents of violence and apathy in chilling detail. "When we sensed trouble, we decided to leave the village but our Jat brothers told us to stay, that they will protect us. But once they had us assembled, they started lynching us. It has been two months, why has there not been a single arrest?" Naseem Ahmed, a resident of Jouli village, demanded to know. There were more than 100 cases of rape and another 100 of murder, he said, but people, particularly women, don't want to come forward for fear of being stigmatised. A number of civil society organisations have sent inquiry teams to the district - one by Delhi-based Anhad, to document violence against women, found State and police representatives unwilling to talk. They also found that these riots were not sporadic as previously thought, but that signs of trouble had appeared as early as 2010. Another team, organised by the Centre for Peace Studies, found that any untoward incidents in the area in the past year and a half were instantly given a communal angle, and that the forces of 'love jihad', as the RSS likes to call it, were particularly in play.

Victims from the Jat community, though, are conspicuous by their absence in the aftermath of these riots - or so it would appear from these reports whose focus has been refugee camps organised by the State government, which are reportedly sheltering 60-70,000 Muslims at the moment. "These

were the more vulnerable sections in these villages and towns because they are the poorer lot, tending to the land and cattle owned by the zamindar Jats. Of course, riots are always two-sided and one cannot argue that the Muslim community had no hand in them, but those who are suffering now had barely anything to do with the riots. The Jat community has been able to rehabilitate themselves, while the Muslims have not," explained Sehba Farooqui, secretary of AIDWA.

Harsh Mander, former member of the National Advisory Council, visited Muzaffarnagar's relief camps as part of a fact-finding team organised by the Centre for Policy Analysis last month. His overarching conclusion from these visits involves a complicit State. "It is possible for riots to start sporadically, but it isn't possible to sustain the violence without the collusion of the government," he said. Three factors are crucial in this regard: the 'manufacture' of hate, followed by the 'organisation' of violence, both of which can happen only with the permission of the government.

Political scientist Steven Wilkinson, in his book *Votes and Violence*, made this observation back in 2005, arguing that politicians have the power to both cause and prevent riots, through their control of state governments that are responsible for law and order. Through an empirical analysis of the communal riots that have taken place in India between 1947 and 2005, he observes: "Whether violence is bloody or ends quickly depends not on the local factors that caused the violence to break out but primarily on the will and capacity of the government that controls the forces of law and order."

Such complicity of the State extends into a separate observation made by Mander on the perpetuation of hate. "In Gujarat (after the Godhra riots in 2002), the communal discord persisted through a social and infrastructural boycott. It takes maybe 2-3 months to spread lasting hatred even in areas where no such history exists. The discrimination that follows only works to sustain this hatred," he said. Even two months after the first incidents of violence were reported, displaced victims don't have the courage to go back home because they still feel threatened.

Yet, the Muzaffarnagar riots were not so much a case of communal politics as of a ruler-worker relationship gone sour. "Asalmein hum unke hi mazdoor they (we were actually their own workers)," pointed out Ahmed. "We ploughed their fields, tended to their cattle. It was only the Jats that took up this war against us. The other castes – Rajputs, Valmikis – had no part to play in this. They in fact came forward to help us in our time of need," he said.

This, as a report by Ajaz Ashraf in *The Hindu* has observed, is a consequence of the gradual disintegration of the MAJGAR – Muslim, Ahir (Yadav), Jat, Gujjar, Rajput – alliance that former PM Chaudhary Charan Singh had managed to foster on the back of the Green Revolution. MAJGAR managed to bring together the middle agricultural classes based on common economic interest, but succeeding politicians (primarily Charan Singh's son Ajit Singh) and the arrival of the Bharatiya Kisan Union have torn this bond apart. Now, like scavengers, regional and identity-based political parties have arrived to pick on the remains – and speculation is rife about

the Samajwadi Party's own role in engineering the Muzaffarnagar riots.

Consequently, this episode is acquiring a communal hue, where the Muslims have fled Jat-majority villages, and the Jats in turn cloister on their side of the village, fearing for life and property. Amid all this political brouhaha, AIDWA's aim in organising this meet was to contain the growing bubble of religious hatred by intervening at the grassroots level.

There are several ways to remember history – and several moments from the past that must or will be remembered. Who decides what becomes a part of history is anyone's guess. As the Lok Sabha elections loom large over the horizon, living room conversations have reverted to the BJP vs. Congress debate. Mumbai, Godhra, Ayodhya are all revisited as sites of communal discord, and attempts to trace the roots of this division stretch back endlessly in time.

If Narendra Modi, in his public speeches, wants to remind PM Manmohan Singh of his birthplace, which now lies on the other side of the India-Pakistan border because of the Congress' decision to go ahead with partition in 1947, the victims of the Muzaffarnagar riots also want to remember that year as a time of peace and quiet, of cooperation between Hindus and Muslims of different castes. This, then, is perhaps where civil society initiatives can be most effective – in keeping the peace on ground, despite all political maneuverings aimed at the opposite, by showing that violence of this sort affects the 'other' just as much as the 'self'.

From the mouths of babes : *Street children share their life stories and script imaginary ones*

What constitutes the mental landscape of a boy who is forced to make the city streets his home? A fascinating glimpse into the hearts and minds of such children was provided by a creative writing workshop organised by NadiraChaturvedi with some former street boys who are in our care.

Many boys wrote about their own lives, and some stories and fantasies. There is sadness, even anger in some testimonies, in which children recall how profoundly they were let down by those into whose care they were born. Ajay recalls his parents fighting all day long, and his painful discovery that both were addicted to drugs. "I pleaded to my parents, not take drugs. They never listened. They never stopped." He adds: "I lived with my parents who took drugs, stole, fought and eventually tried to stop me from studying. I could take it no more." In despair, first his brother, and then he, ran away after stealing some money from home.

He escaped from his village in Orissa to Delhi, and took a job at a tea stall in the railway station, washing utensils and serving tea. He slept at night outside the shop. The shop owner had promised him a monthly wage of Rs.1,500 for this work, but when at the end of the month he refused to pay him, Ajay stole some utensils from him and ran away again. This is how he ended up sleeping on the streets, where other street children befriended him and taught him to survive. Today, in our care, he has reached high school. "I love studying," he writes, "and want to be a computer engineer."

Babu Khan describes his childhood — picking rags from trash. "I wondered why I had to do this work," he writes, "but I also understood that if I did not work, how would I eat?" Later, after he

came into our care, he writes that he loved to study. But, one day, got into a violent fight with another boy in the home, and ran away from the home, finding his way eventually to Kashmir. "Once again I was picking trash, wearing dirty clothes." He often had no food, sometimes not even footwear. "And in Kashmir, night and day bullets would fly." He returned to our care in Delhi, apologised for fighting and running away, and resumed his studies. "I told other children what I had been through, and advised them — read, write and make your life."

For Shahrukh, the poverty of his family was complicated further by his polio. The story he writes is about his longing to dance, like other boys in the home. It seemed an impossible dream until one day he decided to use his crutch as his left leg while dancing. "Hours of practice, dozens of bruises from falling on the cemented floor, and the constant taunting of children for something I had no choice in, made me more determined." He was rewarded when he danced before all his classmates on Independence Day.

The children have also crafted some lovely fictional tales. Navaid's story "Munni's Dream" is about a village family in Karnataka, in which the elder sister Munni is given the duty every day to take her younger brother to school, but her parents refuse to allow her to study. Munni dreams of becoming a doctor, but her mother insists that

instead she should work and collect money for her dowry. Eventually Munni has her way, studies hard and becomes a doctor in the city. She hears that her mother in the village has fallen gravely ill, and she rushes to her bedside. It is Munni who eventually cures her, and her mother realises her mistake. Munni returns to her village, opens a free hospital, and also a school for the poor children in the village. She names the school after her parents.

But my favourite story is "Forest Officer" by Faiz. It describes a young boy called Faiz, whose parents take him for a picnic to a jungle. There he finds that hunters are mercilessly killing the wild animals. It pains him a lot, and one day he runs away from home to the forest, where he first pleads with the hunters to spare the animals. When they refuse to listen, he develops a plan with the poor four leggeds. They dig a deep pit, and cover it with grass. The hunters come into the forest, and all fall into the pit. Faiz gets them arrested and they are sent to jail. The animals are now safe. When Faiz grows up, he becomes a Forest Officer and builds a net around the forest, to protect the animals. Faiz's parents are proud of him, and the animals live happily with Forest Officer Faiz.

These stories are compiled into a volume called Ummeed: Hope writings of former street children (available with amanbiradari. delhi@gmail.com).

What happened to the Left Alternative?

V. Upadhyay

During the 1970s, left movements were very strong across many parts of the world. Left-led anti-colonial struggles achieved major victories in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in the mid '70s. In Africa, left-led struggles against apartheid and colonialism emerged victorious in several countries during the '80s. But in a basic sense global political landscape underwent a fundamental transformation around 1980. Several globally significant events, not always related but occurring around the same period, have caused a severe setback to left politics in most parts of the world. The significant developments in this regard are:

- Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979)
- Iranian Revolution (1979)
- China-Vietnam war (1979)
- The triumph of neo-liberalism in the US and the UK around 1980
- Economic reforms in China under Deng Xioping starting 1978

The electoral victories of Margaret Thatcher (in the UK) and Ronald Reagan in (in the US) proved decisive for the capital-labour battles in the West: capital won and labour lost. This was a triumph for neo-liberalism at the centre of the global capitalist system. The new orthodoxy aimed at dismantling welfare-statism that had gained a great influence in the West (particularly in Europe). The onslaught of capital however was not limited to the West only. The reign of neoliberal ideology spread to the developing world in due course. Many of the developing countries willingly adopted neoliberal policies

but others were forced to submit to the Western dictate. The West-controlled Brettonwood institutions (World Bank and IMF) and WTO were instrumental in coercing the developing countries to follow the West's agenda through mechanisms such as the structural adjustment programmes.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and demise of socialism across Eastern Europe around 1990, the US hegemony across the globe became absolute. The 1990s were thus a period of unipolarity, aptly described as "the end of history". This was the period of capital's onslaught. Capital's commanding position was sought to be strengthened through globalisation, liberalisation, privatisation and financialisation. During the 1990s, capitalist economies at the centre registered uninterrupted economic growth. The IT revolution that originated in the US and spread to other economies, of course, played an important role in promoting growth. Cheap Chinese exports proved helpful in maintaining macroeconomic stability in the industrialised countries. At the beginning of the new century, the Western imperialism resorted to wars for resources. The growth-pushing effects of all these factors however started to wane around the turn of the century. The finance driven growth-push came to an abrupt halt in 2008 with financial sector meltdown in the US which soon spread to other sectors and to other Western economies as well as other parts of the world.

During the last five years, the US economy has seen an anaemic growth but the Western Europe is still mired in a near recessionary situation. Most governments in these countries have tried to push the burden of adjustment on to the shoulders of the poor, working people, immigrant communities and racial minorities. Many governments have undertaken austerity measures which have caused misery to a large number of people. Unemployment levels remain high and youth unemployment particularly in Southern European countries remains at depression level.

There have been massive resistance to the anti-people policies in several European countries (especially in Southern Europe). Strikes, demonstrations, and 'occupy' movements against government policies have been widespread across many capitalist countries involving large-scale participation of labour unions, civil servants, youth, poor, unemployed, immigrant, racial minorities and other affected sections of the society. In all these protests, there has been large-scale left participation not only from the traditional left but also from different new left movements employing varied strategies of alliance formation and people's mobilisation. All these agitations notwithstanding, there has been no direct assault on the capitalist system itself as such. Capitalist system's foundations by and large remain unshaken. The crisis thus remains a crisis in the system, not of the system. Why has the left

* Paper presented at the 17th Annual Conference of the Indian Political Economy Association (IPEA) held at University of Hyderabad during 9-10 November, 2013.

alternative lost its appeal in the popular imagination?

This is a subject of long historical debate. Centuries long sustained technological progress and capital accumulation at astronomical pace have created conditions for production to reach levels that are capable of providing high economic standard of living to vast number of people in the industrialised world. Of course, all this economic progress was not possible without slavery and the imperialistic exploitation of people and resources in the periphery. The associated military might also made it possible for the European population to occupy vast continents of the Americas and Australia. The indigenous population were nearly eliminated in most of these places.

The role of liberal ideology is no less important here. Ideas of individual freedom and belief in market and sanctity of property rights have near complete control over western mind. Socialist alternatives ask for significantly higher, decisive societal role in matters related to production and distribution. Socialist ideas are thus in direct conflict with the liberal paradigm of individual freedom. The socialist ideas are thus a non-starter in the West, at this juncture at least.

China has seen phenomenal economic growth during the last 30 years. Benefits of growth are however are not spread equitably between people and regions and a large number of people still remain trapped in stark poverty. But, on the other side, there are a huge number of people, especially in the export-oriented coastal regions, who have benefited enormously from economic growth. This huge mass of people (the middle class) is for the first time in the history of their nation tasting prosperity only available to the rich

in the past. The present economic paradigm – capitalism with Chinese characteristics – commands (and is likely to continue commanding in the foreseeable future also) complete allegiance from the middle class. Given that the middle class plays a disproportionately large role in guiding policy and in opinion formation, the present economic paradigm faces little challenge from socialist ideas.

India too has experienced good economic growth during the last 30 years, albeit at a pace much slower in comparison to China. Like China, economic growth in India has been associated with rapid increase in disparity in income as well as wealth. Half of the population in India remains almost untouched by this high income growth process. But, on the other side, certain sections of the society, vast in numbers, have benefited enormously from the present growth pattern. Like in China, in India also there is a huge middle class which has seen real economic prosperity, for the first time in the history of the nation. The euphoria being generated by rapid economic growth in the middle classes in India (and China) is probably comparable to euphoria generated among the upper and middle classes in Europe by colonial conquests during the pre-war years. The middle class in India, with enormous faith in the system, form the major support base for the capitalist system in the country. The task of achieving broad unity of poor and working people, which has traditionally been the left's agenda, is rendered quite difficult by this development.

In the Latin American countries, there has been a resurgence of left-oriented people's movements during the past decade. In countries such as Venezuela and Bolivia, governments

have taken many radical steps which have had serious redistributive content and which have enhanced local communities' and workers' control over production process. In this regard, Latin American countries appear to be on a path very different from other developing countries, especially in Asia. Latin American countries are known for very high disparity levels. Most of these countries have per capita income levels which are quite high in comparison to other major developing countries. But these countries had experienced a decade long stagnation or even downturn in their living standards even before the onset of the current global economic crisis.

One distinguishing feature of the Latin American countries is that the gap between the rich and poor is very stark. There is not much middle ground: the middle class is not very dominant either in numbers or influence. Earlier rules by dominant classes (or even in present wherever they exist) were materialised under the leadership of military with crucial support from the imperialist centre, the USA. The present ascendancy of pro-people movements - capturing state power in a few countries and providing effective resistance in several others - can be partly explained by the absence of sizeable middle class which usually forms the backbone of support to the rule by dominant classes in situations where levels of disparity are very high (as is the case in China and India).

The popular political response to the present crisis in the (continental) Western Europe has taken the forms of protests, strikes and blockades. In Southern Europe and France, public sector employees, trade unions, students, immigrants, racial minorities, and other organised and

unorganised sections of middle and lower classes have come out on streets and are resisting quite forcefully their respective governments' moves to shift the burden of the crisis on to the common people. The political tradition and history of the dissent, tradition of trade unionism and student activism are the factors that determine the form and content of the protests.

In the (continental) Western Europe, welfare programmes are strong. Education and health services are free or very cheap and the coverage is near universal. The unemployment benefits are quite generous. Budget cuts and austerity measures there threaten the living standards of vast majority of people, including those belonging to the middle class. The threat of cuts brings the people out to streets as they want to protect the safeguards they have won through long struggles in the past.

With the relatively strong welfare programmes and unemployment benefits providing cushioning effects, the levels of disparity in living conditions in effective, practical terms, tend to be lower in these countries. Austerity measures and budget cuts thus threaten a disruption in their living pattern. The resistance on the part of the people we are witnessing is a reaction against this forced change. It is basically aimed at preserving the gains of welfare-statism: it does not transform into a threat to the existence of the capitalist system.

After the Second World War, no left movement has progressed much simply on the basis of class question. During the 1960s and 1970s, left's paramount importance in global political transformation was secured on the basis of its leading role in anti-colonial struggles in many parts of the world (Asia and

Africa). But this phase ended with the significant victories of the anti-colonial struggles in South East Asia in the mid '70s and in Africa in the mid '80s. With these victories, Western direct colonial occupation had more or less ended (with the exception of the more complicated cases of Palestine and Ireland). But during this period, some globally significant developments in this respect took place. One important development: the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. Here the invading power was not from the traditional Western imperialist nations but rather a country widely perceived as a socialist nation. And here, the resistance came not from left movements but from movements based on traditional Islamic ideology.

During the phase of unipolarity (1990s), the Western imperialist powers (particularly the US) generally restrained from pursuing colonial conquests in the Third World countries. It is true that, in addition to regular interventions in Latin America, this period saw major military attacks on the part of the Western nations (particularly the US) as in the First Iraq war (1990-91) and in Kosovo war (1999), but these were without using ground troops.

In the beginning of the new century, with the end of "the end of history" period, Western colonial conquests restarted. The West did not want to miss this historically unprecedented opportunity, provided by the sudden unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union, where they saw no challenge to their global domination from any quarter.

Most of the globally significant political transformational developments are taking place in the Muslim world and Latin America today. The Western

nations led by the US mobilised on massive scale military forces in their traditional conquest mode to attack several Muslim/Arab countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, and more recently, Libya). The resistance in these countries to the colonial forces was offered by forces committed to Islamic ideologies (mainly Sunni). The Western powers have long been planning to attack Shia or Shia-led countries (Iran and Syria) but so far have not been able to materialise their plans.

In many other Muslim/Arab countries, massive politically transformational struggles are also taking place (the Arab Spring). But there is no single narrative possible to describe these diverse movements. Depending on place and situation, these movements can be characterised into several categories: anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, anti-military, pro-military, or pro-democracy. These movements, in most places involve massive middle-class participation. But in most places, there are strong undercurrents of Shia-Sunni rivalry and religious fundamentalism. Secular and left forces are involved here and there, but are hardly at the fore-front anywhere.

The assertion of Islamic identity and culture (even if full of intra- or inter-religion strife) is the most important aspect of all these struggles in the Islamic world. Opposition to Western culture (which is hegemonic globally) is even more primary than opposition to (exploitative) economic thrust of the Western colonialism/neo-imperialism. In other words, resistance against Western cultural imperialism is the common thread in all these struggles across nations in the Islamic world.

The question of culture has now become a dominant one in other

developing countries too. The US domination associated with unipolarity phase that was most pronounced during the 1990s now appears to be ending. China and several other large countries have seen sustained economic growth over the last three decades. And these countries are also acquiring substantial military might. This is leading towards a multi-polar world. In the historical periods, in situations of emerging multi-polarity, a fight to finish war among the existing major powers would break out to resettle the hierarchies in the international arena. In today's nuclear age, a contained war which could result in winners and losers is not possible. Thus, in the absence of major war between major powers, the trend of multi-polarity is set to strengthen in the future. It has implications not only in economic and political arena, but also for the issue of cultural domination.

An important aspect of western global domination over the last several hundred years has been the domination of western culture. It has meant subordination of other civilisations. Now that the Western domination in economic and military fields is ebbing, other hitherto suppressed and dominated cultures are poised to reassert themselves. This is already happening in the Islamic world in a major way.

In major civilisations such as the Chinese and Indian, which have survived the prolonged western onslaught, reassertion of the indigenous cultures is not unimaginable. This has implication for the left project. Left ideology (socialism/Marxism) has Western roots. Marxism is a critique of capitalism. It seeks to provide an alternative to capitalist economic system. Its philosophical critique of the western society focuses

on consumerism, alienation, individualism, etc. But the whole discourse is located in the western social domain. It does not take cognizance of cultures of non-western civilisations. It is unable to negotiate with them. This aspect is likely to provide increasing hindrance to spread of left ideology in the non-western countries.

For long, the tag of progressivism has been attached with western society. This is because western society is associated with industrial revolution, technological progress, high living standards, unchallenged military might, democracy based on universal suffrage, individual liberty, media freedom, and even ideas of Socialism and Marxism. Although slavery, colonization, genocide of indigenous peoples, two world wars, use of nuclear weapons on civilian population and environmental crisis are also associated with it, but these are largely ignored in the dominant narrative. But seriousness of negative aspects of science and technology developments, governed by laws of capitalism, is also becoming too obvious to be denied. Nuclear weapons, biotechnology and climate changes - all with links to high S&T and pursuit of economic growth - now threaten the very survival of human life on the planet. In addition, there are clear signs of cultural decadence and social decay in the western societies. For all these reasons, the hitherto suppressed non-western cultures and civilisations are likely to start questioning western cultural supremacy and demanding equal status vis-a-vis western counterparts in the coming times.

As there is no discreet left perspective on the question of culture, the challenge to the dominating western culture comes largely from religion/tradition/

non-western civilisations based perspectives. This is happening not only in non-western cultures but also within western societies themselves. The neo-conservatives in the US while believing in neoliberal values in economic matters espouse conservatism in social and personal/family life and blame the dominant culture for the societal decay. In many places (in both western and non-western societies), the oppositional space is being occupied by religious/fundamentalist (or even fascist) forces. It is clearly evident in Islamic countries. But in Europe and America also, fundamentalist (or fascist) tendencies are emerging. In India too, there is a surge of communal forces.

This brings us to the current case of Latin America. The left's progress in Latin America is happening even in the absence of direct military US intervention. Of course, Latin America has a long history of US intervention and there have been historical opposition by peoples of Latin America against it. But the struggles there now are not Vietnam-type anti-colonial struggles. Although indigenous peoples and cultures survive in some areas (Bolivia, etc.), the peoples inhabiting Latin America are largely of European descent. The left ideology thus does not face the kind of cultural resistance it faces in non-western civilisations such as the Chinese and Indian and in the Muslim world. (It is however an issue as far as the indigenous peoples are concerned.) Here economic disparity also has a role to play – the rich-poor divide in Latin America is quite stark and the middle space is not that prominent.

Does it explain, even if partly, the differences in popular acceptance of left ideas between Latin America and other developing countries?

Protection of Western Ghats

It is very interesting to see the massive protest by the people fearing that they would be displaced in the name of protecting Western Ghats. All the time people should be alert about their safety and protection as well. Protection of people and environment go together. At the same time consciousness of the people about their rights and the need to protect the environment go together. It is also very interesting to see that the people are divided on this issue. There is a need for studies and discussion with those for and against. It is through this dialectical process and reflection that we come to the right choice.

The Madhav Gadgil Committee report envisaged people's participation in environment protection and sustainable use of natural resources and it was not anti-farmer as publicised by vested interests. "Many of these rumours are about things that are not even mentioned in the Gadgil report. Unfortunately, the report was not discussed in grama sabhas. It would have helped in clearing apprehensions about the proposals. It contains many recommendations aimed at encouraging farming activities, including provision of financial support to farmers. It should be discussed by the churches, parties, panchayats, municipalities etc. during the next one week with urgency. Human habitats will remain in ecologically-sensitive zones. Those who indulge in false propaganda spread rumours that people will be evacuated from these areas. It's absolutely wrong. The participation of every citizen is required in safeguarding the environment. By promoting organic farming and advocating green concepts in buildings, environmental protection can be ensured. We

also should study Kasturirengan Committee report as well. We should know the merit and demerits of both. And we should be able to propose the corrective measures to the MoEF, so that the correct decisions are made at the right time. The report should be translated and distributed at the grassroots level to clear if any suspicion among the farmer community, which is at the grassroots for a democratic set up in an agrarian based economy. The entire region of the Western Ghats is considered as a single entity and the division of taluks is based on scientific factors and it is the local bodies to decide the activities to be taken up there. The main proposals are: stop all quarries, stop removal of sands from river beds, no more construction of dams and flats, stop destruction of forests and creation of roads. Even the existence Mullaperiyar dam is questionable. There are three zones for the protection of the land. Here there are differences of opinions, which should be studied well. It is true that the land value has gone down in these areas. And the land mafias, flat construction mafias, road construction mafias are active and they have started buying land whole sale and thus farmers are displaced. We have to be alert on this collectively instead of blaming the reports. Agricultural land and Forest land should not be touched. Let us not create another Uttarakhand in Western Ghats. Through wrong development we can create destruction of environment, which can invite disaster in the whole areas. Ultimately the people are the victims. Our development should be all-inclusive - of people and of environment. The type of industries banned would be those included in the 'red list' issued by the government under the

Environment Protection Act. Those were usually considered to be the most polluting of the lot. If we do not save Western Ghats now, we will land in deep trouble. There is a very clear warning involved. The ecologically important grasslands are facing various kinds of threat. These could be effectively countered and there is enough provision for it in the Madhav Gadgil committee report on the Western Ghats, which specifically categorise the entire region into three zones based on the topographical features, cultivation, soil condition, and its bio-diversity spread. Protest and study should go together. The Panchayats and Grama Sabhas are the decision makers of development. Let us not shirk that responsibility.

-Thomas Kocherry

(Continued from Page 2)

public funds they propose to invest in big projects which will benefit the people in no tangible way can help build hundreds of toilets.

The statue of unity that Narendra Modi proposes to build in Gujarat is slated to be the world's tallest, taller than any edifice in the world at present. It will cost Rs.2500 crores, believe it not, and this sum is to be collected through public funds and private donations. The Viraat Ramayan Mandir, which Chief Minister Naresh Kumar, proposes to erect in his home state would be the world's biggest temple. It will cost Rs. 500 crores.

One is tempted to say: Build temples by all means, but why not spare a little out of the public funds and private donations earmarked for temples and statues for building toilets also? Let half the country which does not even know what a toilet is be enabled to use one and thus improve the quality of its life even marginally?

PPP Model School Scheme and its reality

Firoz Ahmad

The government document which details the PPP scheme for setting up 2500 model schools is titled 'Model School Scheme, Model School Under PPP Mode' and is available on the Department of School Education and Literacy, MHRD, GOI website mhrd.gov.in/msup_eng. Apart from these 2500 PPP schools which would be set up in the non-educationally backward blocks, another 3500 Model schools are to be opened by the government in the Educationally Backward Blocks. We are reproducing below the first paragraph of the document:

“A model school will have infrastructure and facilities at least of the same standard as in a Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) and with stipulations on pupil-teacher ratio, ICT usage, holistic educational environment, appropriate curriculum and emphasis on output and outcome. The standards of a model school will be at par with KVS and the target for performance in Board examinations should also be at par with the average performance of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS).”

These schools would have an upper intake of 2500 students each. Out of these, 980 students would be sponsored by the government. These schools are to begin from 6th grade which means that 140 students would be sponsored in each grade. Clearly, with each grade having nearly ten sections these schools are going to be modelled on large, impersonal manufacturing firms/factories and not on personalised

spaces shared by democratic communities. While nearly 40 per cent students, being supported by the government, would be admitted through tests, the rest would be admitted by the management and charged appropriate fees ‘in the interest of viability of the schools’. The state governments are expected ‘to assist the private entity in securing the required land’.

In light of the fact that the government would be disbursing, apart from the agreed amount for the sponsored students, another 25 per cent of the sponsored students’ support amount in the name of ‘infrastructure support’, phasing out its sponsorship after 10 years and allowing the management to charge unregulated fees from 60 per cent of the students, it is difficult to understand the ‘no-profit’ label and claims of the PPP schools. It is evident that the scheme envisages these schools to be special category ones to which admission would not be gained as a matter of right. This exceptionalism gives weight to the criticism of the RTE Act that the Act was never intended to address the educational needs and rights of the most marginalised. That the most ambitious and large-scale scheme the central government brings in after the passage of the RTE Act entails building another exclusive layer which would by-pass those very provisions of the Act which are held to be more generous, not only provides ample evidence of the state’s commitment towards maintaining inequality but also allows us to place the much touted

Act in perspective.

The scheme lists some conditions which would have to be fulfilled by the private operator in order to receive due financial support from the government. This list includes ‘Test on spoken English used by the children’. On the other hand, elsewhere (section 10) the document says that the ‘medium of instruction will be as per the norms of the affiliating National Board.’ Both these details, taken together, provide us another evidence of the hollowness of the RTE Act’s provision that the medium of education will be, as far as possible, the child’s mother tongue. It is clear that the real objective behind the setting up of such schools is not to educate the children on the basis of sound pedagogic and political principles. It should be clear, on the other hand, that nor is the objective to expose the students to the richness of languages other than their mother tongues, including English, taken seriously. The motive seems to be, on the lines of the cultural economy of a growing private school sector, to train and prepare an English-speaking work force for the private and multi-national global market employers.

Under the section ‘Eligibility for selection’ (section 22), it is stated that a ‘corporate entity would be eligible for one school for every Rupees 25 crore net worth...’ In case an ‘entity’ does not already have a CBSE school running under it, it may qualify if it has a track record of running an educational

institution for at least five years by making an interest-bearing deposit of Rs. 25 lakh for each school. Both these conditions are an open invitation to the capitalists and the money-launderers to see education as an area of profitable economic investment, if they are not already doing so. It is certain that once the official and policy-level encouragement to the corporate bodies to invest in education picks steam it will distort the social-transformatory responsibility and the character of schools, nice-sounding perfunctory statements in the document notwithstanding. Indeed, these minimalist provisions are in the order of mere lip-service and may be seen as unavoidable legal-political requirements.

It is said that monitoring of these schools will be carried out 'through extensive use of IT and UID systems besides tests, inspections and surveys'. Given the facts that the scheme virtually bypasses the state governments (except for pressuring them to aid the private entity gain land) and is another example of the centre usurping the state governments' politically and pedagogically legitimate and more urgent claims on school education, this proposed monitoring will entail at least one of the following two outcomes: Either the state governments will be called upon to direct their education departments and officials to give the on-ground feedback. This, in the context of already depleting and over-tasked staff, will only result in a further diversion of the states' bureaucratic, administrative and financial resources away from the regular government schools, thereby probably worsening their conditions through the signalling of reduced commitment and priority. Or, in case

the centre decides to monitor these schools on its own it will necessarily rely on the distance-mode which its faith in technology has encouraged it to clearly pronounce in the document itself. Any new structure it builds to monitor the scheme will have contractual employees, given the fact that the scheme promises ten years of government funding and involvement. Moreover, its employees will be beset by a conflict of interest as they would not be able to afford negative reports about these schools since the closure/defunding of the PPP schools will mean the shutting down of the parallel supervisory structure itself thereby throwing them out of jobs.

Similarly, state governments are expected to provide, apart from 'help' for land for the schools, financial support beyond the 10 years for which the centre would do so. Not only is the provision of uniforms, textbooks and mid-day meals also expected to take place from the state governments' coffers, but it is also hoped that they would 'consider providing transport subsidy or free transport for students to come from different parts of the blocks to the school and back' (section 24). It is not difficult to visualise the school environment where some (980 out of 2500) students are provided meals from public funds and others are not. And if the other (fee paying/management) students are also provided these meals then who would bear the additional costs? We must also remind ourselves that nowhere are the state governments providing free transport to the crores of regular government school students. It is only when such exclusionary and diversionary pet schemes are proposed that a financial commitment which should rightfully have been made in favour of the

common state run schools is instead unjustly prioritised for the special layer schools, thereby increasing the already existing gross inequality in the school system. The 'other' school system is bound to be left inferiorised in such circumstances, thereby paving way for its further defamation and disinvestment.

Section 25.2 (Special teaching for weaker students) says that 'intensive coaching in English language will be made available by such school for [government sponsored] students in classes 6 and 7 so that they can fully integrate'. It could not have been more clearly spelled that these schools will be English-medium ones, the RTE Act's relevant clause and the scheme's own inane section 10 (Medium of instruction) notwithstanding.

The irony of the scheme and its completely superficial commitment to education and pedagogic principles is betrayed when we juxtapose this promise of a generous provision for 'weaker students' – who are, clearly and of course, the government sponsored ones having come through screening tests and studied previously in government schools – with section 15 of the same document where the private partner is prohibited to carry out any 'coaching' activity in the premises. The conflation of 'weak students' with those requiring English language 'coaching' exhibits a similarly bogus and bankrupt understanding.

For 10 years that is during the government-funded phase, the schools would be called Rashtriya Adarsh Vidyalayas with two additional words being chosen by the private entity to be pre-fixed with each school. That is, the state is going

to provide all financial and other support to help the private entities set up profit-making schools and help them get on with their business. This is a phenomenon we are witnessing on a wide scale in various sectors. Public funds are used to establish and bolster institutions and win the trust of the people by serving them and thereafter the management and ownership of these institutions is transferred to the private-profiteers for them to make easy and avaricious use of the mechanisms, infrastructure and reputation built over the years by these institutions. The proposal of third party evaluation (section 29) also conveys the ideological underpinnings of the scheme. Clearly, the state is either a promoting party or an adversarial one which cannot be trusted by the other party to carry out the assessment of schools and students funded by public money. Thus, education is to be firmly placed in the private sector with its attendant dimensions of contracts, risks, insurance, profit etc. The whole idea is then sought to be transfigured, assuming a humiliating political and intellectual incapacity of the people of this country, into the CSR commitments of the same private firms (section 30). CSR or no CSR, the scheme can only be outrightly condemned and rejected by all those who are committed to the constitutional values of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice and oppose any and all commercialisation of education.

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The Last Signs of Slavery

The Last Signs of Slavery: My Lord/Your Lordship should be banned

Addressing judges as My Lord or Your Lordship in courts is a relic of the colonial era, a petition filed in the Supreme Court has asserted, and seeks a ban on their use in the country.

A PIL was filed by a 75-year old lawyer seeking the Apex court's direction to prohibit the use of such salutations in courts throughout India alleging that "it is a symbol of slavery and against the dignity of the country."

The petitioner Shiv Sagar Tiwari, submitted before a bench of Chief Justice P Sathasivam and Justice Ranjan Gogoi. The bench in response, raised the question whether any court in the country

(Continued from Page 3)

satyagrahi was required to purify himself in order to serve the society without any ulterior motive. Gujral visited the Pietermaritzburg railway station where a pamphlet was available relating how Gandhiji was thrown out of a first-class railway compartment exclusively reserved for whites.

My long cherished desire to meet Nelson Mandela came true as I joined Gujral during a banquet dinner hosted in his honour. Later at night, Mandela broke into dance and dragged Gujral onto the floor. Gujral's bonanza to government servants on the recommendations of the pay commission was too heavy a burden on the exchequer at a time when India was not in sound economic health. Had he implemented the other recommendations, such as the 30 per cent cut in the bureaucracy

insists in being addressed by these terms?

Tiwari in his petition wrote that Bar Council of India has already passed a resolution in 2006 saying that nobody will address the court in India as My Lord or Your Lordship but it was not being followed.

The petitioner said that Justice S Muralidhar of the Delhi High Court had acted on the resolution and insisted that no advocate address the officers of the court in any such manner. "The petitioner submits that the same principle should be adopted by all the judges in the judiciary including the Supreme Court, High Courts and subordinate courts."

The hearing could not take place further as Justice Gogoi recused himself from hearing the case. The CJI has stated that the case be listed before another bench....

and extended working hours, some balance might have been struck. But Gujral was under pressure from trade unions and the Left. The hike unbalanced the Central budget and was beyond the capacity of the states when they too were obliged to follow suit.

It is strange how the dust of time accumulates to obscure even the names of people who have served the country well in its most difficult times. The Congress party he served, practically his whole life, is opposed to him because he tried to bring back the party to its ethos of democracy, pluralism and egalitarianism. It is, indeed, a pity that these values have ceased to matter with political parties. Gujral would not have fitted in the Congress or any other party if he had been living today.

Anti-women snooping

We strongly condemn the illegal, unconstitutional and essentially *anti-women snooping* conducted by the Gujarat government as revealed in the recent media expose'. We collectively demand that a CBI inquiry should be initiated in the case at the earliest as it concerns the future of our democracy and polity. The direct involvement of the opposition party's prime ministerial candidate in such brazen and fundamental violation of democratic rights and the party's shameless defence is totally unacceptable.

Illegal surveillance is a serious crime, a violation of Constitutional rights.

When done to a woman, especially to probe her personal life and relationships, it's often stalking - violence against women.

But what when an elected head of state, his Home Minister, and a posse of senior cops stalk a woman obsessively wherever she goes? When taxpayer's money is spent on cops following the woman around on flights, in hotels and malls, when her phone is illegally tapped? Do we even have a word to describe this kind of terrifying, arbitrary misuse of state power?

The 'Saheb' tapes reveal that Gujarat Home Minister Amit Shah monitored the snooping on the woman by his top cops, reporting every movement of hers to 'Saheb'. Saheb himself, it is revealed, had his own surveillance mechanism to verify the cops' diligence.

Who is 'Saheb'? The tapes don't say. But the defence trotted out by the BJP has actually revealed more than the tapes do. They are citing

the statement issued by the woman's father, that the surveillance was actually a favour done by 'family friend' Modi for the woman's 'safety', and this 'family matter' should not be politicised.

The father's statement actually confirms that the tapes are genuine and 'Saheb' is in fact, the Gujarat CM, Modi. This is an admission of - and a lame excuse for - an appalling violation of constitutional entitlements of privacy and personal freedom.

The BJP's defence is painting a graphic picture of their notions of 'women's safety', where illegal surveillance of a daughter at state cost, personally monitored by the head of state and Home Ministry, is perfectly in order for a father to expect and receive. It is another matter whether the father's explanation actually explains the chilling transcripts, where the Home Minister talks vengefully of jailing a young man the woman is meeting, 'for as long as Vanjara is jailed.'

In its ridiculous defence, the BJP has argued that the women's father had asked for security which the Gujarat state had to duly provide. This diabolical answer only raises further questions: where are the documents supporting that the father made such request? Even if he did, is it constitutional to snoop on a woman to provide security to her? Why? On the contrary, the tapes reveal malicious intentions, not security concern. The conversation showed that Madhuri was not only kept in dark but the police was actually trying to lay a trap to find out what she was upto. The tapes clearly reveal that Amit Shah's 'Saheb' was particularly interested in knowing

who 'Madhuri' was meeting. With or without consent, stalking and snooping against citizens is a gross violation of the fundamental constitutional rights. Snooping against a woman on behest of her father is also unconstitutional and only exposes the deeply patriarchal and undemocratic mindset.

The BJP's claim about security is exposed further by the fact that Gujarat has seen a steep rise in crime against woman in the recent years - a 7% increase in rape over last one year. Gujarat has the lowest conviction rate for dowry killings in India: 0.0%. Conviction rates in crime against women are dismal and much below the national average.

The Home Ministry of the Gujarat Government was already implicated in a communal pogrom and a series of staged encounter killings. And now we have evidence of this illegal stalking of a woman. The Government that could not respond to Ehsan Jafri's desperate SOS calls now tells us that they put their crack police corps and Home Ministry at the service of a 'worried father'.

The truth about this chilling instance of state-sponsored stalking must be known. The conspiracy of silence around it must be broken, and patriarchal defences of it may be welcomed by the khaps and the Sangh's moral policing mobs, but never by common citizens and women. The BJP's shameless justification for its Prime Ministerial candidate's criminal acts deserves a wider public condemnation and reinforces our conviction for the need of defeating and politically isolating such anti-women, communal and undemocratic forces.

-AIDWA, AIPWA, NFIW, ANHAD, CPA, BMMA, AISA, JSSF and many other groups and individuals.

BJP's Prime Ministerial Candidate "kills" its Founding Father Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in 1930

Mukul Sinha

The Prime Ministerial candidate of BJP, Narendra Modi, exhibited his stupendous knowledge of history once again while speaking in the inauguration of a Hospital in Balasinor, Gujarat on 10th November, 2013. He vociferously blamed Congress for not bringing the asthi of the freedom fighter Shyama Prasad Mukherjee who Modi claimed had died in Geneva in 1930!

He informed the audience that Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, a great son of Gujarat had built India house in London. He also claimed that Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was in regular dialogue with Vivekananda and Dayanand Saraswati etc etc. Mukherjee was born in 1901 whereas Vivekananda died in 1902. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee must indeed be a great scholar to engage in a dialogue with Vivekananda at the age of just one year. Finally, as is his penchant to take credits, Modi said it was his good fortune to be able to bring back the ashthi (ashes) of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee from Geneva in 2003!

Imagine the next potential Prime Minister of our country totally ignorant about the founder of his own parent organisation Bharatiya Jan Sangh Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee who had died in Kashmir in 1953! Modi "kills" him in Geneva in 1930 and reduces Mukherjee to ashes much before Jan Sangh was born. The most ludicrous aspect of Modi's declaration was that he was in fact criticizing Manmohan Singh's speech in Chhattisgarh and

blaming Congress for distorting history and geography!

To correct the history – It was Shyamji Krishna Varma from Kutchh Mandvi, Gujarat, who had gone to London and with some in 1902 developed the India house which became the living space for many Indian freedom fighters. Shyamji had died in Geneva in 1930 and his ashes were handed over to Modi in 2003. But to invoke this incident incorrectly in Balsinor, Gujarat, is indeed hilarious.

Many would say that we are nit-picking on Modi for such bloopers. But how long can such illiteracy be permitted to be exposed to the world? Very recently, Modi in Patna went on to bring Alexander to Bihar and got him defeated by Biharis though Alexander never cross the Ganges. He also put Taxila in Bihar though it is in Pakistan. Imagine what his last declaration could have done if he was actually the Prime Minister. A war would have broken out between India and Pakistan for taking away Taxila from Pakistan!

Nitish Kumar gives Narendra Modi a history lesson

In the same meeting at Balasinor, Modi made many more bloopers but one more instance would suffice. He blamed the Congress for awarding the Bharat Ratna to Vallabhbhai Patel after it was awarded to Rajiv Gandhi. This is not true. Both Rajiv and Sardar had been conferred with

the Bharat Ratna in 1991. Both were conferred posthumously.

Why doesn't Modi make a grievance that no Government till date has conferred Bharat Ratna to Mahatma Gandhi, the tallest freedom fighter Gujarat has given birth to? If Modi can remember Sardar Patel, why does he forget Gandhiji?

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Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 68 No. 47
December 1, 2013

A visit to Bangladesh

Kuldip Nayar

**The changing character of
leaders and business executives**
K. S. Chalam

It's not only about Tehelka
Kalpana Sharma

This is Rape Number Two
Arundhati Roy

Solidarity Economy
D. K. Giri
Nivedita Giri

Drift in agriculture research
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Within a few minutes of my arrival at Dhaka, I was in the midst of a debate whether the parliamentary elections, to be held on January 5, 2014, would be fair and independent. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has constituted an all-party interim government and has even offered an olive branch to Begum Khalida Zia, who is her main opponent and heads the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). But Sheikh Hasina is “the problem” with Begum Khalida.

I can say after my five-day stay in Bangladesh that the polls would be fair if Khalida Zia boycotts them which look very much on the cards. Sheikh Hasina does not want to step down and looks like going to any extent to retain power. She amended the state's constitution which had provided for a caretaker government, headed by the outgoing retired Supreme Court Chief Justice, to supervise the polls.

What amazes me is the alacrity with which Sheikh Hasina has frittered away her four-fifths of majority in parliament. Her mis-governance has increased corruption, contaminating even the government functionaries in villages. Begum Khalida has aggravated the situation by organizing

hartal every third day, hitting the common man. Sheikh Hasina too had organized hartals when she was in the wilderness.

The two Begums, becoming prime minister alternatively, have talked to each other on phone probably for the first time. There is no breakthrough, not even via the conciliators, because of personal hostility. There is enough evidence to support the suspicion that Begum Khalida's close associates were behind the attack on Sheikh Hasina's meeting when she was out of power.

The Jammata-e-Islami is the biggest gainer. Methodically and relentlessly, it has created cells in all segments of the society, including the intelligentsia. The Jammata has the advantage of BNP's dependence on it. The two were together in the government which Begum Khalida had headed. They would be the coalition partners if and when the BNP comes to power again.

The worse fallout has been the birth of fundamentalism. It has been increasing because of the poisonous speeches the maulvis and the mullahs make after the Friday prayers. It goes to the credit of Sheikh Hasina

that she has kept the fight against fundamentalists on top of her agenda and has harked back to the days of secularism which the rule by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had ushered in.

Such sentiments have brought Sheikh Hasina popularity in India which too has adopted pluralism as the basic structure of its polity. But just as Narendra Modi, the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, has cast shadows on India's secular credentials, Khalida Zia has done in Bangladesh. A country which evoked hope when it liberated itself on the principle that religion would not be mixed with politics is today exhibiting an entirely different scenario. Religion is opium for the masses as Karl Marx has said.

The need of the Left is felt immensely. Bangladesh had a strong communist party. Now it is reduced to a rump and tends to tilt towards the establishment. Tragically, it is the same old story in the entire subcontinent, including India. Had there been hope of the Left's revival, 70 per cent of the subcontinent's people, extremely poor, might not have listened to the religious appeal as a force to propel progress. The Left could have retrieved the situation. Alas, the "God" has failed the people.

The anti-India feeling that Sheikh Hasina is confronting is because of her unilateral steps like the transit facilities to New Delhi to connect its northeastern states through the shortest route. Had Prime Minister Manmohan Singh given the Tista water to Sheikh Hasina, she would have been on a strong wicket. The late West Bengal chief minister, Jyoti Basu, was a visionary and accommodated Bangladesh on the Farrakha waters. Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee does not see beyond her vote bank.

As for Pakistan, I found little interest there than before. The people relate to it mostly as a reference point to their liberation struggle against what was once East Pakistan. Nine months before liberation, the Pakistani government, led by President General Yahya Khan, had refused to step down after the Awami League, based in East Pakistan, had won a majority in the national elections. For years the Bengalis in East Pakistan had chafed under governments that favoured the cultural and economic development of West Pakistan. The then moderate Awami League, with a clear majority gained in the freest and fairest election in years, could implement its Six Point Plan, giving East Pakistan autonomy in all areas except foreign affairs and defence. Instead, Yahya Khan used military to suppress the movement. However, I have found lately in Pakistan, during my earlier visit there, the regret over having lost part of the country because of the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's follies. One of Pakistan's leading lawyers said that they could now appreciate how the Indians felt about the division in 1947 when the British quit.

The post-liberation generation, nearly 65 percent of Bangladesh's population does not know what its forefathers went through to win freedom. Nor does it care to inquire. Surprisingly, there is no good book that describes the privations of those days available there.

Over the years, I have found that self-confidence and optimism has been increasing among the people. Despite the internal turmoil, Bangladesh has sustained six percent

growth for the last decade. Human development statistics are far better than those of India. Agriculture growth has made the country self-sufficient while the garment industry, although not following labour laws, is thriving.

No doubt, there is widespread poverty and the gulf between the rich and the poor is yawning. Yet the rural areas have done so much better that the people from there do not flock into cities as they used to do during the flood or scarcity. They may rough it out but they are self-developed. This is indeed commendable.

The future is no doubt unpredictable, but may see a large scale of violence, particularly at the time of elections because Begum Khalida is opposed to the polls under Sheikh Hasina. Many people think that the army can come back as it did some years ago. But then it had withdrawn when it found that the people were committed to democracy even if it had been disfigured by the two Begums.

One leading editor has gone to the extent of even suggesting intervention by the judiciary. He says, "We have nowhere to turn to but to the custodians of our constitution of law and citizens' rights."

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The changing character of leaders and business executives

K. S. Chalam

The mundane world, it is said, functions with the actions and decisions of people who are influential in the ordinary business of life. They are called leaders in public life and executives in the business world. There are publications elucidating the concepts and collating them as courses of study in Business Schools all over the world. However, quite often we read and pay attention to people talking about the dearth of competent leaders in the troubled world of today. It is true that we need leaders with a vision, aptitude and empathy for the people rather than attending to their immediate routines as political or other functionaries. History is replete with episodes of great men and women emerging as leaders to lead the people, groups, nations and countries to a chosen destiny who earned name and fame. Though, history does not recognize individuals as superhuman, the conditions and circumstances that shape the significant events are however, recorded and in the process some individuals might get recognition as leaders. Historians have recorded the significant contributions of Ashoka, Alexander, Akbar, Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Churchill, Attlee, Gandhi, Nehru, Ambedkar and several others both at the national and international levels. Now the issue is do we have capable leaders now to take on the threats of contemporary society?

It is often seen that old people who have passed the age of sixty, calling the younger generation hopeless individuals without any objectives in life. But, such indictments are proved false when young innovators or achievers demonstrate that they

are different. In other words, we can never generalize a situation to hit the mark. It is necessary to study the leadership qualities of the individuals and classify them as successful or unsuccessful. This is an academic approach to study personnel and we have now hundreds of institutes to teach and train people in leadership. Of late, media is also contributing its share to this enterprise. Interestingly, the notion 'training' introduced in the beginning to control animals like horse, dog and other pets as per our desires is being used now for humans indicating the absence of human element in most of these programmes.

Harvard University started the first Business School in the world in the year 1908. It changed the course of academic discourse of social sciences in a short period of less than a century. In fact, it is not a discipline, it is a programme borrowing its content mostly from economics, psychology and finance. But its influence on the world of knowledge and the value system is incredible and future historians would record that if there is any single training programme that has altered the direction of the society and economy, it is Business Management. Some scholars accuse that it has swallowed the Public Administration discipline and inspired NPM in governance.

Andhra University is the first in India to offer MBA and the course is so popular that we have today more number of so-called Business Schools than the Degree colleges. The one single contribution of

this course is that it has created respect for our word 'Guru' by means of recognizing thousands of management gurus, corporate babas, experts in leadership, soft skills, life skills trainers, etc. Some of them are well read and educated and many of them are charlatans out to make money out of the ignorance of the gullible. It is the American gurus who have defined and elaborated the new concepts of Leadership and Business Executive.

Warren Bennis, an American guru has said that, "Managers do things right. Leaders do the right things". The Austrian-American Peter Drucker has laid strong foundation for the development of the management course through his two dozen books not only in the USA but in several countries where English is popular. We have also our own guru (a late Professor of Michigan) who said that people can make money out of the poor and was responsible for the now unpopular micro finance business. There are executives who brought a turnaround in their chosen fields with inputs from management gurus. The ambitious among the successful gurus joined the world of business seeking money and muscle. A few of the gurus are on the radar of the media and police and the powerful ones are still in the corridors of power and business empires mediating and lobbying, may be for a consideration.

Experts in the field with the support of scholars through sponsored research have developed what is called instruments - consisting of batteries, schedules
(Continued on Page 5)

It's not only about *Tehelka*

Kalpana Sharma

The issue is *Tehelka*, and it is not. It is *Tehelka* because in the charge of sexual assault brought by a magazine staffer against the editor, Tarun Tejpal, the name of the magazine he founded and nurtured cannot be avoided. Thus even though the issue is about two individuals, it is also about the way a magazine that has set out to challenge and expose institutions, functions internally. The response of Tejpal and Shoma Choudhary, the managing editor of the magazine to what the latter has inappropriately termed “an untoward incident” tells a story that reflects on the values the magazine purports to support.

On the other hand, the issue is not only about *Tehelka*. It reflects on the state of the Indian media as a whole and its attitude towards sexual harassment at the workplace and how it is to be handled.

But let us look at several issues that the Tejpal episode raises. The incident that the staffer has detailed in her email to *Tehelka* managing editor Shoma Choudhary took place in Goa during the Think festival that the magazine organises each year. The staffer was given duties, such as looking after one of the foreign guests (duties that normally would fall outside the remit of a journalist, but we are told that *Tehelka* editorial staff have no choice in the matter). In other words, she was on work even if, technically speaking, the location was not her workplace. As such, the equation between her and Tejpal was unequal, with the former being an employee and the latter her boss. In classic cases of sexual harassment, it is precisely this kind of unequal power situation that comes into play.

Second, is one of attitude. This comes out in the messages that Tejpal allegedly sent to the woman after the two occasions when he assaulted her. In these messages he wanted her to agree that all this was just “banter”. The dictionary meaning of “banter” is “the playful friendly exchange of teasing remarks”. Forcing yourself on a woman is not “banter” by any stretch of the imagination. Yet the very fact that this is how he perceived it reveals the attitude of many men who think nothing of doing the same or similar things to the women with whom they work.

Third, we come to impunity. In his email to Choudhary, where he seeks “atonement” and wants to “recuse” himself from editorship for six months (why six and not 10, or 12 or any other number?), you sense a confidence that this is something that can be dealt with if you move quickly and are slick about it. So before the storm could break (and if you looked at social media on Thursday, it was nothing less than that), Tejpal sent off his infamous email. And Choudhary accepted his apology with alacrity, virtually dismissing the seriousness of the crime by calling it an “untoward incident” while Tejpal referred to it as “an error of judgment”. We can quibble about the two letters but what is evident is that both are brazenly ignoring the established law in this country.

According to the earlier Visakha guidelines on sexual harassment, formulated by the Supreme Court in 1997, and the recent Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, it is mandatory for institutions to have Internal

Inquiry Committees consisting of representatives of the employer and employees and at least one outside member who knows the law and is familiar with incidents involving sexual harassment. It is also mandated that half the members of the committee must be women.

Tehelka did not have such a committee in place (although it has now gone about setting it up). There was no inquiry held. And yet both the editor and the managing editor saw nothing wrong in unilaterally deciding that an apology and the editor “recusing” himself for six months was an adequate response to the very serious charge of sexual assault. In her mail to Choudhary, the woman had, in fact, explicitly asked for an inquiry.

These three aspects speak poorly not just of the individuals involved, or the publication, but also of the media as a whole. *Tehelka* is not an exception in its cavalier approach towards the crime of sexual harassment. We in the media point our fingers at every conceivable institution in this country and think it well within our rights to question and expose their shortcomings. Yet, how many media houses have complied with the Sexual Harassment Act and set up inquiry committees as required by this law? If a survey were to be conducted today, it is more than likely that less than a handful would have done so. For an institution that is constantly claiming the high moral ground, this lackadaisical attitude towards something that is not just mandated by law but is essential for the safety and well-being of the growing number of women in the media is unacceptable.

Another aspect that has emerged, yet again, is the power and the downside of social media. In a few hours, not only were the two letters of Tejpal and Choudhary circulating widely but also the confidential email sent by the *Tehelka* staffer to Choudhary. As [Reetika Subramanian](#) points out in her blog posting on the feminist blog *Ultra Violet*:

“Amidst the hordes of tweets and other posts on social media, another disturbing aspect that came to the fore was the brazen voyeurism of the masses. The Twitterati also christened themselves as the messiahs for justice.

“Bits and pieces from the confidential e-mail sent out by the victim made its way to social media websites. Within minutes, intimate details about the grave nature of the ‘unfortunate incident’ were analysed, re-analysed, tweeted and re-tweeted.

“The words ‘penetration’ and ‘disrobing’ invited the wrath of several tweeples. Conversations on the World Wide Web were spent on finding aspects to identify the ‘victim’ without naming her. Thus, with every minute passing by and every new notification, the seriousness of the offence was duly replaced with the need for more intimate details.

“Under the guise of disseminating ‘justice’ and backing the ‘victim’, there were aspersions cast against Tejpal’s twenty-something daughter. Eventually, she succumbed to the pressure and according to news reports, was compelled to delete her Twitter account.

“In this cacophony, I fear that this ‘unfortunate incident’ i.e. an act of ‘sexual harassment’ will be eclipsed by hypocrisy, voyeurism and the unending need to dispense justice in 140 characters.”

From the above it is evident that like mainstream media, social media too is being used to give out salacious details about sexual crimes rather than finding ways to deal with them. In the last one year, despite the discussions around rape coverage that ensued following the December 16, 2012 gang-rape in Delhi, we have seen how much of mainstream media still continues to skirt dangerously close to giving hints about the raped woman’s identity as also giving unnecessary details about the actual crime. This

(Continued from Page 3)

and questionnaires. They deploy standard statistical tools like ANOVA, Factor Analysis, and Regression, etc. to arrive at conclusions. Even political science (PA) scholars are obliged to accept Theory X and Y to denote leadership styles. However, a section of the intellectual community dissents that how the onslaught of a sundry subject is distracting the concerns of human sciences from the welfare of man to creation and accumulation of wealth. The endowment of the Harvard Business School with \$ 2.7 billion reflects this (one fourth or \$ 50 million contributed by Tatas alone). Some of our young politicians have stints of Business education and it has become a craze that civil servants are deputed to get flying degrees under one of Harvard or Stanford’s short term Executive Education Programme paying thousands of dollars as fees by the Government. Late P. C. Alexander, former Governor and Cabinet secretary, in one of his articles critically remarked: why the Government is deputing officers to USA and what do the incumbents learn except getting a label?

Leadership is about the capacity and ability of a person (s) to inspire people to achieve certain inclusive

serves no other purpose except satisfying readers who follow all such crime reports as if they were serialised crime fiction stories.

Above all, this episode reminds us yet again that the media is far from exemplary when it comes to covering crimes against women or to dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace. This would be as good a time as any to turn the searchlight inwards for both media institutions and social media users.

goals. It is also about the sacrifices that one can acquiesce in the interest of the followers and to realize the well being of people. Gandhiji and Abraham Lincoln who sacrificed their lives to uphold certain values under the spirit of common good are the kind of leaders that we are longing for. The leaders who are trained in competencies or skills like charisma, inspirational and intellectual stimulation, communication, guidance, etc are meant to add value to customers and margins to corporations. Regrettably, the delicate difference between Leadership and Business Executive is erasing after economic globalization.

The mind-set of the present leaders in most of the countries is overwhelmed by the business issues to see only short term gains and not the long run interests of humanity. It may be due to the fact that the capitalist democracy that guides the qualities of most of the leaders including George Bush (Harvard), were trained as business leaders. They are constrained by the corporate goals of some powerful lobbies that sponsor their candidature and not the enlightened citizens guiding them to attain collective dreams of people.

'This is Rape Number Two'

Arundhati Roy

Tarun Tejpal was one of the partners in India Inc, the publishing house that initially published my novel *The God of Small Things*. I have been asked by a number of journalists for my reaction to the recent events. I have been hesitant to say anything because of the howling media circus. It seemed vile to kick a man when he was down, especially when it seemed pretty clear that he would not get off lightly and that punishment for what he had done was coming his way. But now I am not so sure. The lawyers have moved in, and the big political wheels have begun to spin. My silence is liable to be vested with all sorts of absurd meaning.

Tarun was a friend for many years. With me he was always generous and always supportive. I have been an admirer of Tehelka too, albeit on an issue to issue basis. To me Tehelka's great moments were when it published Ashish Khetan's sting operation on some of the perpetrators of the 2002 Gujarat pogrom and Ajit Sahi's work on the SIMI trials. However, Tarun and I inhabited very different worlds and our views (on politics as well as literature) far from bringing us together, caused us to drift apart. What has happened now has not shocked me, but it has broken my heart.

The evidence against Tarun suggests that he has grievously sexually assaulted a young

colleague of his during the 'ThinkFest', an 'intellectual' carnival run by him in Goa. The ThinkFest was sponsored by a consortium of Mining Corporations, some who are themselves accused of misdeeds on a gargantuan scale. Ironically, in other parts of the country the sponsors of ThinkFest have contributed to creating a climate in which scores of adivasi women have been raped and murdered, and thousands of people have been imprisoned as well as killed. Several lawyers have said that according to the new law, the nature of Tarun's sexual assault amounts to rape. Tarun himself has admitted to his crime in his own emails and text messages to the woman he assaulted. From his position of uncontested power as her boss, he then loftily apologized to her, and then in an act that can only be described as delusionary, announced his own punishment—

six months of leave in order to "lacerate" himself. Now that it has become a police matter, on the advice of fat cat lawyers whose services only the very rich can afford, Tarun begun to do what many men accused of rape do—vilify the woman he preyed on and call her a liar. Outrageously, it is being suggested that Tarun is being 'framed' for political reasons—presumably by the Right-wing Hindutva brigade. So now a young woman who he very recently saw fit to employ, is not just a loose woman, but an agent of the fascists? This is Rape Number Two: the rape of the values and the politics that Tehelka claims it stands for, and an affront to those who work there and who have supported it in the past. It is the hollowing out of the last vestiges of integrity, political as well as personal. Free, fair, fearless. That is Tehelka's definition of itself. Where is courage now?

Illustrative of this was Congress general secretary Digvijay Singh this evening. "I know Tarun Tejpal for a long time," he said on the sidelines of Pappu Yadav's book launch. "But this is also true that Tejpalji had carried out a sting operation on the then BJP President and minister of the NDA government. After that, the manner in which people from Tejpal's Tehelka institution were targeted and the way the media was strangulated during NDA government is also a historical fact... He has been fighting against communal forces."

Asked about the rape charge against him, he said it was a "matter between a young journalist, an employee of Tehelka, and its editor."

– The Indian Express

Janadhikar Yatra

It is great irony of situation that the two multinationals, Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola were invited by the two CPM leaders, E.K.Nayannar, the then Chief Minister of Kerala and Sushila Gopalan, minister in his cabinet (and wife of the late prominent communist leader, A.K. Gopalan who had gone all the way to the U.S. for that. In 1998, Coca Cola started its activity at the village Perumatty and Pepsi Cola in Puttusery villages, situated at the southern tip of Kerala. Trial run was conducted in 1999 and commercial production was started in the year 2000, after obtaining permits to do so from the respective Gram Panchayats.

Slowly the people started realizing that the two MNCs were overwhelmingly overdraining the water from underground and that there was pollution of air and water due to the functioning of their two plants. Most of the local people are adivasis. They raised their voices and started agitation in 2002. It was an uphill task because most of the political parties and organizations were supporting the two MNCs on the spacious ground that “they have generated employment for the local people and are likely to beacon other enterprisers to invest in the state”. However, a number of civil society people and activists of National Alliance of Peoples Movements came out in support of the tribals. Under the banner of “Plachimada Solidarity Committee, vigorous campaign was carried on throughout the state and the country at large. Great pressure was exerted on the Gram Panchayats as a result of which, the latter withdrew the permits issued to the two MNCs.

The companies tried their best to salvage the situation. But it was in vain. So the companies approached law courts. The litigation dragged on. By 2006, the companies stopped their activities. But the people were not satisfied. They raised the issue of compensation. The Kerala Government first appointed expert committee to gauge the amount of compensation. Later on the task was assigned to the Chief Secretary who estimated the amount of loss and compensation of Rs 216 crores.

Then arose the question of who would bell the cat. Because of the immense support from the masses, a resolution was passed, unanimously, in the Kerala Legislative Assembly requesting the Central Government to appoint a tribunal. The bill was sent to the President of India for his/her assent. The matter remained pending because of the inaction of the Home Ministry of the Government of India. Due to formal technicalities, that bill has lapsed. So the people of Plachimaeda have started agitation to request the Assembly to pass similar resolution

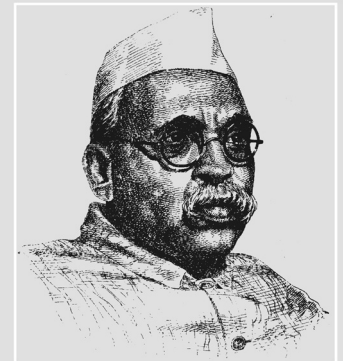
With a view to mobilize public opinion all over the State, it was decided to organize Janadhikar Yatra to visit all the fourteen districts in the State. The Yatra was flagged off at Kasargod on 25th November 2013 by the Socialist Party leader Pannalal Surana. On the occasion he said, “It is the habit of the MNCs to shirk responsibility for the losses caused by their misdeeds and then run away from the responsibility of paying compensation. The case of Bhopal gas tragedy is dragging on for the last thirty years. Now the corporates of the US and France are asking for

dropping the liability clause in the nuclear power plants bill. They want to grab the natural resources of the developing countries. So the struggle of the Plachimada people is a symbol of the struggle of all the Indian toiling masses. We should build up pressure so that the MNCs will not dare to cast evil eye on our natural resources which should be harnessed for upliftment of the masses.”

The Yatra includes the two elderly women from the village Plachimada, namely, Muthu Laxmi and Kannivari Amma. Other volunteers include Vilayodi Venu Otopalan, Arumukhun Pathichi Rao, N.P. Johnson, K.V.Biju, Kunhi Krishnan. The Yatra will go to the home of A. K. Antony, Union Minister of Defence, on 14th December, 2013.

—A correspondent

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Solidarity Economy

D. K. Giri
Nivedita Giri

Economic planning in almost all countries in the world is driven by growth. If a national economy is not constantly growing at a steady rate it is seen to be inefficient, fraught with bad policies and poor management. The World Economic Forum at Davos meets regularly to discuss the growth strategies of various countries. The main objective of this forum is to discuss the economy in terms of “shaping the regional, global and industry agenda”. At the other end of the economic spectrum is the World Social Forum (WSF) demanding justice and rights. The WSF is a collective of civil society organizations which seeks “to develop an alternative future through championing of counter-hegemonic globalization”. However, this forum is perceived to be a protest group making unrealistic demands and peddling utopian ideas. In the wake of the financial crises, like the one that was witnessed recently, there are temporary bouts of austerity measures like cuts in public spending and so on, and once the crisis is over, we are back to business as usual. Whether it is the time of austerity or affluence, the poor remain marginalized, deprived and left behind, as the issues of chronic poverty inequality and fairness slide from public view. In India, according to Arjun Sengupta report, almost 60 per cent people live on less than two dollars a day, whereas the national output has grown manifold. So the difference between the past and present approach to poverty alleviation is not a crisis of affordability. It is a crisis of political will and strategy.

Recognizing this deficit, there are well meaning people across the world, thinking of fresh initiatives. One such initiatives is the creation of International Forum for the Social and Solidarity Economy of Entrepreneurs, (SSE) working through “the Monte-Blanc Meetings” (MBM). We had an opportunity to meet a couple of managers of this Forum to discuss their rationale, objectives and activities. The forum was created out of two meetings held in New York at UN headquarters on 26 March 2012 and again in Rio-de Janeiro at Rio+20 summit on 19 June 2012. Then, subsequently, the Forum for SSE got the special consultative status to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of UN. With this organisational background, the Forum seeks to promote SSE internationally.

Its objective is to “promote the social and solidarity economy in the world, making this Forum of entrepreneurs accessible to all people and to increase the recognition of this economic model in public policies implementation”. The stakeholders of this Forum would include all countries from across the world, which represent socio-economic diversities where SSE has a place. France and Brazil have already agreed to become members. The Forum includes civil society organizations like International Cooperative Alliance and Regional Group of Cooperatives.

The latest meeting of this group took place between 9 and 11 November 2013 in Chamonix

Mont-Blanc, France. This was the 6th edition of Mont-Blanc Meetings bringing together 350 participants from 45 countries, and 5 continents. The theme of the meeting was “changing the course of globalization through social and solidarity economy - towards 2015 Millennium Development Goals”. Among others, the meeting was attended by Benoit Hamon, the French Minister of Economy and Finance, with responsibility of social and cooperative economy. His presence was important inasmuch as he was the representative of the French president Francois Hollande, who has agreed to be a patron of this group and get other countries to join.

The 6th Mont-Blanc Meeting took many path-breaking decisions, concerning the organization and its activities. These decisions are meant to promote SSE in respective countries of delegates present in the meetings. The meeting resolved to map SSE initiatives in the world: lobby the national governments about SSE policies, engage the UN bodies to focus on SSE in their projects, sensitize the development banks on social inclusion - mainly of women and minorities - a critical component of SSE, work for the creation of international guarantee fund for SSE, work jointly with cooperative banks and trade union federations. Over all, it resolved that the Forum should be “active, constructive, and a platform that brings together those who want to act together to promote, strengthen and develop the social and solidarity economy”.

The Forum encourages projects and enterprises which promote solidarity economy. It has identified 60 odd enterprises from 30 countries which are engaged in solidarity economy. The enterprises have been selected on the basis of their links to the sustainable development and triple bottom line - profit, people and planet, their structuring capacity for projects in terms of scale and longevity, etc. The themes covered by the survey include multi-sectoral projects, agriculture and food, climate change, energy, socially responsible financing, territorial occupation and management, social media and technologies as well as transboundary cooperation. A few innovative enterprises of socially responsible finance, from among eight enterprises identified are Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, Banco Palmas in Brazil, Uplift India Association in India. Grameen bank is a well known model. Banco Palmas is a community bank, created in a place called Conjunto Palmeiras, a favela of 30,000 inhabitants in the north of Brazil. A favela is a slum or shantytown located within or on the outskirts of the Brazil's large cities, especially Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The settlement at Conjunto came up as the poor Brazilians got expelled from the city and were re-housed away from the city. Some more people from rural areas intending to migrate to the towns came to this settlement. The locals there formed the Association of Inhabitants of Conjunto Palmeiras (ASMOCONP) in 1979. During 1980s and 1990s, the residents formed a community maternity centre, campaigned for better living conditions - and successfully mobilized funding for them.

Banco Palmas was created in 1998 by ASMONCOP to provide

micro-credit; they also introduced local currency that can be used to buy goods in the district shops. The idea was to create supply and demand in the district, combine microcredit with local currency to create small businesses and localize the transactions for the sake of self-reliance. The community bank managed fully by the locals has been a successful model and replicated in other parts of Brazil and Venezuela. It has won international prestigious prizes such as Millennium Development Goal Prize, UNESCO Orilaxe prize, and the Visionary Prize.

The Uplift India Association is a health insurance agency created in 2003 as a network of mutual insurance companies. In India, the facility of health insurance is not available to all, especially the poor. Without access to health insurance, the people with low income have to borrow or sell their meager assets to pay for health care, mainly in case of emergency and hospitalization. Many people suffer from illness and remain in pain and agony as they cannot afford to pay for the treatment. Uplift India came up to provide support for the development and management of mutual health insurance for the poorest segment of the population. Its services have been extended to the slums of Pune and Mumbai as well as in some rural areas of Maharashtra. It has now 115,000 members.

These enterprises identified by the Forum demonstrate how creative ideas can animate and inspire others to fight poverty, deprivation and backwardness, and help build a momentum for deeper changes. As we wish to create a new context for solidarity economy, we need to embrace solidarity as principle of

social and political organizing, in other words build a solidarity society. The principle consists of public attitude and structure of relationship between individual citizens based on self-interest, sense of fairness, mutual sharing and caring and so on. For example, economic policies with narrow coverage divide population into groups, who may think of their interests and identities in terms of 'them' and 'us' whereas policies with wide coverage align interests and identities so that people feel "we are in this together". So the lesson here is the policies that just target 'poor' or attack poverty, may not be effective. Alternatively, policies which foster a 'shared sense of citizenship', harnesses collective and cooperative instincts of citizens, in other words promote solidarity, seem to work better. This is the spirit and the principle that seems to be the basis of creations of Solidarity Economy. This is very welcome as well as promising initiative that deserves to succeed.

Studies in Socialism

By

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published by

Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan
Centre for Socialist Studies
Bangaluru

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Defeat communal forces in the coming elections

In a multi-religious country like India democracy can subsist only on the basis of secularism. Since independence there has been gradual growth of a democratic culture. However the BJP and its sister organizations, under the patronage of RSS, have been continuously trying to sabotage this process of democratization for narrow electoral advantage.

The campaign for 'Ram Janambhoomi' launched by BJP was its first major assault on Indian democracy leading to demolition of Babri Masjid in December 1992, and giving rise to feeling of resentment and insecurity in the Muslim community. The demolition also afforded a pretext to international Jihadi terrorist organizations to interfere and expand their terrorist activities in India.

In 1998, as soon as the BJP coalition government was formed, the first act of Vajpayee was to launch a programme to have nuclear weapons claiming that it would ensure the security of India. But in fact it has enhanced its insecurity. With its very limited nuclear weapons, India is rapidly becoming a puppet state of the U.S.A., while Pakistan has also acquired nuclear weapons. In this process, the continuous huge expenditure in acquiring and maintaining nuclear weapons has diminished Indian resources for reducing mass poverty and unemployment - thus adversely affecting the process of economic development.

Under BJP coalition rule, India's history has been perverted and distorted in order to paint past Muslim rule in India as being harmful to Hindus. Another term of BJP's government will cause further perversion in teaching history to Indian students.

During NDA regime, in many a department such as education, industry, police, etc. vacancies were filled up by the appointment of supporters of the BJP. This process has proved highly detrimental to the continuation of a secular democracy in the country. The process of arresting large number of innocent Muslim youths started as soon as the BJP coalition government came to power in 1998 and the police officials involved in this process still continue to function with impunity in spite of change in government.

Political opportunism which is the main cause of the increasing corruption as well as vulgarization of government services increased during the rule of BJP-led coalition government. For example, Vajpayee supported Mayawati when she secured the support of 35 unprincipled legislators by appointing all of them as ministers, many of them even without portfolios, in order to avoid collapse of her government.

The most atrocious act committed by BJP at present is in declaring Narendra Modi as its Prime-Ministerial candidate, who is well known for his anti-Muslim

sentiments and for the genocide which took place in Gujarat in 2002 under his chief-ministership. Many fake encounters which took place in Gujarat and the recent exposure of surveillance of a young woman in which large number of police officials were employed by the Gujarat government at the behest of 'Modi' reveal the nature of governance which may be employed for the entire country if BJP comes to power. To top it all, BJP has honoured in a rally at Agra, the two MLAs namely, Sangeet Singh Som and Suresh Rana who are on bail and who are accused of instigating recent communal violence in Muzaffarnagar areas in UP in which about 60 persons were killed, large number missing, women raped, crores of property looted/destroyed and around fifty thousand persons are still residing in relief camps.

The aforesaid few instances justify the conclusion that the rule of a communalist party like BJP cannot benefit our country. The opportunism of other political parties may not be as dangerous for the survival of democracy as that of BJP as the rule of latter is surely going to turn India into a Fascist State. To save the secular democracy of India, it is necessary that a BJP government does not come to power in the next elections.

We therefore appeal to the voters to ensure the defeat of BJP and its allied partners in order to save democracy and rule of law in India.

Kuldip Nayar
(President)

N.D. Pancholi
(General Secretary)

Citizens For Democracy

Candidates contesting in the Delhi 2013 Assembly Elections

Delhi Election Watch and Association for Democratic Reforms have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 796 candidates out of 810 candidates who are contesting in the Delhi State Assembly Elections. What follows are summary and highlights of the analysis:

- **Candidates with Criminal Cases:** Out of the 796 candidates analysed, 129 candidates (or 16%) have declared criminal cases against them. In 2008 Delhi Assembly elections there were 111 (14%) candidates with declared criminal cases out of 790 candidates analysed.
- **Candidates with Serious Criminal Cases:** Out of the 129 candidates who have declared criminal cases, 93 (12%) have declared serious criminal cases. These include attempt to murder, robbery, dacoity and crime against women.
- **Party-wise Candidates with Criminal Cases:** 15 (21%) of 70 candidates fielded by INC have declared criminal cases against them while 31 (46%) out of 68 candidates from BJP, 14 (21%) out of 67 candidates from BSP and 5 (7%) out of 70 candidates from AAP have declared criminal cases in their affidavits.
- **Party-wise Candidates with Serious Criminal Cases:** 8 (11%) of 70 candidates fielded by INC have declared serious criminal cases against them while 22 (32%) out of 68 candidates from BJP, 12 (18%) out of 67 candidates from BSP and 5 (7%) out of 70 candidates from AAP have declared serious criminal cases in their affidavits.
- **Party-wise Comparison of Candidates with Criminals Cases with 2008 Assembly Elections:** INC had 30% candidates with criminal cases in the 2008 Assembly Elections which has gone down to 21% in the 2013 Assembly Elections. BJP had 35% candidates with criminal cases in the 2008 Assembly Elections which has risen to 46% in 2013 Assembly Elections. BSP had 23% candidates with criminal cases in the 2008 Assembly Elections, which has gone down to 21% in 2013.
- **Red Alert Constituencies:** 14 constituencies have at least 3 candidates from these political parties with declared criminal cases. Red Alert Constituencies are those which have 3 or more candidates with criminal cases standing up for elections. This analysis excludes independent candidates with criminal cases.
- **Cases of Attempt to Murder and related charges:** 1 candidate has declared charges relating to causing death by negligence (IPC 304A) and 3 candidates have declared charges related to attempt to commit culpable homicide (IPC 308) against themselves while 10 candidates declared attempt to murder charges.
- **Cases related to Robbery and Dacoity:** 3 candidates have declared robbery or dacoity related charges against them.
- **Crimes against Women:** 13 candidates have declared crimes against women. 9 of these 13 candidates have declared charges related to assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty (IPC Section-354). 1 candidate has declared case related to husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty (IPC Section – 498A) and one candidate declared a case of causing miscarriage without woman's consent (IPC Section-313)
- **Crorepatis Candidates:** Out of the 796 candidates analysed, 265 (33%) are crorepatis. In 2008 Delhi Assembly elections there were 180 (23%) crorepatis candidates out of 790 candidates analysed.
- **Average Assets:** The average asset per candidate contesting in the 2013 Delhi Assembly Elections is Rs.3.43 Crores. Average asset per candidate in 2008 Delhi Assembly elections was Rs.1.77 crores.
- **Party-wise Average Assets:** Among major parties, the average asset per candidate for INC is Rs 14.25 crores, BJP candidates have an average assets of Rs.8.16 crores while the average assets of AAP candidates is Rs. 2.51 crores.
- **High Asset Candidates:** Manjinder Singh Sirsa of SAD from Rajouri Garden constituency has declared highest assets worth Rs.235.51 crores followed by Sushil Gupta of INC from Moti Nagar constituency with declared assets worth Rs.164.44 crores and Ashok Kumar Jain of INC from Delhi Cantt constituency with declared assets worth Rs.143.69 crores.
- **Undeclared PAN:** 117(15%) out of 796 candidates analysed have not declared their PAN details.
- **Average Assets in 2008 Elections:** The average asset of these 66 re-contesting MLAs fielded by various parties including

independents in 2008 was Rs 2.90 Crores.

- Average Assets in 2013 Elections: The average asset of these 66 re-contesting MLAs in 2013 is Rs 10.43 Crores.
- Average Asset growth in 5 years (2008-2013): The average asset growth for these 66 re-contesting MLAs, between the Delhi Elections of 2008 and 2013 is Rs 7.53 Crores.
- Percentage growth in 5 years (2008-2013): Average percentage growth in assets for these 66 re-contesting MLAs is 259%.
- Highest growth In Assets in 5 years (2008-2013): Sat Prakash Rana of BJP from Bijwasan constituency has declared maximum increase in assets with an increase of Rs 105.51 Crores i.e from Rs 6.38 Crores in 2008 to Rs. 111.89 Crores in 2013 (Sat Prakash Rana has not declared the value of two vehicles in his 2008 affidavit) Assets of Ram Singh Netaji of INC from Badarpur constituency has increased by Rs 50.26 Crores, from Rs 8.44 Crores in 2008 to Rs 58.71 Crores in 2013. Assets of Tarvinder Singh Marwah of INC from Jangpura constituency have risen by Rs 27.99 Crores, from Rs 7.06 Crores in 2008 to Rs 35.05 Crores in 2013 (Insurance policy value and one vehicle value was not provided in his 2008 affidavit).

Candidates Education: A total of 280 (35%) candidates out of 796 analyzed are graduates or have higher degrees. 479 (60%) candidates have educational qualification of 12th pass and below.

Candidates' Age: A total of 556 (70%) candidates out of the 796 analyzed, have declared their age to be between 25 and 50 years. 216 (27%) candidates declared their age

to be between 51 and 70 years. 10 candidates are in the age group of 71-80 years.

Women Candidates: Out of 796 candidates analyzed, only 69 (9%)

women are contesting in the Delhi 2013 Assembly Elections. Among the major political parties, INC and AAP has fielded 6 women candidates each and 5 women are contesting under BJP ticket.

Nehru vs Patel

I refer to the "Between the lines" in the *Janata* dated 10th November, 2013. I find some inaccuracies in the statements made by Kuldeep Nayar.

1. I was present at the public meeting held at the Girgaon Chowpatty sands in 1947/48 when the redoubtable Sardar declared to thunderous ovation from lakhs of people gathered that "Jinnah says that there should be exchange of population. Let Mr. Jinnah take away his Muslim population from India first. Thereafter we will think about bringing the Hindu population from Pakistan". Shri Nayar may like to look up the *Times of India* archives to ascertain the truth. It was certainly not Sardar Patel who mooted the idea of exchange of population. And I say this with all the emphasis at my command.

2. None unfortunately refers to the decisions of Supreme Court throwing out the ban on RSS. All appear to make it subjective between the Sardar and Golwalkar or Hindu communalism vs Muslim secularism.

3. Mahatma Gandhi, with all his background, philosophy, non-violence and secularism, and more importantly, his practice of remote control, was, in retrospect,

an unsuspecting simple God-fearing individual who unreservedly trusted all who were around him. That explains the adoption of Shri Nehru as his heir apparent. That explains also the famous photograph of Gandhiji and Nehru clicked at Cowasji Jehangir Hall in 1946 after their release from jail and where the first post-War AICC meeting was held. Nehru had addressed a public meeting opposite Tata Bunglow at Azad Maidan (named after Maulana Abul Kalam Azad) in the morning and had gone straight to Cowasji Jehangir Hall for the meeting. You might recall Nehru holding his spectacles listening to Gandhiji like a dumb child while Gandhiji is shown talking to Nehru with a wide grin, on the dais.

4. It is not that the Sardar was called the Iron Man of India for nothing. He unified India with an iron hand. He had rightly chosen the ends as more important in the given surcharged conditions. Otherwise India would have been balkanised as predicted by Sir Winston Churchill.

The *Dramatis personae* are no more around. Let us therefore, neither ignore nor change historical truths.

B. M. Rao

Drift in agriculture research

K. P. Prabhakaran Nair

The other day, a poor farmer from the interior of Kerala asked me, “Sir, in summer when we have severe water scarcity, even for drinking, besides for our marginal farming, can we get some from the moon, where scientists said water is available in plenty more than five years ago?” An innocent question, but it speaks volumes for the relevance and impact of Indian science to the life of the common man. Come summer, Kerala, despite receiving the second highest rainfall in the country, next only to Cherrapunji in Meghalaya, suffers the most acute water scarcity, in spite of the presence of a huge centre exclusively for research and development in water management in northern Kerala, functioning for almost half a century.

Not long ago, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), with much fanfare and a colossal sum of money invested from the national exchequer, told us it has been able to detect water on the surface of the moon (the Americans had done it decades ago). Now, the media hype on the ISRO mission to Mars makes me think, what next? Surprisingly, the former ISRO chief who marshalled thousands of crores for the moon mission now points a finger at the current one to say that the Rs 450 crore-plus spent on the Mars mission is a waste of money.

Ironically, the principal scientific adviser to the prime minister comes to the defence of the new chief saying that “Rs 450 crore is peanuts compared to the central

fund allocation for science”. As an honest taxpayer, and one who does not understand space science, I am aghast at the thought that the country seems to be awash with so much cash that it simply can dole out Rs 450 crore as though doling out a morsel of peanuts!

Like the poor illiterate farmer who questioned me about bringing water from the moon to his parched fields and thirsty mouth, I am concerned about what is happening to the crores spent on agricultural research, as I am back in India, having spent over three decades in Europe, Africa and other parts of Asia. I have been closely following the so-called green revolution, euphemistically called thus, for a high-input industrial type of agriculture, transplanted on Indian fields, which had nothing truly “green” about it (the term itself was originally coined by an American scientist working for the US Department of Agriculture, USDA for short, surreptitiously lifted by someone here, which became a household term subsequently) that in essence was nothing but a combination of a short type of wheat (again imported from the International Research Centre for Maize and Wheat Research {CIMMYT} in Mexico), unbridled use of chemical fertilisers, water and pesticides. And the adverse environmental fallout is all there for one to see. Please go to Punjab the “cradle” of the green revolution, the reader will understand what I say here.

My real worry is that those who boss over the agricultural research set-up in India seem unable to answer some very difficult and uncomfortable questions. Let us take a bird’s eye view of the monolith, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). There are 98 institutes of one kind or the other, which have been set up or were subsumed by ICAR after it was given full control over all the research institutes under the ministry of agriculture in 1966.

The term coined then was the National Agricultural Research System (NARS). Additionally, ICAR funds and oversees about 56 State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), besides four deemed universities and a Central Agricultural University for the Northeast. With 24,000 scientists and a 12th Five-Year Plan budget of Rs 25,000 crore (initial request was Rs 50,000 crores!), this is “no peanut”. Yet, what does the common man reap? The ICAR often boasts one of the largest national agricultural systems in the world. My finding is that in terms of its geographical spread, manpower, budget allocation and infrastructure, it takes the third spot behind USDA and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS).

But there it stops. Both USDA and CAAS have made spectacular contributions to agricultural science. The spectacular fundamental research in soil science (where I had the privilege to collaborate) of USDA and the American varsities

and the hybrid rice of CAAS are just two examples. And what do we have to show to the world except a failed “green revolution”? The problem arises when one takes a very hard look at a balance sheet — input and output. Take the case of a country like Brazil, with far less manpower and budget, which has made a lot more impact on farming of the poor peasants. The current director-general of ICAR admits that present challenges to Indian farming are daunting. He cites soil degradation (thanks to the so-called green revolution) and the consequent plateauing of crop yield, especially in rice and wheat, as examples. What have the scientists of ICAR and SAUs done to mitigate the problem? Put another way, the dwarf “miracle” wheat imported from CIMMYT (it was no innovation here) did the wonder for about two decades, but what have the subsequent ones offered? A yield difference of 1-5 per cent, one way or another. Is there any spectacular one that helps a yield jump of 300 per cent over those currently cultivated? This is a question Indian scientists cannot face.

More importantly, when we take up a project to emulate others, it turns out to be not just a failure, but a real fraud. Almost a decade ago, when Monsanto-peddled Bt Cotton made headlines, ICAR began foraying into a desi Bt Cotton. Alas, the “Bikaneri Narma” (BN Bt) Cotton turned out to be not just a failure, but a fraud and flew in the face of the DG. Monsanto made profit of Rs 2000 crore-plus from its royalties. A former vice chancellor and his top colleagues of University of Agricultural Sciences in Bangalore are facing criminal charges for clandestinely letting Mahyco (a Monsanto subsidiary)

poach Indian brinjal violating agricultural biodiversity norms. Is there a greater shame? Here is what an official of the agriculture ministry said: “Cotton is a good example of what is happening in agricultural science. Pitted against companies with a turnover of Rs 4000-crore plus annually, our research has

faltered and fallen by the way side.” Is there a worse indictment than this, coming as it is, from our countryman? Unless fresh ideas and brilliant minds combine, Indian agricultural research will go down the drain, squandering public money.

– New Indian Express

Socialist Party candidates campaign for a better Delhi

The Socialist Party candidates Abdul Qayyum from Olhla, Anita Ujjainwal from New Delhi, Rajiv Kumar from Ghonda, Mohammad Shoaib from Rajender Nagar and Prof. R.N. Singh (supported by the party) from Burari are doing effective campaign in the Delhi Assembly election. They are contesting election on ‘Whistle’ symbol.

Motivated by socialist ideology Socialist Party candidates are distributing pamphlets, holding padyatras, corner meeting and street plays in the campaign. They have put a straight forward appeal to the voters : ‘Decision is in your hands whom would you help to win - the candidates of the Socialist Party whose politics is based on policies or people who take millions and billions from national and international corporate houses, and then contest elections for their benefit.’

The Socialist Party has entered the elections with the following agenda:

1. Electricity, water, education and health services should remain completely in the public sector.
2. The decision of FDI in the retail sector should be repealed forever.

Civic amenities should be provided to Delhi villages, resettlement colonies, and JJ clusters on a priority basis.

3. Delhi University’s four year B.A program should be immediately scrapped; the studying and teaching of Urdu and Punjabi language /literature should be given special encouragement; and the Common School System (CSS) should be followed.
4. The Justice Sachar Committee Recommendations should be implemented in toto in the state of Delhi.
5. The victims of the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 should get full justice without further delay.
6. The citizens of Delhi, especially children, women and senior citizens should be given full security.

–Renu Gambhir
President Delhi State



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Vol. 68 No. 48
December 8, 2013

High fives to electorates
Kuldip Nayar

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K. S. Chalam

Universal old age pension
Pannalal Surana

Socialism and Culture
Bapu Heddurshetti

Bribes and Spies
A. G. Noorani

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of socialism violates the
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The Telengana muddle

The Centre's handling of the Telengana issue is an apt illustration of how not to deal with major and controversial national issues. The Telengana cauldron has been simmering for nearly two decades. Even if it is granted that the issue is delicate and needed careful handling, is there any excuse for the slipshod manner in which the Centre is and has been dealing with it.

Firstly, whose baby is Telengana at the Centre? Is the Home Minister and his ministry in charge? Is it the Prime Minister? Or is it Sonia Gandhi? Or is it the sundry ministers representing Telengana and Andhra Pradesh in the Congress-led coalition government? Who has been looking into the legal problems that the proposed bifurcation of Andhra is bound to create? Similarly, who has looked into the division of waters? Or, for instance, has anyone devoted any deep thought to the eventual status of Hyderabad after the ten-year waiting period during which it will be the common capital? Has anyone at the Centre any idea of how explosive the Hyderabad question can turn into when the final decision about its status is taken?

A Group of Ministers (GoM) has been dealing with the "nitty-gritty"

problems incidental to the creation of Telengana. This body has made its own ill-informed contribution to an already complex and burning problem by suggesting that two districts of Andhra Pradesh in the Rayalaseema region (Kurnool and Anantapur) be tagged on to Telengana whose nomenclature could be changed to Rayala-Telengana. This suggestion so patently made with an eye on Congress prospects in the coming Lok Sabha polls has so infuriated public opinion in the state and has angered the Telengana region that the Telengana Rashtra Samiti called for a day's bandh in the yet-to-be-formed state. The BJP has reacted by denouncing the suggestion as a ploy by the Congress to avoid tabling the Telengana Bill in Parliament. The party suspects that the idea has been mooted to please the Congress-ally the All India Majlis-e-ittihad-ul Muslimeen leader Asaddudin Owaisi who had wanted it. The way the Congress and the GoM have handled the issue, everyone other than the ruling party suspect that the group is tinkering with the problem and has prejudices to overcome.

Incidentally, the GoM has delayed finalizing its proposal to clear the situation that the Centre has to rush

Between the lines

High fives to electorates

Kuldip Nayar

drafting a bill and introduce it in Parliament during the first week of the winter session which began a few days ago. The development coincides with demands from the Opposition to extend the winter session and enable an informed debate on issues like Telengana and a handful of controversial matters that are embarrassing to the UPA. The abnormal increase in prices, for instance.

The government has not bothered to work for a consensus on many legislations that have been cleared by the Rajya Sabha and are pending disposal in the lower house. One of these relates to the women's representation in legislatures. This measure has been pending for ages. One would have thought that the government would have tried to influence the Samajwadi Party, its "external" supporter, to agree to pass the bill but so far it has not done so. The SP has threatened to disrupt proceedings if the bill is sought to be enacted. The Centre will be well advised to drop the proposal to add the two Rayalaseema districts to Telengana to create Rayala-Telengana. The fact that the TRS called a protest bandh is evidence enough that the suggestion is unpopular if only because it is politically opportune and is motivated to improve the Congress party's electoral chances in the new state. Secondly, now that Telengana is a certainty, the Centre owes it to the people of the residual Andhra that their interests are safeguarded in the new set-up. Thirdly, the process of bringing about a consensus on the future of Hyderabad has to begin right away. The Centre must not dilly-dally with Hyderabad as it did with Telengana

The elections for state legislatures in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Delhi have indicated the mood of people. Many questions have come to the fore. The political parties face the challenge of finding an answer before the parliamentary polls next year.

Two trends have emerged, one plus and the other minus, from these elections. The positive aspect is that more voters have come to the polling booths than ever before, nearly 75 percent exercising their franchise. If spelled out, it means that people have expressed their ever-increasing faith in the ballot box, an essential ingredient of democratic governance.

The negative side is the mudslinging. I have watched campaigns of all elections since independence. There were fierce contests, particularly from the late sixties. Yet none, neither an individual nor a political party, ever hit below the belt.

At best, a remark like the one by Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, a socialist leader, was that Indira Gandhi, his strong opponent, was a *goongi gudiya* (a silent doll). There was no malice. Indulging in personal abusive remark was not considered ethical. Since then the thin line between what is moral and immoral has got erased. And it has become free for all.

The current state elections are considered a semi-final contest.

I shudder to imagine how low would the level of the final, the Lok Sabha elections in May 2014, go to. Political parties have to agree upon a code so that the polls are not reduced to street brawls and the candidates do not behave like the urchins.

I think that the Election Commission has been too complacent and too accommodative. I have seen reports of giving warnings and asking for explanations from erring candidates. But no action has been forthcoming so far. I get the feeling that the two have come to develop a cozy relationship, the anti-thesis of independent elections. I do not doubt the veracity of elections. Yet the means are not less important than the end.

My greatest concern is over the attempt to polarize the society. Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi may not have played the Hindu card directly. But all his speeches underline the notion of Hindu nationalism, an anti-thesis of pluralism which is the ethos of our country.

That the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has forced his candidature on the moderate Bhartiya Janata Party is understandable. But why people like Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley, who are considered left of the BJP ideology, are sharing the rostrum with Modi? L.K. Advani, who has mellowed over the years, has made it clear through his attitude that he is distant from Modi and the communal politics he represents.

The BJP has hit itself on the foot. The party has been expanding its base by diluting its anti-Muslim stance. By honouring at Agra two BJP members of legislative assembly during the election campaign, the party's base has got shrunk. The voters have seen through the smokescreen it had created. Both the MLAs were charged with the participation in the anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat in 2002 and were let off by the court due to lack of concrete evidence. Their communal antecedents have only been confirmed.

The results for the legislature in the five states will have no bearing on the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls. They do not indicate that the parliamentary elections will go the same way. The voters are sick and tired of non-governance by the Congress government at the centre. They are also horrified over the scams running into thousands of crores. The price rise is also a factor against the Congress. Therefore, the vote cast in favour of the BJP is a negative one. There are still no all India alternatives to the Congress and the BJP, however distasteful to most voters.

Yet the most disconcerting thing that has assumed dangerous proportion is the role of money. It has been always there, but has beaten this time all the previous records. There were 6,454 candidates in fray in the five states. Madhya Pradesh had the highest number of candidates—2,586 for 321 seats, followed by Rajasthan with 2,087 for the 200 seats. There was a drop in Chhattisgarh—843 contestants for 91 seats, 142 for 40 seats in Mizoram and a whopping figure of 796 for Delhi's 70 seats. The expenditure runs into thousands of crores.

(Continued on Page 16)

Is Marxian Crisis Theory Relevant?

K. S. Chalam

Economic crisis in the form of a recession in the advanced countries has provoked several scholars to re-examine the theories propounded by classical writers including Marx. Those who were critical about the miscarriage of Marxian prediction of the so-called 'law of the tendency of falling rate of profit' during the peak days of capitalism appear to muse now. There are scholars who are still working on the ideas of great thinkers unlike some political parties. It is in this context, the 17th annual conference of the Indian Political Economy Association took place in the University of Hyderabad recently. I was invited to deliver the valedictory address (being former founding member and office bearer). Some young scholars from different parts of the country and also a few from outside were found dabbling, during the sessions, with old and obsolete concepts without relating them to the existing conditions. They need to be told that the job of an academic as distinguished from a political activist is to try the alternative paradigms to test a theory or law.

Political economy is not a religion and its importance is recognised when there was a transition from feudalism to capitalism in the 19th century and its relevance is felt now when the globalisation project is in deep crisis. Therefore, scholars should realise that unless the epistemology of the discipline is enhanced and strengthened, its relevance may not last long. Indian Political Economy Association has been publishing an Alternative Economic Survey and in the same

vein one should also work on an alternative frame work to assess the relevance of the existing theories. It is wrong to come to conclusions without exhausting the prevailing discourses available in different countries.

There are different shades of political economy taught and discussed in social sciences. Its popularity of the subject is down now in most of the universities due to several reasons and due to deliberate academic neglect. For instance, the UGC curriculum centre in economics did not recognize the subject at all and in most of the universities, I am told, even economic thought or political ideas are not taught. In fact, the Chicago School of Political Economy and its high priests, who were behind the non-Marxian theory of withering away of state, have done great damage to the dispassionate academic quest in educational institutions by espousing only one-sided view. India is not an exception to this trend. However, one of the prominent and the dominant approaches of political economy based on Marxian theory are still surviving despite the collapse of Soviet or Chinese official patronage. In fact, the academic discourse now gains objectivity due to the absence of the official bogey. It is anticipated that prospective scholars and thinkers who are searching for alternative sources of intellectual insights, would soon bring about paradigm shift.

There are three important academic developments in the Marxian political economy. The

German scholar and economist Michael Heinrich in his “An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx’s Capital” published by Monthly Review Press in 2012 and in his expository article in April 2013, brought out a contentious revelation. The much maligned theory of crisis of falling rate of profit in capital, according to Heinrich, is a version edited by Engels and not that of Marx. As a German, Heinrich had access to all of Marx’s material and found that 1865 manuscripts of Marx were edited by Engels, heavily revising to construct the third chapter on “Law”. He had condensed it to divide it into four subsections and the original seven chapters were reorganised into seven parts. So, what is the problem? Heinrich argues that Marx was still researching and trying to understand the dynamics of capitalist system and the law was only a disparate theory and not a comprehensive law. The fact that he tried to use mathematical examples to explain the falling rate of profit with the increase in constant capital and declining surplus value (with lower number of workers due to increase in productivity) is only a discrete attempt. Heinrich also explains that Marx was collecting data and information (he even learnt Russian) to understand the American system of capitalism where presence of interest bearing capital and credit have dissipated the tendency of falling rate of profit. Therefore, we need to understand the essence of Marx’s argument and not the actual events.

The arguments of Heinrich are contested by Michael Roberts through his blog. According to Roberts, the falling rate of profit even within the given theory is proved in the UK and USA. He has estimated the rate of profit by using

the standard Marxist concepts of organic composition of capital, surplus value and rate of profit in the two most advanced capitalist countries during 1963-2008. He found that profits fell by 28 percent, organic composition rose by 20 percent and surplus value fell by 19 percent during 1963-75 in the UK. It is estimated that between 1996 and 2008, profits fell by 11 percent, organic composition rose by 16 percent and surplus value remained secularly stagnant. It is now left to the scholars to examine to what extent Marxian theory of crisis is relevant or irrelevant and to what extent Lenin who explained the tyranny of finance capital in his elaboration of Imperialism (globalization) would be useful.

The second most important criticism against Marxism is the alleged absence of analysis of human element in the mechanical application of historical materialism. One may leisurely and dispassionately look at his theories now and their application in countries like India. One may also address the criticism that why India could not produce a Gramsci, a Ho chi Minh and the like probably to dabble with the so-called objective and subjective conditions. Why is it that the Asiatic Mode of Production (exception Sardesai, Harbans Mukhia, Shakti Padhi) was not given importance in the mainstream Marxist discourse to understand the vexed question of caste? How do we understand a situation like Telangana even 65 years after independence?

There are attempts by independent scholars to address some of these questions, but the hegemony of organized few, it is alleged, did not allow the lone voices to be heard. In fact, scholars like Eric Fromm published “Marx’s Concept of Man”

in 1961(thanks to Ravela Somayya for forwarding the book). Fromm, one of the topmost Psychologists of last century analyzed Marx’s Philosophical and Economic Manuscripts 1859, to discover the humanist traditions in the elaboration of concept of “Alienation”. The spiritual emancipation of man from the chains of economic determinism as elucidated in ‘labourer exists for the process of production and not the process of production for the labourer’ are to be re-visited. In fact, he argued that historical materialism of Marx was deeply rooted in anthropological content rather than on economic considerations (as it was drawn from Morgan, the anthropologist).

How the classes in contemporary capitalism are to be understood? Do the classes and castes mean the same thing? Is the concept of New Petty Bourgeois (NPB) advanced by Nicos Poulantzas applicable to India? How do we account for those who assert that, ‘we are poor in economic terms and not by the prestige of caste’, in the urban slums? Do the ICT professionals and finance managers who serve the interests of capital come under NPB? Has the concept of New Imperialism been understood in the Indian context? These are some of the important questions that should bother the academic scholars to make political economy really a tool in the hands of the oppressed.

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Universal old age pension

Pannalal Surana

Urbanites are accustomed to get services of vegetable sellers in mandis or by the road-side. Hawkers number more than two crores in all urban areas, including the metros. Ricksha-pullers and auto-drivers are always at the beck and call of the citizens going to hospitals or after getting down from the trains. Small boys and even girls serve tea and eatables at taparis. Cleaners of trucks and assistants of garage mechanics, workers engaged in construction activity- all of them are rendering useful services to the needy people. But they are not on the payroll of any employers. They are treated as casual labourers and paid poorly. So their share in the GDP is not properly identified or calculated, because GDP is a sum total of prices of goods produced and services rendered. Even the contribution of agriculture that provides nutrition to the whole nation is shown to be very meager – 15/18 percent; because the prices of agricultural produce are pitifully low due to buyer-dominated market mechanism. Peasants and agricultural labourers are also part of the unorganised sector.

They receive just a pittance for the services they render to the subsistence of the nation. Secondly, when they reach the age of sixty years, all energy and stamina is drained out of their bodies. They cannot put in hard labour as they used to do in the younger days. So they are deprived of daily income or get a ridiculously small amount for their labours. Their progenies

are also poor and hard pressed. So they are not able to provide basic necessities to their parents. Hence, the need for social insurance in the form of old-age pension.

Various organisations have been agitating for the demand of instituting social insurance. It was in May 2005 that a huge rally was held at Jantar Mantar in Delhi. Dr. Baba Adhav had undertaken bicycle yatra from Mahad to Delhi traversing more than 2000 km. The rally was addressed by the former prime minister V.P. Singh, former deputy chairman of the Planning Commission and other leaders. A petition was submitted to Somnath Chattarji, the then Speaker of the Lok Sabha, who forwarded it to the Petitions Committee of the Parliament. Some deliberations ensued. But with no concrete outcome. Now, more than five thousand unorganised workers, hailing from distant places like Chennai, Kanyakumari, Manglore, Pune, Mumbai, Ahmadabad, Jaipur, Hapur, Ludhiana, Lucknow, Patna, Guvahati, Dimapur, Kolkata, Ranchi, Bhubanshwar, Nagpur and so on are staging a Dharna at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and waiting for the opening of winter session of Parliament so that their demand for old age pension may get renewed attention of the Parliamentarians and hopefully due consideration.

The authorities say that they are all sympathy to the cause of the unorganised workers. but they are not able to find resources to assure Rs. 2000 per month to every

soul, above sixty years, who has worked throughout his life for the betterment of the nation. On the back-of-the-envelope calculations show that number of the needy unorganised workers of 60 + years old comes to about two to three crores. If Pension of Rs. 2000 per month is to be paid, the amount required comes to about Rs. 80,000 crores. How can such a huge amount be spared out of the current revenues of the Central Government? The annual amount of tax revenue (net) of the Central Government in 2010-11 was Rs. 5,34,094 crores. If 5 per cent of that amount is earmarked for the old age pension, it would come to Rs. 29,000 crores. In addition, 10 per cent of the amount of pension payable to the retired Government employees, drawing more than Rs. 2,00,000 per year is charged then equal amount can be raised.

Beginning must be made now; it cannot be postponed indefinitely. To start with, old age pension of Rs. 1,000 per month per head must be paid immediately, which can be a great solace to the unorganised workers. Slowly other resources can be explored and harnessed for this cause.

The nation owes to all those hard working women and men to assure them of a subsistence allowance in the last days their life when their hands and feet are crumbling. The Parliament should rise to the occasion and meet the long pending demand of the unorganised workers.

Socialism and Culture

Bapu Heddurshetti

The expanse of culture is very wide. It takes within its fold a wide range of human activities like language, literature, art, music, the dresses people wear, the food they eat, status of women and so many such others. Though the word culture appears to have been first used by Cicero in his work 'Tusculan Disputations' as 'cultura animi', meaning the 'culture of the soul' as against the 'culture of the soil' i.e., agriculture, later it came to be used to include all that the human beings develop to overcome, what can be called, their 'barbarism' and become more 'humane'.

However these traits of culture that the human beings develop can be seen and understood from different angles, from different points of view. They could be seen from the point of view of a religion, a caste, as also of a nation and a class and so many others. Some times the times and places and some times the scientific and technological developments become the determinants of culture. For example while the river valleys engender one type of culture, deserts engender a different type of culture. Cultures can also be classified on the basis of time frames as ancient, medieval and modern. While each religion may give rise to a distinct culture, in India, some times, castes also have nurtured different cultures.

As socialism provides a distinct point of view on society, it also provides a distinct point of view to approach culture. Socialism attempts to view culture from the economic and social standpoints. Socialism considers the economic and social institutions to be major determinants of culture.

However it is interesting that some times some cultural traits become determinants of what socialism means. For example, George Padmore, the Socialist ideologue of Africa says that in African socialism, elimination of 'idleness' becomes the goal of socialism. Usually the term 'owner' is juxtaposed to the term 'worker' in socialist circles elsewhere, perhaps due to the fact that socialism grew in the midst of industrial revolution. But in Africa as there was hardly any industrialisation, the term 'worker' has a totally different connotation since every one in traditional African society 'works' and hence 'nobody had even heard of the term 'exploitation' and 'idleness' says another African socialist leader Julius Nyrere. Explaining an adage in Swahili language, he says that a guest should be treated well for two days and on the third day he should be given the plough. He adds that there was no need to so give him a plough because the guest would himself ask for it. This then becomes the meaning of the term 'labour' or 'work'. Thus in Africa, the term 'work' or 'labour' is juxtaposed with the word 'idleness' or 'lethargy' rather than 'owner'. Hence George Padmore says that African socialism aims at elimination of idleness rather than elimination of ownership.

However there is difference of opinion between the Socialists and the Marxists in the emphasis on the determinants of culture. Marx said that the basic structure of the economic institutions i.e., the relations of production, determine the super structure of political, cultural, legal and other institutions.

He called it Historical Materialism or the Economic Interpretation of History. The cultural studies developed by the latter day Marxists, like Raymond Williams, also identify culture with the leisure activities like art, music, sports, food and clothing, etc., but still consider them as determined by the relations of production.

Referring to the Marxist argument Asoka Mehta says: "It is argued that a culture is determined by the organisation of productive forces in an economy and the alignment of property relations. In a society, where the economic life is in the hands of the priestly class, the culture will be essentially saturated with religious orthodoxy and the state is likely to be theocratic".¹

But then is culture unicausal? Socialists not only deny that the economic structures determine the superstructures but also emphasise the independent nature of socio-cultural structures and consider both the structures to be mutually influencing and inter-dependant. Asoka Mehta says: "...though the economic factor is an important factor, it is not the decisive factor. Other factors are of autonomous importance: the legal framework or the political structure does exercise an influence on a society which is independent, up to a point, of the economic forces that may have helped to bring either the legal framework or the political structure into being".²

It appears that Engels clarified later that he and Marx also did not

mean that the economic structures alone are the determinants of other structures. “In the Marx-Engels Correspondence - a key-book for understanding Marx’s ideas - you will find that during a period of thirty years, the ideas of the fathers of scientific socialism slowly shifted from an exclusive emphasis on the economic factor to treating it as the primary factor. And that brings about a major shift in the understanding of culture.”³

Acharya Narendra Deva, the doyen of the Indian Socialist movement, though himself a Marxist, says: “In a class ridden society... while some cultural values are the common heritage of the entire community, many cultural values reflect class interests and prejudices. ... The dominant social class is able to impose upon society a cultural pattern suited to its needs and urges and upholds it firmly with a view to perpetuating its social and cultural hold over society”⁴ and thereby recognises the social class as also a determinant of culture. He also recognises the d’etre of culture, independent of economic relations, when he says “Socialism is not only an economic movement but also a cultural movement.”⁵

While Acharya and Asoka summated their response to this Marxian formulation thus, Nanasheh Goray was elaborate. He writes: “As I realised the inadequacy of Marxian thought after I read Freud, in the same way, I realised its inadequacy after making a comparative study of history. I realised that his theory that the contemporary culture, social behaviour and social values of the human society take shape out of the relations of production is valid only in a limited way. I realised that the cultural values expressed in the Iliad and Ramayana were very

different when the similarity of the relations of production of the two times are taken into consideration. The behaviour of Achilles after he slew Hector in the battle, the arson and plunder of the city of Troy after its fall by the Greek army; and Rama performing the obsequies of Ravana after he slew him, saying that the enmity ends with death, and refusing to even enter Lanka after its fall, let alone plundering it, aren’t these examples of how human values imbibed by people can be so different in spite of the relations of production being almost the same in both the cases? A similar instance can be quoted from Baburnama. Babur has himself recorded that after he defeated Rana Sanga or some other Indian enemy in the battle, the enemy soldiers would be beheaded and their heads would be piled in a heap. Do we get references to such instances anywhere with persons like Prithviraj, Chandragupta or Ashoka? Babur was a very romantic person, nay he was even a poet; even then he did not feel any remorse in such beastly cruelty. We just cannot reconcile this kind of cultural differences with the relations of production. We will have to conclude that the human mind works quite independently of what Marx believed.”⁶

However, as the economic structure of the society changes, it engenders changes in the political, social and cultural structures and vice versa. Thus there will be a ‘feudal culture’ a ‘capitalist culture’ and a ‘socialist culture’. Applying the time-frame criteria, we can say that the feudal culture is the culture of the past, and since we are living in an age of transition from capitalism to socialism, the capitalist culture is the culture of the present and the socialist culture is the culture of the future.

Since it is impossible to analyse all the dimensions of a culture within the span of an article, only one aspect of culture, the status of women, is taken here for discussion. The status of women in a culture is one of the parameters by which a culture is weighed and judged.

Different cultures accord different statuses to women. For example, in India where different cultures co-exist side by side, while at one end Manusmriti says that since ‘a father protects a woman when she is a maiden, husband protects her when she is married and son protects her when she is old, no woman is entitled to freedom’, at the other end there are certain communities in Kerala where, in a family, primacy is given to women rather than to men. While Muslims provide a separate place for women to offer prayers, there are communities in India which give equal status to women in worship so that both men and women can offer prayers together without segregation.

Asoka Mehta describes the status of women in feudal and capitalist cultures in a colourful language. In a feudal society, if a person ‘steals’ the wife of another, the loser challenges the stealer for a combat and whoever wins the combat gets the woman. This is because a woman is treated as ‘property’ in a feudal society. Asoka Mehta says “A feudal lord ... had hardly any function to perform, except to indulge in warfare, or in poetical and musical contest, or in gallantry. Abduction of a Helen of Troy or of a Sita provided themes for epics, because the leaders of society had unlimited time and ample wealth at their disposal with no specific social function”.⁷

Helen of Troy and Sita were sought to be rescued from their

abductors not because the society valued women or their freedom but for restoring the honour of the feudal lord whose woman was abducted. While Sita was abducted against her wishes, Helen was perhaps a willing abductee. Even then when after Rama slew Ravana and Vibhishana brought Sita to his presence, Rama tells Sita "Let it be known to you that this endeavor in the shape of war ... was not undertaken for your sake. ... This was done by me in order to ... wipe off the insinuation on my own illustrious dynasty. ... You were won by me with that end in view (viz. the retrieval of my lost honour). The honour has been restored by me. For me, there is no intense attachment in you. You may go wherever you like from here."⁸ Thus in a feudal culture, when somebody's wife was abducted, restoration of one's lost honour was more important than restoring the liberty of the abducted woman.

But a capitalist society evolves a different culture where everything is measured in terms of money, which Asoka Mehta calls cash nexus. He says "In capitalist society, a culture develops that is all the time money-conscious".⁹ For example, many institutions of higher education in India these days are being started with a view, not to spread education but, to make money because starting an educational institution has become a 'profitable enterprise'. Even the students study not to gain knowledge but to get a job which gets them a salary. 'Dowry' is the cash nexus that connects many spouses.

Writing about culture in a capitalist society Bertrand Russell in his book 'Roads to Freedom' says "The first thing to realize—though it is difficult in a commercial age—is that what is best in creative mental activity cannot be produced by any

system of monetary rewards. ... In a thoroughly commercialized society, an artist is respected if he makes money, and because he makes money, but there is no genuine respect for the works of art by which his money has been made. A millionaire whose fortune has been made in button-hooks or chewing-gum is regarded with awe, but none of this feeling is bestowed on the articles from which his wealth is derived. In a society which measures all things by money the same tends to be true of the artist. If he has become rich he is respected, though of course less than the millionaire, but his pictures or books or music are regarded as the chewing-gum or the button-hooks are regarded, merely as a means to money. In such an atmosphere it is very difficult for the artist to preserve his creative impulse pure: either he is contaminated by his surroundings, or he becomes embittered through lack of appreciation for the object of his endeavor."

Writing about women in a capitalist culture George Bernard Shaw says "Capitalism made a slave of the man, and then, by paying the woman through him, made her his slave, she became the slave of a slave, which is the worst sort of slavery."¹⁰ Capitalism develops a culture where women sell their bodies and men their souls for money.

What happens when a person 'steals' or seduces another's wife in a capitalist society? Asoka Mehta says "Everything has a price. If your wife commits adultery, you do not seek out and kill the seducer, but you go to the court and claim a big sum as damages. The virtue of a woman, the self-respect of a man, ancestral land, everything has a price".¹¹ If a feudal age Rama waged a war and

killed his defamer to retrieve his lost honour, a capitalist age Rama would file a defamation suit and claim compensation for his lost honour.

Socialists in India had advocated abolition of Zamindari and redistribution of the acquired land to the land less on the ground, inter alia, that the peasants will develop an attachment with the land hence cultivate with interest and thus increase its productivity. But today the very peasants are ready to sell that land to the industrialist if a good price is offered to them without any sense of remorse at losing their land.

What would happen if a person 'steals' or seduces another's wife in a socialist society? Though Asoka Mehta does not directly answer the question, the answer is obvious. Socialism neither considers a woman as property nor does it value every thing in terms of money. A woman enjoys freedom and equality in a socialist society. Hence she would be free to live with anyone of her choice. A woman who does not wish to live with a man, whom she does not like, will be free in a socialist society to leave him and live with any other man whom she likes. And since the man whom she leaves, does not consider her as 'his' property there is no question of his challenging the other man to combat as in a feudal society or since he respects her freedom there is no question of his claiming damages or compensation. The words 'stealing another's wife' or 'seducing another's wife' lose their meaning in a socialist society since a woman does not 'belong' to anyone but herself.

In this context, what George Bernard Shaw has to say is very interesting. He says that when the husband/wife is "selfish, tyrannical, jealous, cruel, envious, with

different and antagonistic tastes and beliefs, incapable of understanding one another; in short, antipathetic and incompatible, it produces much untold human unhappiness. Why is this unhappiness endured when the door is not locked, and the victim can walk into the street at any moment? Obviously because starvation awaits them at the other side of the door. Vows and inculcated duties may seem effective in keeping unhappy wives ... at home when they have no alternative; but there must be an immense number of cases in which wives and husbands, would walk out of the house, like Nora Helmer in Ibsen's famous play, if they could do so without losing a single meal, a single night's protection and shelter, or the least loss of social standing in consequence. As socialism would place them in this condition, it would infallibly break up unhappy marriages. This being obviously desirable we need not pretend to deplore it. Husbands and wives, if they knew that their marriage could only last on condition of its being made reasonably happy for both of them, would have to behave far better to one another than they ever seem to dream of doing now. There would be such a prodigious improvement in domestic manners all round that a fairly plausible case can be made out for expecting that far fewer marriages will be broken up under Socialism than at present".¹²

Acharya Narendra Deva says "Democratic Socialism is convinced of the justice and urgency of the equality of the sexes. Inequality is inhuman, and the cultural backwardness of the fair sex is retardatory. Great social changes are impossible without the feminine ferment."¹³

However a question arises that if the feudal culture was the attribute of the feudal class and the capitalist culture is the attribute of the capitalist class, were the common people, the plebeians and the proletarians, who were living in those ages deprived of any culture at all? Can hungry and poor people also have their culture or is culture only the prerogative of the 'leaders of society with unlimited time and ample wealth at their disposal with no specific social function'? Explaining the connect between hunger and culture Asoka Mehta narrates an interesting incident. He recalls that once Rabindranath Tagore had complained that Mahatma Gandhi, in pursuit of his politics of the masses, had sacrificed cultural gains and values, to which Mahatma Gandhi had asked Tagore if he had ever heard hungry birds singing.

Socialists do not subscribe to this view that the poor and the hungry were deprived of any culture in the feudal or the capitalist societies. Asoka Mehta elaborates: "It is wrong to suggest that masses, ground down by poverty and victims of exploitation, are unprepared for cultural foliage. ... it is the distilled teaching of history that liberating philosophies and emancipating cultures are evolved by the oppressed alone. The proletariat, or the dispossessed, has ever been the virile carrier of culture... *Culture of the poor need not suffer from poverty of culture.*"¹⁴

It is possible that two cultures may not be hierarchical. For example, there is no hierarchy between the Hindu culture and the Muslim culture. However it is possible that two cultures may be hierarchical inter-se, like the culture of the so-called upper castes and the culture of the dalits. Socialists consider

non-hierarchical cultures as symbols of socio-cultural plurality and would encourage such plurality. However, if there are any cultures with hierarchy, like the one for the citizens and one for the slaves or one for patricians and one for the plebeians, one for the bourgeoisie and one for the proletariat or one of the rich and one for the poor as in a capitalist society or one for the upper castes and one for the dalits as in a caste-ridden society, then the concern of the socialists will be to remove the hierarchical differences. In India not only the castes are hierarchical but their cultures also buttress hierarchy. That is why Acharya Narendra Deva says that the "removal of the cultural and the educational lag between the advanced and the backward castes is a special concern of the Socialist movement."¹⁵

However, there cannot be strict lines of demarcation between the cultures, feudal and capitalist also. They overlap in many aspects. While we can find the traces of feudal culture in a capitalist society, it is possible to find traces of capitalist culture in a feudal society. For example, even though the human relations are based on agreement or contract in a capitalist society, the institution of marriage continues to be a religious bond rather than a contract between two consenting adults though capitalism began shaping the contours of Indian society more than a hundred years ago. Similarly, though Islam was born in the midst of a feudal society, the marriage in Islam is based on a contract rather than is a religious bond. In the same way, traces of even a socialist culture may be found in a feudal or capitalist society either as exceptions or as anachronisms. However, though some such traces of socialist culture can be found in the present capitalist society, a

socialist society with its own distinct culture is still a golden age to be realised in the future.

“All movements believe in the golden age. You can divide them into reactionary and progressive movements from the fact that the former have their golden age in the past, the latter place their golden age in the future” says Asoka Mehta.¹⁶ He says that while Hindu Mahasabha traces the golden age in the Vedic times, the Muslims trace it in the rule of the Khalifs and perhaps the Marathas in the rule of Shivaji. Hence in Asoka Mehta’s language, they are to be considered as reactionary. Utopian Socialists, Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, Saint Simon, the Scientific Socialists Karl Marx and Frederick Engels as also the Democratic Socialists like Louis Blanc and Ferdinand Lassalle, dream of building their golden age in the future and are hence to be considered progressives.

“How does a democratic socialist society look and work? No one today can answer that question completely” says Jayaprakash Narayan.¹⁷ Since we are still transiting from a capitalist society to a socialist society, which transition is painfully slow due to the process being democratic, it is difficult to draw a complete picture of such a society and its culture. However, glimpses can be gleaned from here and there. Jayaprakash Narayan himself drew a silhouette of culture in a socialist society in his tract ‘My Picture of Socialism’.¹⁸ About the picture of culture in a socialist society which Asoka Mehta draws in his book Democratic Socialism, Jayaprakash Narayan says “The ennobling picture of this new culture that he has drawn ought to be a corrective to the vulgar Machiavellism and a humanism that plague leftism in this country, as well

as an inspiration to all those who are toiling to build a new civilization”.¹⁹ Acharya Narendra Deva drew a picture of the impact a socialist culture will have on its various aspects in his address to the Gaya Conference of the Praja Socialist Party in 1955. He elaborated : “Socialist culture shall be a creative synthesis of humanistic elements of Indian culture and democratic socialist elements of Western culture. Social humanism so evolved should be the basis of the socialist culture in India. (Socialist culture) values human labour as a creative force of human personality and regards the refinement of conditions of its expression as essential for the cultured life for the multitudes of humanity. Culture it holds must be shared by the entire community and should be equally accessible to all. ... Modern amenities of decent civilized life should be so extended to the people residing in rural areas that there may be real cultural integration of urban and rural India. ... India is a multi-lingual nation, misconceived as a multi-national State. We stand for national unity on terms of equality of all linguistic communities.” He captures the essence in a sentence “culture, happiness and joy will, thus cease to be a monopoly of the privileged few. Every one shall have the means of decent cultural life and be entitled to happiness and joy in association with others”.²⁰

1. Asoka Mehta : Democratic Socialism : Bangalore : 2011 : Page 201
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Bribes and Spies

A. G. Noorani

There is something singularly revolting and despicable about a divorced wife spilling bedroom secrets in public. The former Army Chief General (ret'd) VK Singh has crowned his ventures in venom with sensational disclosures. In Kashmir, some have reacted in the manner of those caught with their pants down, screaming “obscene, obscene”. Their patrons in New Delhi gravely shook their heads to warn of threats to “national security” and “national integration”. Both must be very tenuous, indeed, if they rested on subterfuges and can be destroyed by their exposure. At stake is the fundamental principle of civilian control over the armed forces. VK Singh will receive his just deserts sooner than he suspects. What the public interest requires is a calm appraisal of the entire record—the recent disclosures must be seen in the light of their background since 1947. What is the truth of the matter and what are its implications for policy on Kashmir?

The recent episode began with Ritu Sarin’s report in *The Indian Express* on September 20. VK Singh served as the Chief of the Army Staff from March 31, 2010 to March 30, 2012. A little over a month after he assumed charge, he set up the Technical Support Division (TSD) as a unit under Military Intelligence. P. N. Haksar styled the external intelligence service he set up as the Research and Analysis Wing—some research, some analysis. VK Singh chose a similarly innocuous, if misleading, name for his baby. Some key personnel of the Army’s

Intelligence Corps were attached to the TSD, which was headed by Colonel Munishwar Nath “Hunny” Bakshi. He handled key operations for which secret service funds were drawn from accounts of State Bank of India. The TSD comprised four officers and about 30 men.

Shortly after VK Singh demitted office, the TSD was wound up and an inquiry by a Board of Officers on its functioning was set up. It was headed by no less a person than Lieutenant General Vinod Bhatia, D.G. of Military Operations. It submitted its report to the Defence Secretary in March 2013. Ritu Sarin’s report drew on that document’s exposures. They are stunning. An amount of Rs.1.19 crore was given to Ghulam Hassan Mir, Minister for Agriculture in the Government of Kashmir, headed by Omar Abdullah, to oust his chief. He floated the Democratic Party (Nationalist). That the Congress embraced him as an “associate member” though his membership was not necessary reveals the Congress’ true role in the State.

Mir denied the charge. As much as Rs2.38 crore was given to one Hakikat Singh “on orders from Army Headquarters”. He set up a non-governmental organisation (NGO), which was linked to another NGO that filed a public interest litigation (PIL) petition which would have thwarted VK Singh’s successor General Bikram Singh’s appointment as Army chief. It failed. Its other activities need not detain us. But Ritu Sarin’s statement that the

Board’s report found “unauthorised” covert operations by the TSD is important. Was the government in the know? As we shall see, VK Singh himself provided the details with Falstaffian abandon as the story snowballed to his discomfiture. Muzamil Jaleel from New Delhi and Mir Ehsan from Srinagar provided some shocking details in their report in *The Indian Express* on September 21. The TSD had tapped the phones of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and his colleagues in 2011 when he and the Army had a “protracted face-off” over the withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. The vile deed was detected by the State police in Jammu. “In November 2011... the 15 Corps Commander gave an hour-long presentation to J&K’s top security grid Unified Headquarters, chaired by the Chief Minister, where he said that the country will be forced to give ‘independence’ to the State by 2016 if the government lifts the AFSPA.” For good measure he added that this was the very demand “made by Pakistan, the ISI, separatists and terrorists”.

The correspondents’ report said: “The Chief Minister asked where did he fit in this matrix of four.” This incident reflects the Army’s style of response—impugn the integrity of critics. The prediction of Kashmir’s secession “by 2016” is in the same spirit. As for Ghulam Hassan Mir, these correspondents of repute called him a “manager” and “a politician for all seasons”.

On September 21, *The Times of India* provided further details.

“Secret General Staff funds are also budgeted and cleared by the Ministry of Defence. *But it was later found out that of the Rs20 crore allotted to TSD in the two years under Gen VK Singh, as much as Rs eight crore could not be properly accounted for.*” On September 21, VK Singh spoke up. Money was spent on “*stability work.*” He accused Omar Abdullah of “mis-governance” and insinuated intrigue. “I am quite sure if you were to check up who all from the Army have met him in recent times, you will come to know why he has said this at this particular time” (The Indian Express, September 22, quoting ANI). *Was VK Singh keeping Omar Abdullah under surveillance not only when he was Army chief but even after he quit a year and a half ago on March 30, 2012?* (Emphasis added, throughout.)

V. K. Singh boldly jumped into the political fray as the CNS/PTI report in the respected Srinagar daily Greater Kashmir on September 22 brings out. More importantly, he claimed: “If this Unit [TSD] was allowed to function properly, the cross-border terrorism you are seeing today would not have happened.” This was amplified explicitly, as he went on a roll.

On September 23, VK Singh told Arnab Goswami of Times Now: “The Army transfers money to all the Ministers in Jammu & Kashmir... there are various things to be done. As part of the stabilising factor in Jammu and Kashmir, as part of the activities to be organised.” Calculated vagueness cannot conceal the sinister import. Realising that he had put his foot in his big mouth, he withdrew it, just a bit. “Maybe not all the Ministers; but certain Ministers and people who are given a certain sum to get a particular thing done.

That job involves bringing stability to a particular area.” How? By bribing the local leaders?

Nothing new

Is this not interference in an elected government? The answer was swift and telling. Not “if a civilian government is unable to get the people together...”. That is the heart of the matter. Deny free and fair elections to Kashmir and buttress the government installed by New Delhi by the means indicated by General (ret'd) V. K. Singh. Now comes the most shocking but honest admission of all: “It is nothing new, for the last so many years since independence of this country, this has been going on and has been the practice” (The Indian Express, September 24). It is this admission that sent New Delhi’s spooks and their henchmen in Srinagar running for cover. More followed in an interview to Chander Suta Dogra of The Hindu (September 24): “Not just Mir, but many other politicians in J&K are paid by the Army and other intelligence agencies for nationalistic work aimed at maintaining peace in the State. I have served in Kashmir myself and am aware of it. I know which politicians have been paid during my tenure. It is not unusual.” He also remarked: “It was all part of the larger game plan and two major achievements of the TSD were the panchayat elections of 2011 and the sudden end to the stone-throwing agitations in Kashmir in 2010.”

Thus, in one fell blow, he stripped Omar Abdullah of credit for holding the panchayat elections. No less significant is the other claim. The stone-pelting agitation very much had a “sudden end”. Who was his tool in this? VK Singh was in Kashmir, as GOC of the Victor Force

in South Kashmir, Chief of Staff 15 Corps. Devender Singh Rana was Political Adviser to Omar Abdullah and is now head of the Jammu unit of the National Conference. He told Yogesh Sagotra of the General’s links with “political operators” (Greater Kashmir, September 24). Clarifications followed on September 24. It was not bribe money but money meant “to wean people away from separatist activities under the overall umbrella of *sadbhavana* (harmony)” (The Indian Express, September 25).

More followed. The astute Josy Joseph reported that the TSD “has claimed to have carried out at least eight covert operations in a foreign country” (The Times of India, September 24). It could not have been in Iceland. Did V.K. Singh act thus with the consent of his political masters? The TV channel Headlines Today “accessed” parts of Lt-Gen Bhatia’s report of over 200 pages. Its disclosures were precise. Between October and November 2011, the TSD claimed money “to try enrolling the secessionist chief in the province of a neighbouring country” and in early 2011 it claimed an unspecified amount for carrying out eight low-intensity bomb blasts in a neighbouring country” (Sandeep Unnithan and Asit Jolly, India Today; October 7). The veiled reference to Pakistan and its secessionist-torn province of Balochistan deceives none, not even the “nationalists” in the media. The TSD has a wider remit—“countries of interest”.

The man and his politics

It is only by piecing together the many statements by VK Singh that one can form an assessment of the man and the politics he personally conducted. On September 24, the very day

he disavowed payment of bribes, he said also that almost all the Ministers in J&K are on the payroll of the Army, explaining: “The Army transfers money to all the Ministers to get various things” done as part of the stabilising policy. He was explicit: “Kashmir is a different issue altogether.” Why? “Because there are things which happen in J&K which are inimical to the country. We have a job—that is to keep the country together.” By bribery and corruption? It was left to Farooq Abdullah to expose the Army’s active role in interfering in the conduct of elections. “I knew that they were handling voting.” People were threatened that their legs would be broken if they went to a meeting in Doda in 2002. “I don’t want to expose it as it would be against national security,” he said, adding, “I know my brother Mustafa Kamal got defeated in Gulmarg constituency because the Army played tricks there” (The Indian Express; September 29). If this is what it does to a blunt outspoken unionist, do you blame the separatists for shunning the elections?

VK Singh received support from some in the Army. Lt-Col Manoj Channon of the Armoured Corps, who has served in Kashmir, candidly said: “Anyone who claims that payments are not made is lying through his teeth. Funding is done to ensure the territorial integrity of India and bring the misguided youth into the national mainstream” (The Tribune; September 29). It has been well said that while the Almighty has limited the intelligence of man, he placed no corresponding limits on his folly. Trust VK Singh to make matters worse rather than leave alone the mess that he created. In Chennai on October 3,

he asserted: “The secret you are talking... Whatever was revealed by me was revealed by former U.S. Ambassador to India David Mulford. It was published by The Economic Times on September 5, 2011. Please read it. Mulford said everybody in Kashmir gets money and I have said the same thing” (The Times of India; October 4). His endorsement of Mulford flatly contradicts his own claim, disingenuous though it was, that the payments were not bribes. For Mulford had spoken of bribery and corruption. The report was filed by The Economic Times’ excellently informed Srinagar correspondent, Masood Hussain. Mulford’s report to the US State Department was based on the U Embassy officials’ visit to Srinagar between April 3 and 5 in 2006. Sample these bits. “Corruption cuts across party lines and most Kashmiris take it as an article of faith that politically connected Kashmiris take money from both India and Pakistan” and “Security officers bribe their way into Kashmir assignments that give access to lucrative civil affairs and logistics contracts”. Mulford alleged: “Omar and Farooq Abdullah, descendants of the Sheikh who first figured out Delhi’s money game, live in fabulous houses in Srinagar and Delhi, wear matching Panerai watches, serve Blue Label to guests and travel all over the world first class courtesy the Indian government.” All this has won VK Singh’s endorsement now. Incidentally, in his interview to The Indian Express, Farooq Abdullah claimed that he was a Sufi. One is reminded of ZA Bhutto’s flamboyant Cabinet colleague Maulana Whiskey Niazi.

It is tough: Omar

Having watched the steady flow of disclosures for over a fortnight, Omar

Abdullah uttered a cri de coeur in an interview to Harinder Baweja: “V.K. Singh’s allegations are making us out to be paid agents of the Army. We have all become suspects. It is tough enough to be a mainstream politician in Kashmir and now we have to deal with what he has said.” This was a giveaway. Why is it “tough” to be a unionist in Kashmir? It is because the people support the separatists.

Evidently, Omar Abdullah, a Johnny-come-lately, is ignorant of Kashmir’s history. For, he asked: “And what does he mean by 1947? Militancy is a product of 1990, so who was the Army paying before that and for what?” (Hindustan Times; October 14). It was not popular alienation but Pakistan-aided armed militancy which erupted in 1989. Alienation in Kashmir existed since 1947. India exacerbated it, and Pakistan provided the gun in 1987-89.

Is he ignorant of the reason why his grandfather Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was not only dismissed as Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir on August 9, 1953, but kept in prison for 11 years, all at the instance of Jawaharlal Nehru, as recently published documents established.

Omar’s wail is belated. In August 2007, he himself charged, when in opposition, that “22 of 87 members of the State Legislature are Intelligence Bureau agents” (R.S. Gull in the Srinagar weekly Kashmir Life; October 5). For his information, the game was begun in 1947, not 1990. “Virtually all important security and intelligence agencies that operate out of Kashmir are flush with funds under the garb of source money or secret funds. The BSF, CRPF, Army and even the J&K

Police have their own secret fund apart from the Intelligence Bureau, RAW and Military Intelligence, that have sizeable presence in the Kashmir Valley. Sources point out that while intelligence operations conducted by India have required secret funds since 1947, the importance of such operations increased dramatically, especially in J&K, from 1989 onwards when Pakistan-sponsored insurgency began” (Asian Age; September 29, Rajnish Sharma & Sridhar Kumaraswami). Money is paid freely to politicians and NGOs. Alienation cannot be extinguished by military might nor suppressed by bribery. That is precisely why New Delhi cannot allow a free election in Jammu and Kashmir. Two recent statements on this aspect deserve notice. On September 22, the People’s Democratic Party’s (PDP) patron, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, said: “Central agencies have always been viewed with suspicion for their role in the electoral process and there is a general feeling that the Centre plays favourites and predetermines the outcome of the elections (Greater Kashmir; September 23).

The political process

Dr. Haseeb A. Drabu, former Chairman and Managing Director of Jammu and Kashmir Bank and a noted economist, explains in detail how it is done: “The political process in J&K has always operated in a ‘controlled environment’. First, before elections there is systematic disenfranchisement of the population to generate desired overall electoral coordinates. Second, during the election operations there is rigging, ranging from direct stamping to fixing results by engineering selective boycotts to help the chosen candidates. Third, post-election, there is manipulating of the

elected government. It is the third ‘intervention’ that V. K. Singh has revealed.

“The initiation of J&K into the democratic fold was a sign of times to come. In the first ever election in Jammu and Kashmir, not a single vote was cast in the valley! The National Conference, ruling at that time with the help of draconian laws, like the Enemy Ordinances Act, ensured that they won 73 out of total of 75 seats uncontested.... “The entire electoral demographics have been distorted! In 1989, Jammu region had 18.3 lakh voters, while Kashmir valley had 22.2 lakh voters. In a little over a decade, this was reversed.

“The population of Jammu region as per the 2001 census was 43.9 lakh while that of Kashmir was 54.4 lakh; that is, 20 per cent lower. Yet Jammu had 28.7 lakh voters while Kashmir has only 25.5 lakh voters. Despite lower population, the 37 constituencies of Jammu have 1.8 lakh more voters than the 46 constituencies in Kashmir. Who engineered this and how? Take the case of the Sopore constituency in the valley vis-à-vis the Jammu West constituency. During the 1987 Assembly polls, both had roughly the same number of voters; about 54,000. Yet, in 2001, the number of voters in Sopore was shown to have increased by just 1 per cent in 15 years. As against this, Jammu West shot up by 177 per cent making it the largest Assembly constituency in the state. How was this achieved and why? It may help to know that Sopore was the hub of separatist politics.

“All this is a part of the systematic disenfranchisement of the Kashmiris. Their weightage, despite

higher population, is declining in the electoral arena. Correspondingly, that of the Jammu province is increasing. This is fraught with dangerous implications, be it communal or regional....

“It doesn’t stand to reason, therefore, to look for a solution to the Kashmir problem in the current framework of democracy, which, it turns out, is a web of deceit. It is the realisation of this fact that sows the seeds of separatism and provides sustenance to militancy; not unemployment, lack of infrastructure, or absence of sporting events like KPL!” (Greater Kashmir; September 26) The Congress, the Centre’s plant in the valley, ensures, with its Jammu vote, that no Kashmiri party can form a majority without it. GhulamNabi Azad and SaifuddinSoz boast about it incessantly.

These realities depress Kashmiris. V. K. Singh’s disclosures only prove what they had always suspected: (1) Since Kashmir’s accession to India on October 26, 1947, the Government of India has had a nest of spies in the State not merely for gathering information but also for covert operations against the State government. (2) For this, money was spent through the spies of the Intelligence Bureau and also through the Army—against its ethos and discipline—with the approval of the Prime Ministers of the day as two well-known, documented cases of 1953 and 1984 establish. (3) Kashmiri politicians were bribed systematically. (4) Popular alienation, far from abating has increased. (5) The result is the debasement of politics and the corruption of the electoral process. (6) It all rests on a profound contempt

(Continued on Page 16)

Failure to follow the path of socialism violates the constitutional obligation

Rajindar Sachar

The country is going through a chaotic spell of elections in various states. Soon we will go through the same exercise at the national level. At times like these the main political parties are expected to prove to the voters that they have honestly tried their best to carry out the mandate of our Constitution to constitute India into, amongst others, a Socialist Republic. But die-hard pro-capitalist apologists in our social set-up try to laugh away this commitment by suggesting that the word socialism was not incorporated in the Constitution in 1950, but was brought in later by an amendment to the Constitution in 1975 and has no relevance in the present times, especially in the post-1990 India. But it is precisely the failure of those advocates of the so-called global opening up that is responsible for our country's present misery.

Article 39(b) of the Constitution was always understood to mean that in India we have to endeavour to set up a socialist society. This is brought out specifically by Dr. Ambedkar in reply to Prof K.T. Shah, who wanted 'socialism' to be incorporated in the Constitution at the drafting stage. Dr. Ambedkar, while expressing his inability to do so for technical reasons, explained that socialism as such was already included in the directive principles. He explained thus: "What I would like to ask Prof. Shah is this: 'If these directive principles to which I have drawn attention are not socialistic in their direction and in their content, I fail to understand what more socialism

can be?' Therefore, my submission is that these socialist principles are already embodied in our Constitution and it is unnecessary to accept this amendment."

It is self-evident that to the extent there is failure by any government in following the course of the socialist path, it will be held guilty of violating its constitutional obligation.

The innocent but misplaced faith of those who still continue to believe that the development of the Indian economy can follow the false promise of globalisation ignores the warning given by respectable economists even of the USA who have clearly pointed out two ominous developments - one in the financial realm and the other relating to the real economy.

To talk against globalisation in the well-cloistered quarters of governments and the corporate sector is looked upon as almost treason. So let me invoke Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel laureate economist, who in his book (2006) is very caustic about the assumed benefits of globalisation. He has commented forcefully that "Globalisation is neither socially benign nor has it been instrumental in reducing poverty". According to him, globalisation has been detrimental to the poor and other weaker sections of society. Globalisation policies have been responsible for many ills of the global financial crisis and loss of employment as inefficient industries closed down under pressure from international competition.

The lesson to be drawn from the economic crisis in the US and Europe is clear, namely, that it were the oligarchic financial institutions that were chiefly responsible for it. The sordid story of multinational banks like Citibank and Goldman Sachs which by their greedy operations were responsible for damaging the US economy with their private profit-oriented policies and being rescued only because of the intervention of the US government and its Treasury clearly exposes the much-touted efficiency of the private sector over the public sector. The latest financial disaster in the US relates to — the case of J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, the largest in the US by assets, which faces multiple investigations and a \$5.8 billion loss on wrong bets on credit derivatives. Some of the well-known American banks are already under suspicion of the allegation that their firms rigged interest rates or were involved in money laundering. Ironically, the UPA government still feels that the talisman for growth is permitting these very foreign banks' unchecked entry into the Indian market.

The government, almost on bended knees, invokes the aid from foreign multinationals and apparently justifies it on the ground that we do not have sufficient financial resources for development and therefore need foreign capital. How mischievously wrong! According to the Union Minister of Commerce, in the last ten years only about \$250 billion (about Rs 12 lakh crore) has been received in India. As against this,

“The top 500 listed companies have enough cash on their books to double India’s power generation capacity of 2.00,000 mw or build over 40,000 km of six-lane high ways every year (compared with the current 800km), but are refusing to invest because of the slowing economic growth that has been aggravated by policy paralysis. By March 31, 2012, these companies were sitting on cash and cash equivalent of over Rs 9.3 lakh crore or \$160 billion”.

India is certainly not shining and this is even clear from the Human Development Report released by the Planning Commission in October, 2011, showing the widening gap between the rich and the poor. “In India, the distribution of assets is extremely unequal, with the top 5 per cent of the households possessing 38 per cent of the total assets and the bottom 60 per cent of households owning a mere 13 per cent. Just 66 resident billionaires in India control asset worth more than a fifth of the country’s GDP. Capital at large is three times more concentrated than in the United States”.

If the main parties continue to violate the mandate of the Constitution, let them beware of the foresight shown by Dr. Ambedkar, who when winding up the debate in the Constituent Assembly over 60 years ago while approving the Constitution warned us, “We are going to enter a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life, we will have inequality.....We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality

will blow up the structure of political democracy which this assembly has so laboriously constructed”.

(Continued on Page 16)

The various studies show that the cost per Lok Sabha seat is around Rs. 10 crore. Seven to eight assembly constituencies constitute a Lok Sabha seat and the expense works out to Rs. 1.25 crore per assembly constituency. But it is said that the minimum expenditure on an assembly seat is at least Rs. 2 crore. Adding these figures, the total expenditure by the candidates comes to Rs. 13,908 crore. Chief Electoral Officer explains: “We do not want to put all the eggs in one basket.”

The campaign of Modi, the BJP’s prime ministerial candidate, is reportedly financed by the corporate sector. The party cadres are said to be happy for getting the money. The meeting of captains of industry at Ahmedabad last year to support the candidature of Modi for prime ministership emphasizes their preference for him because his speeches indicate how they would have a free hand if he came to power.

They should have reconsidered their stand after the surveillance by the government’s security forces, including the anti-terrorist force, of a girl he had taken ‘fancy’ to in 2004. It was not protection but a close check on whom she met or where she went. The state’s inquiry committee is a farce. There should be a judicial probe. The surveillance is linked with Modi or, probably elections, in Gujarat. The overall picture may not be affected very

I humbly submit that the above warning continues to have the same relevance and urgency today. Are the political parties listening?

much. Yet what it suggests is that electoral reforms are essential for free and independent polls.

There have been many committees which have proposed reforms. I recall Gandhian leader Jayaprakash Narayan making several recommendations. In fact, even the Janata Party, his creature, did not implement any one of them because Prime Minister Morarji Desai had different ideas. His personal integrity was beyond doubt, but he could not lessen the role of money in elections. That continues to affect the independence and fairness of elections even today.

(Continued on Page 14)

for the people and for democracy itself. (7) None of the tactics, so cynically adopted, has helped in finding a solution to the Kashmir problem.

Gen VK Singh’s disclosures, though motivated, reveal that New Delhi persists still in the policies it adopted since 1947—let loose spies in Kashmir with huge money bags. Thus armed, they will inevitably play dirty tricks. Experience has demonstrated that dirty tricks are no substitute for statesmanship. To that history since 1947 we must turn to learn the lessons which our establishment refuses.

(to be concluded)

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 68 No. 49
December 15, 2013

Nelson Mandela

S. Viswam

Unimportance of parliament
Kuldip Nayar

**Future of Andhra Agriculture
under Water Deficit?**
K. S. Chalam

A Message from Delhi
Uday Dandavate

Bribes and spies -II
A.G. Noorani

AAP can hasten Third Front
Sankalp rallies

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A man who spent 28 years in prison, liberated his country from one of the worst forms of racist colonialism, and turned out to be a living legend passed into history last week. India, along with the rest of the world mourned the loss of this great human being and iconic revolutionary. His legacy to the world is not only his successful battle against apartheid in South Africa and the adroit manner in which he united the white and blacks of his country to build a nation on a non-racist secular platform. There was a touch of additional poignancy to the grief felt by Indians. Nelson Mandela was a Bharat Ratna, and in a sense India was mourning the loss of a fellow Indian. Mandela's life and India's freedom struggle had common linkages. Mandela was a Gandhian, and perhaps a committed devotee of Mahatma Gandhi whose non-violent techniques to eradicate racism and inequality found a ready resonance in Mandela. In ending apartheid in South Africa, he did the biggest service to the entire African continent in the sense that the wretched system of apartheid which divided humans on the basis of colour could never be attempted in any other colonial country. Just as India's freedom

struggle inspired and led to the liberation of many colonies, South Africa's banishment of apartheid led to end of racist practices in many black countries once ruled by colonial empires. Mandela's legendary qualities of head and heart have remained talking points in the global public discourse. One of these, quite illustrative of the man and his compassion and forgiveness, relates to his invitation to his jailer for 27 years to his inauguration as South Africa's President. Mandela was not a vindictive man although he had enough cause to be. Mandela was perhaps a universally venerated leader. One of the reasons surely was the fact that he shunned violence as a strategy to win freedom for his country. Like Mahatma Gandhi. This resulted in his strategy based on peace, reconciliation and democratic change remaining essentially peaceful and entering the pages of history as an example of peaceful revolutions. A great figure has died at the ripe age of 95. But his legacy, his imprint, his eventful life and his great moral strength will continue to inspire the peoples of the world for generations. Men like Mandela do not die. They live in their work and thoughts and

in the noble examples they set for others to follow. *Janata* dips its

banner in salute to the memory of this extraordinary human being who

set standards whether inside a prison or the presidential palace. RIP.

Humiliating defeats

There have been occasions when the 127-year-old Congress party has experienced electoral humiliation. Perhaps the latest example is particularly galling. The polls to five state assemblies had been seen as a curtain raiser to the 2014 Lok Sabha round. The Congress performance has been dismal, to say the least. It has lost by massive margins. It has lost Rajasthan and Delhi which were governed by efficient chief ministers. This can only mean that the people are angry with the Congress for its many shortcomings apart from corruption and rising prices. The Congress has almost been decimated in four states. Its only success in Mizoram is a poor consolation indeed.

A debacle at the state level need not necessarily mean a debacle at

the national level. The situation will be different, issues different and the local considerations will be different. Even so, the point is that the Congress performance does not inspire confidence. The Modi factor is making a difference; it is a moot question whether Modi influenced the outcome in the four states but the outcome is bound to boost his own and his party's hopes for 2014. The Congress has been unable to match Modi's electoral strategy with a counter of its own. True, Rahul Gandhi addressed many rallies in MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. But he was no match for Modi's anti-Congress tirades. It is time the Congress central leadership accepted the truth that Rahul Gandhi is just an ordinary Congressman and has displayed no special traits that qualify him for the highest job in the

country. He is just not prime minister material, and but for the cyclophancy in the Congress would not have been considered for any senior position in the party or government. The sooner the Congress projects a more credible vote-getter the better for the party. The party also needs to get its act together. It has six months left to do so. The party has to change its strategy and tactics and get closer to the masses whom it seems to have alienated. This is not impossible, but the party seems to have lost its political will somewhere on the way between 2009 and 2013. Let Sonia Gandhi introspect, and find out the causes for the latest debacle. She can perhaps salvage something with which she can redeem the party's fortunes in 2014

Mail & Guardian, Editorial

We will always need Madiba

In truth, we've said goodbye to Nelson Mandela many times before. As our president in 1999, as our omnipresent inspirational figure when he stepped out of the public spotlight in 2004, and then a handful of premature goodbyes as the world hung anxiously on news of his deteriorating health.

This goodbye should be the final one, but it doesn't feel that way. It's as if this moment, which we have grudgingly rehearsed so many times, is still just a simulacrum of a grief that our nation, and indeed a large part of the world, must necessarily

experience again and again.

Nelson Mandela stands for so much in our national psyche, is so much a part of the vocabulary we use to understand and express our present and future struggles, that we can never really let him die.

We needed him then, we need him now, and we will always need him. He was, is, and always will be the lodestone to which our national voyage must tend.

In an editorial six months ago, we spoke of Mandela's goodbyes

as a bestowal, a way of turning the absence of his person into the presence of his example.

We wrote of the profound withdrawal from public life that he began in 2004, a withdrawal which we saw as an insistence that South Africa learn to get along without his guidance, overt or implicit.

As much as he may have sought peace after a life of constant struggle, Madiba was also teaching a basic lesson: this must be a nation of laws, and of institutions, not of men,

(Continued on Page 16)

Between the lines

Unimportance of parliament

Kuldip Nayar

Indian parliament has had another sterile session. I do not understand why members wanted its extension when there was no business conducted for several days. It is a familiar pattern now. One party or the other, however small, disturbs one of the two houses. Once the undisrupted house comes to know that the other is not functioning, it follows suit on some pretext or the other. The state legislatures are no better.

What members of parliament do not realize is the extent of cynicism which is building up against the politicians. The very word, politics, has come to be derided. This is a dangerous trend for the democratic polity we have. Desperate elements jump into the arena to propagate other options.

This happened in Pakistan when General Mohammad Ayub Khan, the army chief, came to power. The then president, Iskander Mirza, himself asked him to administer for “some time” so that the unruly forces were curbed. Ayub lengthened “some time” and did not allow the civil government to return.

True, democracy has returned to Pakistan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has come through the ballot box. But he has to be cautious because the army chief is always overlooking his shoulders. In fact, my reading is that once the army comes to rule in a third world country, it may go back to the barracks but its “presence” remains.

Bangladesh, engulfed in violence, can have the intervention of the army easily. But the army is itself reluctant. It failed last time in 2009 to put together a set-up without the two Begums, Shiekh Hasina and Khalida Zia. The then army chief, General Moin U Ahmed admitted later that the misrule of the Begums was a staple food of the people in Bangladesh and they wallow in mess created by hartals and bandhs. Now the situation has deteriorated because the Jammata-e-Islami has methodically built up its strength and has a visible presence in every segment of society, including the media.

I do not think that these examples will deter members of our parliament or state legislatures from disturbing the proceedings in their respective houses in India. They want attention. A rumpus by a member gets more prime space both in electronic and print media than a mature and responsible speech. Media is to be blamed for this.

In a way, this also explains the phenomenon of Narendra Modi, the prime ministerial candidate of the BJP. He is a demagogue who arouses aspirations of people and indulges in a divisive politics. This has helped the BJP to increase its tally in the state elections in Madhya Pradesh and wrest Rajasthan from the hands of the ruling Congress.

However, his thesis of strong man and a decisive leader has given new ideas to the people. Disenchanted as the people are with

the way the parliamentary system is working, they are toying with the idea of presidential system. India had experienced authoritarianism when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi imposed the emergency. One hundred thousand people were detained without trial and Smt. Gandhi ousted morality from politics. We have not been able to revive the institutions even after 35 years of the imposition of the Emergency. Both the bureaucracy and the police continue to be the instruments of tyranny in the hands of rulers at the centre and in the states.

What consequently happens is the synergy they bring about in the programme and functioning of the two major parties, the Congress and the BJP. They are two sides of the same coin. I heard it at a gathering Arun Jaitley, the BJP leader and Digvijay Singh, a Congress leader, attended. Both expressed more or less the same views and conceded that their policies on economics and foreign affairs coincided. Since the two main parties are on the same page, parliament has become a status quo body. The adjournments or the walkouts are not on the basis of issues but for trivial reasons. An example is the bill on the division of Telangana as both parties support it.

The bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, I believe, will be a disaster and create insolvable problems, particularly on the sharing of water and the capital. The situation is aggravated when the centre says that it will be the custodian of

rivers. In other words, the ruling party at the centre will dictate. Still the Congress and the BJP have gone ahead splitting the state because of political considerations they have.

What surprises me is the BJP's opposition to the communal violence bill. It has become necessary since the police force has come to have a pro-Hindu tilt. Most Hindu-Muslim riots begin between the two communities. But they get converted into a fight between the Muslims and the police.

This formulation is confirmed by the Justice Srikrishna Commission, appointed for inquiring into the Mumbai riots during December 1992-January 1993 and the March

12, 1993 bomb blasts. "It is true that there might not have been incidents of private firing as put forward by the police, but on several occasions there were attacks by Muslim mobs on the police, clashes between violent mobs of Muslims and Hindus..."

I think the partisan attitude of the security forces has surfaced because of states' interference. This situation can be met through a federal police force. It can be used by the centre at places where the minorities are targeted with the connivance of the state government. The federal police can also be used to protect the property owned by the centre. Some years ago when Kerala government was at the back of the

Anti-Congress mood

Without any doubt, the elections reflect anti-Congress mood. The people of four states - Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Delhi - have expressed annoyance at the polls for their legislatures. The saving grace for the Congress has been Chattisgarh where the party is close second because it had sacrificed its 32 functionaries while confronting the violence of the Maoists.

Why the party has got the drubbing is due to its 10-year of mis-governance at the Centre that manifested itself in the shape of corruption, price rise and the general sense of insecurity. Congress president Sonia Gandhi and vice president Rahul Gandhi could not pull the chestnuts from the fire because Sonia Gandhi is distant from the people and Rahul does not click. Good that the party is going to introspect. To begin with, it can shed the arrogance of power. My feeling is that the dynasty does not

sell any longer. Rahul is too prosaic to make any impact as his campaigns in the different states have shown. His sister, Priyanka may do better.

Sonia Gandhi has said that the party would name the prime ministerial candidate soon because Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi had the focus since he had been put up by Bhartiya Janata Party for the office of prime minister. She will find it difficult to choose the candidate because she has pushed Pranab Mukherjee, upstairs by making him the President. P. Chidambaram is the obvious choice but he would not be as obedient as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been.

The best thing that has happened in elections is the emergence of Aam Aadmi Party which evokes a sense of idealism and strengthens the belief that religion, caste or language does not influence an ordinary person. I wish the Aam

protesters, the places belonging to New Delhi were set on fire.

America, like India, has a federal polity and has constituted a federal police force. It has gone many a time to the states where the segregation on the basis of colour had taken a toll on the black. The Mississippi riots are a staring example of Washington's intervention.

The communal riots are increasing in India. The country may not practice racial discrimination but still suffers from indifference towards the minority. The importance of legislatures and parliament is primarily for the rule of law. And it has to be safeguarded and enforced at all costs. This determination seems to be lacking.

Aadmi Party had an ideology to pursue. The future has to be chalked out, not only against corruption but also against consumerism which is taking over the nation. It is time to revive the ethos of our freedom struggle: democracy, pluralism and egalitarianism

Ganguly must quit

In view of a committee of three Supreme Court judges holding Justice (Retired) A.K. Ganguly guilty of "an act of unwelcome behaviour (unwelcome verbal/non-verbal conduct of sexual nature) with an intern, the People's Union for Civil Liberties urges Justice Ganguly to gracefully tender his resignation from the post of the Chairperson of the West Bengal Human Rights Commission to uphold the dignity of the high office that he holds and also to uphold the rule of law.

Prabhakar Sinha
President
People's Union For Civil Liberties

Future of Andhra Agriculture under Water Deficit?

K. S. Chalam

The Telugu people are once again drawn into yet another anxiety in the form of Brijeshkumar Tribunal Award on Krishna river water. Andhra Pradesh as the agricultural surplus state would encounter deficit of water with this award. This is not the first time nor would it ever resolve the problems of our state in future given the nature of the issue. The interstate agreements on Krishna started during the British in 1892 and repeated in 1933, 1944 and 1946 due to the geographical nature and spread of the river Krishna. Krishna and Godavari are the biggest rivers in Peninsular India having almost the same length of 1401 and 1465 Kms respectively. Krishna originates in Western Ghats travel 15 per cent of the length in Maharashtra, 23 per cent in Karnataka and the rest 62 per cent in Andhra Pradesh. Keeping the interstate demands and controversies in view, the Government of India had appointed Krishna Water Tribunal in 1969 using the Interstate Water Disputes Act 1956. Interestingly, interstate rivers and valleys come under central list (56) and the maintenance of irrigation and canals, water supplies, etc under state list (17). Given that federal structure in India is different from USA or Australia due to the historical reasons; the Centre entangles to redress disputes between states through the process of Tribunal Awards.

Water is a precious resource for sustenance of life. Once it was considered as free good and is now reduced to as the scarcest thing and therefore a commodity with all its characteristics. Out of the 2.7 per cent of fresh water on earth,

75 per cent is frozen in the polars, while some is underground and very limited is available on surface through run off. Though North India has the bounty of perennial Ganga, Brahmaputra, Indus, etc. originating in the Himalayas, South is not so blessed (may be *vastudosham?*). Therefore, out of the five states in the South, two states -Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh - are considered as water deficit as they are on the receiving end or tail end of the river systems. The interstate disputes led the central Government to establish five river water tribunals. Interestingly, out of the five, two are for Andhra Pradesh. As we are preoccupied with the Coastal Andhra and Krishna and Godavari so intensely, we are not even aware of the fact that Vamsadhara Tribunal was not provided with an office space and conveniently the North Andhra farmers were ignored.

The Krishna Water Tribunals I and II consisting of Bachawat and Brijeshkumar respectively gave their verdicts and have been discussed in detail in different fora and the facts are known to many. Award II has considered 65 per cent dependability and arrived at 2578 TMC for distribution with 16 TMC to flow down Prakasham barrage as environmental flow till 2050. We have chosen scheme A and seem to have not touched scheme B. We are definitely deprived of the legitimate share in the water, given the principles or methods adopted to arrive at the formula of sharing. As 80 per cent of the rivers in India are interstate and we had committed a blunder in allowing Visakhapatnam district to be bifurcated in 1936 (as

part of Odisha), we have very few sources of fresh water. Critics do also mention as to how we have indiscriminately used our water and in a short period of time swallowed 27 TMCs of fresh water in Kolleru Lake, the largest in South East Asia. However, Telugu people are proud of being the providers of food to the entire East India in the form of rice and fish. We are also proud of our farmers who are progressive and scientific in their approach to adopt to modern techniques and methods of cultivation particularly in areas where irrigation water is assured.

The utilisation of water for agriculture can be assessed in terms of Net Irrigated area in Net Sown area. The data with the Ministry of Water Resources show that we have 40.73 per cent coverage while our neighbours have - Karnataka 25.4 per cent and Maharashtra 16.78. However both Karnataka (16) and Maharashtra (56) have initiated major irrigation projects after 2001. The minor projects run in to hundreds. The highest irrigated states are Punjab and Haryana with 84 per cent; and Bihar, UP, Bengal in the Gangetic plane with 50-70 per cent. Among the South Indian states, Tamil Nadu with 54 per cent stands first. Among the deficit states, Andhra farmers are the most productive and translated the Government of India Green Revolution into a reality and are contributing to the national pool of food stock to accomplish the Right to Food security. Is this the way a state that comes to the rescue of the government should be treated in the allocation of water?

A Message from Delhi

Uday Dandavate

Water disputes and interstate allocations are not unique to India alone. The USA has devised polices and its Supreme Court passed orders for allocation of water based on principles. The principle of “Equitable Apportionment” is devised as one of the principles to distribute water. The problem with water and irrigation projects in India is that most of the people who formulate and manage the schemes are civil engineers and seem to lack expertise in hydro-geology, hydraulics and other related knowledge. Irrigation has emerged as an interdisciplinary subject and therefore uses outsourcing. The scientific knowledge about rains, water, cyclones etc. is now given priority and technocrats are in a position to predict and assess the availability of water for distribution. Then why is this controversy? Is it due to the political economy of irrigation and the involvement of interest groups?

The water deficit states, particularly Andhra Pradesh should insist on principles or guidelines drafted including the proposed National Water Framework Law for sharing of water. In this context, we may cite here what the Supreme Court of USA saying in exercise of an informed judgment, “ factors like, physical conditions, climate, the use of water, the character and rate of return flow, the extent of established uses, the availability of storage of water and the practical effects of wasteful use are considered”. It can also be based on: A. States can divide water by the amount of flow each state contributes. For example, if a state contributes 60 per cent of flow, it gets 60 per cent. But if it occupies 60 per cent area and contributes 30 per cent, a compromise is needed. B. Based on

(Continued on Page 7)

In the aftermath of a historic debacle of the Congress party, the TV channels are inviting expert commentators and representatives of political parties to provide their interpretations of who gets credit for victories and who should bear responsibility for Congress party’s disastrous performance. I believe the shape of the future will not unfold from the expert knowledge of political pundits, but from the collective imagination of everyday people of India, especially the youth, who are eager to distance themselves from traditional politicians and are willing to experiment with fresh perspectives.

The significance of young voters can be gauged from a report in *Times of India* of October 4th, 2013: “Close to 12 crore youths will be eligible to vote for the first time in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. To put that in perspective, no single party garnered more than 12 crore votes in the 2009 polls, showing how significant this segment can be if all of them register to vote. In the 2009 polls, the Congress polled 11.9 crore votes, the BJP 7.8 crore, BSP 2.6 crore and CPM 2.2 crore. No other party polled even a crore of votes across the country. The draft electoral rolls published by various states at this stage show that the national total is just under 79 crore votes.”

The difference between traditionalists and innovators, between the pundits and the youth is - that the traditionalists and the pundits are obsessed with just permutations and combinations of existing options

whereas the innovators and the youth continually reinvent themselves by daring to imagine a radically different future. My experience as a design researcher prompts me to say that the future is always under construction, in the imagination of everyday people. The outcome of the elections reveal what is possible through the traditionalists’ approach of permutations and combination and the delightfully surprising and inspiring results that can be achieved by including the youth in the process of imagining a radically idealistic future. The voters of Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh and Rajasthan had limited options of either going with discredited Congress party or with the other available alternative in BJP. On the other hand in Delhi the Aam Aadmi party was able to inspire youth from around the India to come to its campaign and unleash the imagination of a future where both established parties could be made to eat a humble pie and the political discourse of vote bank politics made irrelevant.

As the votes were being counted the percentage difference between the AAP and the BJP (according to *Times Now*) votes throughout remained within 1%-2% range and interestingly at times AAP’s voting share went higher than BJP’s. The older voters were split between the BJP and the AAP whereas overwhelming majority of first time young voters was primarily voting for the AAP.

People’s support to AAP reminds me of the atmosphere during

Navnirman Movement in Gujrat in 1974. This was a time when Jayaprakash Narayan galvanized nationwide resurgence of youth energy demanding Total Revolution. Electoral success of AAP fell short of putting them in the government, unlike in 1974 when Janata Morcha managed to install a government led by Babubhai Jashbai Patel. AAP has done well by declaring to stay clear of trying out any permutations and combinations to cobble up a government. The BJP, relatively a master at the game of permutations and combinations will only hurt its long term electoral prospects if it tries to encourage defections or resignations from either the AAP or the Congress. In the event of a re-election, the chances of AAP coming back with greater number of seats is higher, now that it is seen as a serious contender and Congress as a spent force.

AAP's victory in Delhi as well as BJP's success in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh has a more profound message for the progressive forces in India.

The youth of India does not buy into the narrative of the need for a two party system in India. The Congress party stands at a historic prospect of decimation, possibly worse than its humiliating defeat in 1977. Progressive-minded Indians need to rise to the occasion and participate in the force of transformation unleashed by the success of people's will in Delhi. It is time to make sustainability, secularism, social justice and swaraj - the foundation of a new vision for India. It is time to encourage grass root level leadership development and bring to political mainstream a new generation of leaders who can dedicate their imagination

to developing innovative and sustainable solutions for India's development needs. The match up between Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi runs counter to the aspirations of the youth of India who want opportunities to cleanse the political system of corruption and follow their own imagination. RSS's vision of the future is emerging as a formidable alternative to a discredited Congress party, the progressive forces need to step in and respond appropriately to Delhi's clear message: the need for creating an alternative imagination of India.

Democratic process has its own painfully slow way of bringing clarity. Remember those days in 1990s when Atal Bihari Vajpayee ran a 13-day long government, after it failed to garner majority India had a short-lived Deve Gowda and Gujral Governments, then came elections again which brought 13-month long Vajpayee government after the Gujral government was pulled down by the Congress party and elections were held. That government too fell down after Jaylalitha withdrew support. Finally NDA government came to power and lasted its full term. We had to go through three elections in two years to get NDA government of a full term followed by UPA government of two full terms. In the process, parties learned to manage coalitions and last a full term.

In Delhi, I anticipate a similar natural process of arriving at a clear mandate. If BJP shies away from trying its hand at cobbling up a coalition with Congress, and AAP stays away from it as well, there will be new elections, and hopefully people will provide a clearer choice - now that there is at least a mandate on keeping Congress out of the

way. The next election will provide a clearer choice between the BJP and the AAP to Delhi voters. It's a small price to bring a clear mandate and a streamlined governance that is not held to ransom by the Congress party. It does not make sense for either AAP or BJP to seek support from an unreliable and discredited Congress.

(Continued from Page 6)

historical claims such as claiming that they have already been using 60 per cent as "prior assertion". C. Dividing on the basis of priority uses like drinking, municipal, fisheries, etc. Some economists suggest that it is possible to standardise for every use to arrive at "water foot print" (value of) and leave it to the market to decide the flow. This is an extreme step which seems to have been tried by World Bank experts with precarious results. This is not useful in a country like India where we have several discontents and disconnects.

Andhra Pradesh a being a deficit state should argue that inadequacy is not a problem of Coastal Andhra; it is a national issue as it would adversely affect the national pool of food grains. There are already 125 bilateral agreements on water. The state Government can initiate a dialogue with Karnataka to get release of water from our share to meet our needs on time and the same amount of water can be seized later in a staggered manner. We may also rethink and redesign our agricultural operations including ground water use, cropping pattern and other alternative strategies while fighting for our Right to Water. Andhra is blessed with 950Kms of coast and should use nonconventional sources to get water to meet some deficits. Is it not reasonable to ask for compensation for foregoing our share in water?

AAP can hasten Third Front

Voters have punished the Congress, punished it decisively, and the party deserved it. It deserved it because of the massive corruption it indulged in and, the unrelenting price rise, much of it state fueled or ideology fueled, in deference to the dictates of its neo-liberal advisers. The Congress is a victim of its self chosen policies as far as inflation is concerned and of its pathological propensity to milk the state exchequer for personal gain. And even worse is the brazenness with which it faced charges of corruption. Corruption was first denied, later, when proved, it was shamelessly confronted, as of no consequence. And those groups which agitated against corruption were first ignored and later derided and still later, the Congress let lose all forces which could assassinate the character of the agitators. The defeat, let's hope, will teach a lesson, not merely to the Congress, but also to the party that will now come to power in the states which went to poll.

There are people who see in the defeat of the Congress a Modi wave. They are insulting the voters. There is no Modi wave, there is only anti-Congress wave. Remember Bofors days! V. P. Singh defeated Congress on the issue of corruption. But most commentators do not even mention corruption as a cause. They parade parrot like their pet neo-liberal

nostrums. One of them has said that even a weakened congress in power can do something and should do it before it loses in the Lok Sabha polls, and they roll out all the pending reforms. This class does not realize that these reforms are the cause of the massive defeat of the Congress and not their absence. If the Congress wants to improve its image, even a tiny bit, it will have to go left of the centre, and become not just what they call populist, but also anti-private corporate sector, the sector which has lined up squarely behind Modi and all the papers owned by it are humming the same tune, reform, reform, reform. And they are celebrating because Modi is almost in. The share market too.

And when some of these papers advise leadership change in the Congress, on the one hand, they remind the readers of the increasing numbers of young voters, and on the other hand, they promptly plump for a leader like Chidambaram, who is not young, but like the PM, cannot but serve the interests only of the well heeled. All his policies to revive the so-called growth, so-called because it is growth for the rich and not for common persons, have gone wrong.

While the Congress deserves what it got, the BJP has little to rejoice. The success of AAP, even if it got four seats less than the BJP in Delhi, has a story to tell, has a lesson to

teach. Anti-corruption, transparency, advocacy of the interest of the aam aadmi can be a heady decoction to deliver success. It also means that if there is a credible alternative, voters will dump both, the Congress and the BJP. Many say that the victory of the BJP in MP is because of the development that its CM delivered and not because of rabid Hindutva. He did not preach Hindutva and even boasted that he did not. If this is true, and it does appear so, there is little to cheer NaMo. Perhaps, the latter is looking for some opening to shed his rabid image to become more acceptable. But the RSS as usual will not allow him to do so and hence there is hope for all those who do not want both these parties because of the success of AAP. It is obvious that the AAP will grow, but it will grow faster, if in the elections that will follow in Delhi, it wins again. It will attract adherents in a massive manner. All those left parties, which dismissed it as of no consequence, will have to change their stance, and many may even accept it as a possible builder of the third force. If that happens, the politics in India will change, should change. And further, if this comes about, India will be a better place to live. Politicians should remember that in the voting lists, common persons, despite a planned effort to build middle class, have an overwhelming presence and they have the capacity to take well considered decisions.

Sankalp rallies

We have had 'Hunkar' rallies and now we will have Sankalp rallies. 'Hunkar' denotes assertion, 'Sankalp' a commitment. At the

recent rally, one out of the twelve planned, in a village in Motihari district, Nitish Kumar demanded special category status for the

state and condemned UPA's dilly dallying on this score and he warned people against the divisive BJP. Fair enough. And it is quite possible

that the marginalized Congress in the recent polls in four states might oblige him as far as the special status is concerned.

But the Bihar CM should realize that to win, to defeat his erstwhile partner, BJP, he has to work to uplift common persons, for those, who in hordes, take a train to Calcutta, Delhi or Mumbai almost daily, and sometimes are even worse off in their dream destinations than in their villages.

By all means, let him chase urbanization, industrialization because that is what middle class dreams of, but what is needed to defeat the divisive force is to work for common persons of his state. A promise of dignified life to all deprived people of Bihar, not on the basis of caste and religion, but on the basis of economic status will help him. And this he can ensure not by wooing or inviting the organized sector, especially the private one, to the state, for they say it delivers jobless growth, but through what Gandhians and Gandhiji inspired socialists advocate. The Sankalp rallies started from East Champaran from where Gandhiji had started his satyagraha against the British government. Let's hope that Nitish Kumar's choice of Champaran, connected with Gandhiji for his first rally, will not remain just symbolic but the latter's thinking will guide him to develop Bihar in a different manner.

Bihar has plenty of water, there is no dearth of bio-mass, and there is plenty of cow dung. The energy short Bihar can take care of its energy needs, especially of rural areas, through setting up of bio-gas plants which use cow dung and bio-mass available in villages to

generate electricity. The power in small villages is available only for a few hours in a day and it comes in fits and starts. And there are enterprising villagers who buy diesel generators and supply power to their neighbours. The bio-gas will be a better substitute to diesel and if the state takes it up as its programme, it will not just ensure power to rural areas but the state would be able to boast that it had done this without causing global warming.

Then Bihar is rich in handicrafts. The state does promote these, but it could be used as a trigger for development and prosperity of villages, and the unintended benefit will be that the migration will reduce. And all those who work with their hands, it should be remembered, happen to be lowly and poor. This will be development from below.

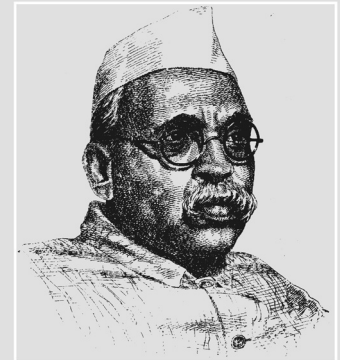
In his early career, Nitish Kumar had commissioned a report on education. The report is there gathering dust. It can be dusted and brought out and reexamined for implementation. Now that the BJP is not there, it may not be difficult for him to implement it. Equal, compulsory and free education in neighbourhood schools will be a revolutionary step and the people of Bihar, who still venerate J P, will see the latter's dream realized. This will fit in with Nitish Kumar's socialism too.

And a few more things. Make cheap credit available easily to common persons. The people in Bihar are hard working and there is a tradition of consuming locally available goods. In this background, with cheap credit, all the state will need to do is to ensure appropriate training to the youth for self-employment. And

he will have to launch a war on corruption. This will give him an additional advantage. Anna Hazare movement has successfully sensitized the middle class against this curse and the outcome of the recent Delhi election proves that anti-corruption movement has a salience. The middle class too will support him, if he succeeds in taming the burgeoning corruption in Bihar.

– GGP

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Bribes and spies -II

A.G. Noorani

Governments are run by a wide array of functionaries, each with a clear remit—Ministers, civil servants, diplomats, members of the armed forces, and spies. The problem arises when the head of one branch encroaches on another's territory and begins to run the show with a personal agenda of his own. Policy must be made by the political leadership on the basis of inputs from relevant specialists. But the latter cannot be allowed to make policy. In 1987, the Army chief brought India to the brink of war with Pakistan. Fortunately, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi put his foot down in time. A spy chief acts more insidiously. He has dossiers on the political opponents of the Prime Minister, within and outside the government. He acts in secret. His usurpation of policymaking is not so apparent, but it is no less dangerous for that.

In Kashmir, the chief of the Centre's spies was allowed to roam freely from the very outset in 1947. He began to doctor information with a view to shaping the government's policy. Before long, he was joined in the game of dirty tricks by senior members of the armed forces. The capers which Gen. (Retd) V.K. Singh cut have been documented on the basis of reportage by correspondents of repute in responsible journals. His predecessors' equally despicable role is laid bare in documents of unimpeachable authority.

The first in the sport was a policeman, B.N. Mullik, who joined the Intelligence Bureau (I.B.) as Deputy Director in charge of Internal Affairs, which included Kashmir.

He became its Director in July 1950, when "the Prime Minister instructed me to pay personal attention to Kashmir" (*My Years with Nehru*, Kashmir, page 18). Military Intelligence properly kept a watch on Pakistan. The I.B. spied on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, the Prime Minister of Kashmir. Nehru had three other informants—Karan Singh, D.P. Dhar and the Sheikh's Deputy, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. Mullik soon developed a personal agenda to "ruin" the Sheikh.

Y.D. Gundevia, former Foreign Secretary, wrote of Mullik in withering terms: "But what was the Intelligence Chief's objective? Mullik freely admits that after the Sheikh's arrest the aim was to see him and his associates 'ruined forever'.... The game began, it would seem, with an unobtrusive junior intelligence officer being posted in Kashmir, nominally to watch out for Pakistan's activities in the State but actually to spy on Sheikh Abdullah" ("A Monograph on Sheikh Abdullah" by Y.D. Gundevia, *Testament of Sheikh Abdullah*; pages 109 and 111).

Prem Nah Bazaz, a former colleague of Abdullah's who became his critic, levelled the same charge. "Mullik set his subordinates to watch and report on the activities of Sheikh Abdullah as if he was a shady character and enemy of the Indian nation. Coming to know of it, Sheikh Abdullah characteristically flared up and demanded the withdrawal of the I.B. officer stationed in Srinagar. Despite Mullik's protests Nehru, in no mood to offend Sheikh at that

time, promptly ordered the officer's removal.

"Though crestfallen, Mullik was not the man to relent or own defeat. Doggedly, he pursued the course he had chalked [out] for himself and the I.B., with the result that a similar situation arose in October 1952 when the Kashmir Constituent Assembly was engaged in producing a Constitution and the Delhi Agreement was on the anvil. Reports about developments in Kashmir politics, unfavourable to the Sheikh, were sent to the Union Government. This time the Sheikh's demand to remove two subordinate officers of the I.B. was turned down and he had to eat the humble pie" ("New Light on Kashmir", *Indian Express*, October 28, 1971). A full English translation of Sheikh Abdullah's autobiography was published for the first time in September (*The Blazing Chinar*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar). He writes: "A top official of the Central Intelligence Bureau, Hasan Waliya, sent successively reports against me and my administration. We ordered him out of the State. He was given twenty-four hours to comply. The Sardar was Minister for Home Affairs and the Intelligence Bureau fell within his purview. He did not like our action. There was a great stir in the corridors of power in Delhi. To sort out the matter, Jawaharlal called me to Delhi. I went accompanied by Bakshi and Beg. The meeting was held in Patel's house, which was attended by Jawaharlal, Azad and N. Gopalaswami Iyengar. I explained the reason for my action. Thereupon, the Sardar said, 'I have often told Jawaharlal that the gamble

we played in regard to Kashmir has been lost by us. We should quit it'....

"I said, 'We have no wish to snap our ties. However, if the Sardar does not like the relationship, what can we do? According to the Instrument of accession, the Centre cannot set up intelligence bureaus in Kashmir, we allowed them to function there by way of courtesy. But we would not like the department to become a stumbling block between the State and the Central government. So, if you want to let Hasan Waliya resume his work, we will have no objection. But he should be asked not to repeat the mistake of misrepresenting us to the Centre.' One can have a sense of Sardar Patel's animus against me by the book titled my *Years with Nehru* by B.N. Mullik, who eventually became Director of the Central Intelligence Bureau. The Sardar had poisoned his ears against me. So he started dispatching to the Centre concocted stories me, which filled Jawaharlal's heart with prejudice against me" (pages 247-8).

Mullik's book fully supports this: "Sheikh Abdullah, of course, suspected that all these reports were going to the Prime Minister from the I.B., and this time, instead of asking for the withdrawal of the Assistant Director, which demand, he rightly apprehended, might be resisted, he asked for the transfer of two of his immediate subordinates, hoping that thereby he would be able to restrain their boss sufficiently.... I had a long discussion with the Prime Minister about this and he agreed that our officers were not at fault and that the Sheikh was behaving in an unreasonable way. But his point was that *we were in Kashmir because of the Sheikh and if the latter resiled, India's position would be difficult*. The situation being so delicate, it might be necessary to yield on small matters so as not to affect the

bigger issues. So he advised me to go to Srinagar, talk to the Kashmiri leaders and settle the issue across the table.... I also stressed that the Government of India had once withdrawn an officer on demand by Sheikh Abdullah, but this process could not be repeated every time a demand was made" (pages 26-7). (Emphasis added, throughout.)

Earlier, in 1949, Abdullah's *published* interviews to two foreign correspondents had Mullik asking for his blood. I.B. officials in Srinagar were asked to report. "The Sheikh had come to know about our report. He promptly demanded the withdrawal of our officer from Kashmir and threatened that, if this was not done, he would be put under detention. When we were asked to withdraw this officer, we protested and I met Gopalaswami Iyengar in that connection.... Gopalaswami Iyengar agreed in principle with my arguments, but said that Kashmir was a delicate case and we should realise that *without Sheikh Abdullah's support it would be difficult for us to stay and work in Kashmir*. So, the Government of India, he felt, had to give in on small matters so long as the Sheikh stood by accession to India. He suggested that this particular officer, to whom the Sheikh had apparently taken a dislike, should be withdrawn and we should send in his place a more senior officer who would be able not only to meet the Sheikh and other Kashmiri leaders officially but also socially. We should also take this opportunity to strengthen our organisation in Kashmir. It was unlikely that the Sheikh, having once gained his point by getting a Central officer withdrawn, would raise such a demand again, and it was also likely that the new officer, instead of being handicapped in his work by the Sheikh's hostility, might find

himself in a much stronger position" (pages 9-10).

Mullik was no professional but a pliable politician. He was close to Nehru, who ran Kashmir's policy. But the I.B. fell under the Home Ministry headed by Vallabhbhai Patel. Mullik deftly switched sides. He had submitted a detailed report favourable to Sheikh Abdullah on his return from a tour of Kashmir. "The Prime Minister had considered the report to be an impartial assessment of the situation in Kashmir, and had forwarded copies thereof to all the Indian embassies abroad and also the Indian Representative at the U.N. to give them a proper perspective about Kashmir.

"Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was unhappy. This report of mine apparently went against the views which he had held about Kashmir in general and Sheikh Abdullah in particular. He suspected that the Sheikh was not genuine and was misleading Pandit Nehru and was not happy that the report should have been given such wide circulation. A few days after I had sent the report, the Home Secretary informed me that *the Sardar did not agree with my assessment and had taken exception to the fact that I had submitted this report without first consulting him*....

"I got a summons to see the Sardar the next day. He was not well and was seated on his bed. He looked at me quietly for some time. Then he asked me whether I had written the report, a copy of which was in his hands. I replied in the affirmative. He asked me why I had sent a copy of this to Jawaharlal without consulting him.... The Sardar then said that he did not agree with my assessment of the situation in Kashmir in general and of Sheikh Abdullah in particular. ... The Sardar then gave me his own views about Sheikh Abdullah. He

apprehended that Sheikh Abdullah would ultimately let down India...”.

Mullik was “soon afterwards promoted as the Director by the Sardar over the heads of nearly thirty of [his] seniors in the cadre”. Mullik writes: “That day I came back to my office wondering whether I had really made a mistake in my assessment of Kashmir and whether what the Sardar had said was not right after all” (pages 14-16).

No professional would have felt thus. Mullik’s report contained the *facts* he had gathered from a long tour. Patel’s *assessments* were opinions based on a hunch and his prejudices, of which Mullik could not have been unaware. He got the coveted promotion. Later, he found that Nehru was very willing to hear stories against the Sheikh. Mullik had arrived. He acquired a high position in the darbar and went on to wreak havoc on India’s policy towards China *at a very delicate and formative stage*.

No foreign correspondent based in New Delhi enjoyed better access to sources, wrote more felicitously, or worked harder than Neville Maxwell. Gross excesses in his book *India’s China War* should not blind a serious student to some fine insights and close analyses, based, of course, on his perusal of the Henderson Brooks Report (1963), which is denied to the public even now, 50 years later.

Mullik’s role

Maxwell’s comments on the I.B. and Mullik bear quotation *in extenso*: “The decline of military intelligence (M.I.) in India could be traced back to the last days of the British. There had been no Indians in M.I., so after 1947 all its personnel were new to the work. Furthermore, its role was diminished in favour

of the civilian Intelligence Bureau (I.B.), staffed by police officers. This I.B. grew in influence and importance, while M.I. languished, its senior staff posts tending to become sinecures or stepping stones. Under its director at this time, B.N. Mullik, the Intelligence Bureau had, as has been seen, become an important voice in the innermost counsels of the government; at bottom this influence derived from Mullik’s standing with Nehru. Access to and the confidence of the Prime Minister were the prerequisite of influence in the government in those days, and Mullik enjoyed them to the full. A former police officer, Mullik was articulate and astute; his stewardship of *dossiers on many of Nehru’s colleagues and opponents and the importance of intelligence in domestic Indian politics* would also have brought him close to the Prime Minister.

“Reliance upon Mullik’s advice in some areas of domestic politics had grown by the 1960s into a willingness to accept almost as fact his predictions about Chinese behaviour.... Mullik plainly relied on extrasensory perceptions rather than on the regular disciplines of intelligence collection and assessment, and no doubt part of the explanation for the inordinate and indeed irrational trust placed in his predictions is that *he was telling Nehru and his colleagues exactly what they wanted to hear*” (pages 335-6).

Maxwell adds: “The natural habit of intelligence operatives is behind the arras, and their accounts of their government’s policies and actions, while usually laudatory, often also show their principals in a seamy light. Mullik’s long account of his ‘years with Nehru’ certainly falls within this pattern, and the Nehru who emerges, although—and

because—so venerated by Mullik, is further shrunken. Mullik is bent on depicting a Nehru who, far from being of sanguine and idealistic disposition in his thinking about foreign policy, *was in fact a very Bismarck of realpolitik*. But of course what one man praises as the tactics of realpolitik another may see as mere deviousness, or even hypocrisy, and it is not easy for the outsider to find anything admirable in the sustained contradiction between what Nehru so prolixly used to say and what, in Mullik’s account, he actually thought and did....

“But, even allowing for the distortions of focus inherent in autobiography, it seems that if anything *Mullik’s role in the formulation and implementation of his government’s policy towards China was more substantial than has appeared to this point*. Again, the image of the court is inescapable in a reading of Mullik, and it appears that the monarch’s failing was that he all too often made those whose real capacities fitted them for the cap and bells into his dukes and captains” (pages 496-7).

Nothing aroused Indian emotions more than the Kongka Pass incident on October 21, 1959. Maxwell proves that it was staged by Mullik “with the approval of the Prime Minister” of Kashmir, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad.

Toppling governments

There is irrefutable evidence of the abuse of the armed forces and the intelligence agencies to topple two State governments in Kashmir, in 1953 and 1984. As early as on July 10, 1953, Nehru sought the services of Major General Hiralal Atal, who revealed the details of the operation in his memoirs, *Nehru’s Emissary to Kashmir* (1972). He was Director of

Personnel Services in October 1947, when Nehru personally selected him for an assignment in Kashmir. About the middle of July 1953, he was summoned by Nehru. He was then commander of 21 Communication zone, now known as XV Corps. He was asked “to be of all assistance that you can to the Government of the State”. He could not have meant the Abdullah government.

Atal organised a “tactical exercise” for the troops of all arms to be brought to Srinagar. Sheikh Abdullah was of course under close surveillance. A staff officer of the Adjutant General’s Branch came to see Atal and met Karan Singh, the head of state, often in mufti: “I was most curious to know how he, as Director of Organisation, could have been selected by Army Headquarters for an assignment which militarily was not within his sphere. My suspicions about the motive of his visit to Srinagar were aroused on two counts. First, he mentioned that he was carrying with him a largish sum of money, and secondly his surprisingly secretive behaviour particularly when he normally confided in me to a great extent. I was left with the impression that he had been sent by a responsible political personage and that his mission was political and not military” (ibid., page 164).

Personnel of the armed forces should not be used for such shady jobs. The political personage could only have been someone who could give such orders—Prime Minister Nehru. It was a feudal political culture. Atal had been visiting Bakshi (ibid., page 165), apparently without Abdullah’s knowledge and “discussed the political situation” with him and others.

Nehru also availed himself of the services of another favourite

in the Army, B.M. Kaul, who was officiating as Adjutant General. In late July 1953, he said that Nehru “called me in my private capacity” (Kaul, *The Untold Story*, 1967, page 140). Kaul took 10 days’ leave from the Army chief and went to Srinagar “without an official status” and stayed with Atal. The Sheikh was sacked from office as Premier on August 9, 1953, and jailed for 11 years.

“With the Sheikh out of the way, it became easier for the Central Intelligence to work with Bakshi Ghulam Mohd as the Prime Minister and D.P. Dhar as the Home Minister. The old suspicions had disappeared,” Mullik wrote.

‘Bullets’ for defection

B.K. Nehru, the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, had a poor opinion of Farooq Abdullah, both as a man and as Chief Minister. But he opposed Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s decision to sack him in 1984 by arranging defections in the time-tested manner. His account verges on the hilarious. “The inducements for defecting had then to be substantial. The standard rate was two lakh rupees in cash and a ministership; this latter would, of course, provide the defector with substantially larger cash return even though his career in office might be short. The funds were provided by my friend Tirath Ram Amla, a staunch and tried Congress worker, and were supplied to him in cash from Congress Party money in Delhi, transported in the mail pouches of the Intelligence Bureau. The use of official machinery for party purposes had by then become so commonplace that it did not call for any eyebrows to be even slightly raised. The channel for transferring the funds from Paymaster General Tirath Ram to the recipients was

uniquely Gul Shah. Tirath Ram used to complain of Gul Shah’s perpetual demand for more ‘bullets’; he always needed more than had been given. When the term bullet was used for the first time I did not understand....

“When I say that the amount of money used was substantial, I use the adjective in relation to the relatively modest demands of the politicians of the State and to the rates for the purchase of votes then prevalent in India. As is well known, in the years since the events related in my story this rate has far outstripped the rate of inflation.

“Whenever I came to Delhi, I called on the President [Zail Singh] also and gave him my reading of the situation in Kashmir. This he used to appreciate greatly because, as he said himself, it balanced the view on Kashmir with that given to him by continuous delegations from the Congress party trying to convince him to dismiss the State government because of the iniquities of Farooq. When I mentioned the purchase and sale operation going on, he said, ‘To kee gal hoi, lukh lukh rupaiya de do, kaam ban gaya’ (So what? Give them a lakh of rupees each and the work is done). I said a lakh of rupees was no longer enough; he said rather disgustingly, ‘Aaho, e Bhajan Lal ne rate kharab kar dittae’ (Yes, that Bhajan Lal has spoilt the rate)” (Nice Guys Finish Second, pages 627-8). In this case the Army was spared. The I.B. helped. It had helped also when Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad moved a motion of no-confidence against Chief Minister G.M. Sadiq, a Central appointee, in September 1964. It was certain to succeed, given the Bakshi’s resources and his hold on the MLAs. He was put in prison on the eve of the vote.

The Meadow by Adrian Levy

and Cathy Scott-Clark lays bare the doings of the I.B. and Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) in Kashmir (Penguin, 2012, Rs.499).

Elections have to be rigged and leaders with mass support have to be imprisoned lest the Assembly boldly proclaim Kashmir's voice for all the world to hear. What if the Assembly passes a resolution for Kashmir's independence? Precisely this fear prompted Indira Gandhi to intern Sheikh Abdullah in Delhi in January 1971 and prevent his men from contesting the Lok Sabha elections that year and the Assembly elections in 1972.

Now, the play of the Centre's money-laden spies and the separatists' boycott of the elections have resulted in a deep disconnect between the people and the governments, Central and State. The people resent the installation of unrepresentative State governments with Central help. As Churchill said in the House of Commons on June 2, 1931, "No government which is in a large minority in the country, even though it possesses a working majority in the House of Commons, can have the necessary power to cope with real problems."

On July 10, 2010, Omar admitted, "The troubles erupted in areas where we got very low polling percentage in elections, where voting was less than 20 per cent even in the 2008 elections that was considered a major success." This is a reference to the eight constituencies in Srinagar district, all won by his National Conference by "external" aid. On the strength of these eight, he formed a coalition with the Congress. In a House of 85 seats, the N.C. won 28, Mehbooba Mufti's J&K People's Democratic Party (PDP) 21 and the Congress 16. In the valley itself, if the eight are excluded, the N.C.

won 12 and the PDP 19. Omar was nominated by the Centre.

Both Nehru and Indira Gandhi had a poor opinion of Kashmiris. She wrote to Nehru from Srinagar on May 14, 1948, that "only Sheikh Saheb is confident of winning the polls. But, they could be won over and all this political talk will count for nothing... after all the people are concerned with only [one] thing—they want to sell their goods and to have food and salt." The people had no mind and no soul. Nehru repeated this view to Sheikh Abdullah on August 25, 1952: The common people are primarily interested in a few things, "an honest administration and cheap and adequate food". No Kashmiri would say that of his people. It was not love for the people but for the land that inspired his policy. British Collectors in the districts held similar views during the Raj. Television panelists and anchors and newspaper columnists express similar views today.

But unlike Nagas, Kashmiris lack the clout. They can be taken for granted. M.S. Prabhakara spoke the unpleasant truth. "The impression is inescapable that more than any objective assessment of the genuineness of grievance, it is the strength and weaknesses of a rebel outfit that influences the government's response to its offers of talks."

The guns of 1990 could be met, but the massive spontaneous street protests of 2010 were hard to combat—except by killings or bribery. Even the State police protested at the Central Reserve Police Force's (CRPF) shootings. The people are not "alienated", that implies a prior love. They were and are still opposed to Kashmir's accession to India in 1947. That is

the grim reality of the uniqueness of Kashmir. The bunkers and armed presence are offensive, but they are not the cause of the unrest. It is rejection of the Union itself. That is why Kashmiris explode every now and then.

There is another truth, however. History did not stop in 1947. Pakistan's aggression in 1965 ended whatever prospect there was of a plebiscite. Pakistan's covert military operation in Kashmir was conceived and planned by Zia-ul-Haq as far back as 1986-87. Such ventures must have a realistic political objective. In 1994, Benazir Bhutto asked for a plebiscite. The operation dwindled down. Militancy has declined steeply. But popular rejection of the Centre remains as intense as ever.

Leaders without vision

Kashmiri's leaders offer no solution. The Unionists, the N.C. and the PDP, cannot agree even on a new draft Article 370 to replace the moth-eaten one of today. Both are dependent on the Centre's support and submit to coalitions with the Congress. They have to suffer the likes of Ghulam Hasan Mir, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Taj Mohiuddin and the like. Even in cases where there is credible evidence or even proof of corruption, Omar Abdullah dare not sack a Congress Minister, and the Congress leaders in New Delhi will not sack him either.

In sheer anguish an independent MLA, Engineer Rashid, pleaded in the Assembly for N.C.-PDP unity: "Unfortunately, N.C. and PDP only look at forming a government with Congress, both the parties neglect the fact that they can serve better if they think together about Kashmir and Kashmiris." On the first day of the recent Assembly session, he alleged that "members are stooges

of Indian Army” after V.K. Singh’s issues rocked the House (Kashmir Life, October 12, 2013). It would be like the Grand Coalition of the two major parties in Germany. But neither party in Kashmir wants to alienate the Centre.

The state of the separatists is as pathetic. They do not take up issues concerning the people’s daily lives at all. Syed Ali Shah Geelani rightly objected to Bilal Lone’s breach of discipline by standing for the elections. But that was no ground for splitting the Hurriyat. He remains the most popular leader only because his negative stance appeals to them in their parlous plight. But his world view and Islamist politics are little accepted in Pakistan or by large numbers in the valley and by none in Jammu and Ladakh and also not by the Kashmiri Pandits. His is an “all or nothing” stand. Geelani wants the State to accede to Pakistan and Pakistan to become an Islamic state. The Mir Waiz, Maulvi Umar Farooq, and he are locked in a contest for leadership and in demagogy.

On May 17, 2013, the Mir Waiz said that Kashmir was a natural part of Pakistan. On September 1, 2013, Geelani declared that Kashmir was a “natural part of Pakistan”. Both swear by “the U.N. resolutions”. In 2013, not one of the Five Permanent Members of the U.N. Security Council endorses any of the plebiscite resolutions of the U.N. Commission for India and Pakistan (1948-49) or any pleas in the same vein by the Council itself. The leaders will not unite even on a limited programme for restoration of civil liberties. Omar Abdullah kept Geelani under house arrest for nearly eight months. His popular appeal frightens Omar. Geelani was released on October 29.

The separatists have no control

over the militants and offer no proposals which New Delhi can accept. In 2013, how on earth can anyone in his senses imagine that India will pack up and quit Kashmir? The politics of “All or Nothing” obsesses also some in the universities and in the press. It requires moral courage and an honest intellectual effort in India, Pakistan and Kashmir to grasp three stern realities: India will never agree to plebiscite or secession. Pakistan will never accept the Line of Control (LoC) as an international border. Why would it accept under a settlement what it already has? Kashmiris will never acquiesce in the partition of the State or denial of azadi, democracy and human rights.

These realities can be reconciled but only in an imperfect solution in which all gain some and all lose some. This is what the Manmohan Singh-Musharraf four-point formula accomplished. Manmohan Singh would have passed into history had he pushed it. He decided otherwise. In Kashmir demagogy prevents acceptance of the realities. It is comforting to cling to stereotypes—and more rewarding too.

Things are no better south of the Pir Panjal Range. Almost the entire Indian establishment—most in the media and academia—have been complicit in repression. A senior Indian official reminded this writer that there are other restive people in the world also, the Kurds, as he mentioned. Ergo, Indians can live with the militancy in Kashmir. We are strong. We can bribe. Our spies are efficient. And some Kashmiris there will always be—as they have always been—who will sell their souls for the crumbs that are offered by India and Pakistan.

In truth, the “All or Nothing” attitude is shared by both New

Delhi and Srinagar. It will fail but not before the violation of human rights have deepened the alienation even further.

Dare we hope that all the three parties, India, Pakistan and Kashmir, will heed Dr B.R. Ambedkar’s advice in the Ranade Lectures on January 18, 1943. He said, “We must not set up as our ideal something which is purely imaginary. An ideal must be such that it must carry the assurance that it is a practicable one.... In political negotiations the rule must be what is possible. That does not mean that we should be content with what is offered. No. it means that you must not refuse what is offered when you know that your sanctions are inadequate to compel your opponent to concede more.”

Kashmiris will never be able to force India to quit. And India will never be able to crush the revolt of the Kashmiris. The four-point formula, itself an ad hoc arrangement for, say, 10 years, offers a way out and relief to the people. There is no secession and no drawing of an international border. There is maximum self-rule for East and West Kashmir and de facto the State of Jammu and Kashmir is reunited, the people crossing the LoC freely. The troops withdraw once peace settles in. It does not aim to settle the dispute; only to alleviate a hopeless situation and thus pave the way for a final settlement in the future in better conditions.

Blind opposition to it, fashionable in some quarters, does not help the people but only those who prosper by the status quo and feast on the miseries it inflicts on the hapless people. As the Quran says, “Verily never will Allah change the condition of people until they change it themselves” (13:11).

-Frontline

(Continued from Page 2)

certainly not of one man.

At the time of Mandela's withdrawal, some of us did not want to let him go, besieging him with pleas for intervention, for anointment, for the sheer, unrivalled, force of his being at World Cup bids, fundraisers, and election events.

In the space of his refusals, a Mandela industry grew up designed to protect him and his legacy, but clearly, naturally, incapable of embodying him, and at times susceptible to glib shorthand.

Now, at this awful point of his death, is the time to reject that easy legacy, and to embrace the infinitely more complicated truth of the man.

Others were all too hasty to see him off, to welcome the lacuna left by his gracious absence.

As our transition progressed, and in some ways soured, Mandela's tough-minded commitment to reconciliation based on the restoration of justice was caricatured by critics as too soft, too forgiving, inadequate to the increasingly urgent project of a deep transformation in South Africa's power structures, and in the lives of millions of still-immiserated people.

For them Mandela could be dismissed as an ANC leader who made white people and foreigners feel comfortable, at a time when discomfort was needed.

This too we must reject as a facile re-engineering of his force, a force that defies the containment that

would render it mute.

An incapacity to recall the radical demand of Mandela's humanism, and a tendency to congeal his personality in bronze and branding, however, may be the least of our failures.

The truth is that Nelson Mandela has been absent not just from banquets, front pages, and the high councils of the ANC, for close to a decade. He has too often been absent from our conception of ourselves, and the messy, joyous work of building a democracy in which the full realisation of our individual and collective humanity is possible.

The ANC, which he regarded as essential to the transformation of our national life, without which, he said, "I would be nothing", is struggling amid factionalism and greed to recall his 2009 injunction "to let the good of our people always remain supreme in all our considerations".

This is why today's goodbye must not be final.

Tomorrow, we will need Mandela again, to imbue us with the spirit, the intelligence, and the humanity to carry on the flawed, essential legacy he has gifted us.

At the opening of the first democratic Parliament in 1994, Mandela quoted Ingrid Jonker's poem *The child who was shot dead by soldiers in Nyanga*.

The final words of that poem seem as apposite to the death of Nelson Mandela as they were to the birth of our nation.

"the child is present at all meetings and legislations

"the child peeps through the windows of houses and into the hearts of mothers

"the child who just wanted to play in the sun at Nyanga is everywhere

"the child who became a man treks through all of Africa

"the child who became a giant travels through the whole world

"Without a pass."

We say goodbye to our giant.

But we must refuse to say goodbye to his example, his ideals, and the dream we share with him.

We will always need Madiba.

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Vol. 68 No. 50
December 22, 2013

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D. K. Giri

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Praise be that a legislation conceived many decades ago, passed in the Lok Sabha two years ago but consigned to cold storage since then has at last reached the enactment stage. The Lokpal Bill, brought to the two Houses of Parliament by a government chastened by public criticism for its lackadaisical approach to ending graft in the country, was vastly different in tone and content from the legislation that awaited acceptance over the decades. Even in its present modified and improved version, it is doubtful if it will prove to be an effective deterrence to high-level or high-scale graft. However, we must acknowledge that a sense of pragmatism if not public pressure, has forced officialdom to bring forward an instrument that shows immense promise and potential as a graft combater. The bill's introduction in parliament and its adoption by the two houses is certainly a tribute to the public movement initiated by Anna Hazare and his enthusiastic band of activists. To everyone's surprise, the movement generated so much support and goodwill that national politics itself can be said to have changed dramatically in months following the agitation for a comprehensive and effective institution of an ombudsman for the country. One would not

have or could not have imagined that the success of the Lokpal bill agitation would lead to a situation in which a Johnny-come-lately political party would win enough popular support in elections to set up a minority government in the national capital. Yet, that situation is on the verge of turning itself into reality. If it does not, in the sense that the Aam Aadmi Party finally decides not to form a government in Delhi, the option that is open is for a re-poll to the assembly coinciding with the Lok Sabha poll. Even that option, if exercised, would be an endorsement of the way in which the newly formed Aam Aadmi Party is getting itself absorbed smoothly into the national mainstream politics. The government has been more than pliable in modifying the Lokpal Bill to be made acceptable to its critics and the opposition. Many provisos have been dropped, many amendments accepted and the objections relating to the status and position and role of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) have been largely met. One wonders if the UPA government, and the central leadership of the Congress led by Rahul Gandhi would have committed themselves to enacting the bill if the assembly poll outcome were more favourable for the Congress or

if the Aam Aadmi Party had found short shrift of its political ambitions. The larger parties obviously do not evoke any faith or confidence in the people regarding their credentials for fighting graft, compared to the AAP which is being perceived as an objective anti-corruption crusader. In other words, the nation owes the gift of a Lokpal bill not to a reformed and brain-washed government but to Anna Hazare and the AAP. On whether the Lokpal Bill has teeth, the two differ. The AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal says that not even a mouse will be caught by the Lokpal. Anna says, why a mouse, the institution will capture even lions. This remains to be seen, but surely, Anna Hazare cannot be so wide of the mark and Kejriwal so dismissive of a measure which in its amended form is toothful enough and has full potential of baring its fangs to the detriment of the corrupt and the unjust. As a compromise, the bill in its enacted form, is neither too weak nor too strong. We need to view it as a beginning in our fight against corruption, and as an initiative that can be refined and fine-tuned as we go along. For the present, it is enough that even on first reading the institution seems strong enough to Anna Hazare that he invests it with the capacity to trap lions. From this it emerges that much depends on Lokpal himself whoever heads the body. The Lokpal has been vested with powers to bring the corrupt to book and has the mechanism to process their cases from the stage of arrest to the stage of conviction and punishment. We need to give the Ombudsman a chance to perform, and we need to support his creation and establishment. The Lokpal was long overdue. Now that he has arrived, let us welcome him and wish him well.

Who is more to blame?

Kuldip Nayar

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has repeatedly asked India to resume talks which had got snapped following the terrorists' attack on Mumbai in November 2008. His brother, chief minister of Pakistan's Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif, has echoed the same sentiments during his visit to India's Punjab a few days ago. His advice to both the countries was to engage in a dialogue to settle their issues since war is no longer an option.

India's External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid, too, has said that he was not against the dialogues. But he has predicated his statement with a proviso that there should be an environment for the talks to be fruitful. He has probably in mind the contentious issues which continue to sour relations between the two.

One irritant is the attack on Mumbai. The manner in which Pakistan has gone about in not punishing the perpetrators shows that it is merely going over the exercise. The suit in the law court is still at the initial stage even after five years. Numerous judges hearing the case have been either transferred or probably asked to go on leave.

I wish Pakistan's Chief Justice, Mohammad Iftikhar Chaudhari, who did a brilliant job in upholding his country's constitution in letter and spirit had taken up the matter suo moto before retiring a few days ago. Many lawyers may mock at the suggestion, but punishment to the 26/11 terrorists is a pre-requisite to normal ties between the two countries.

Hafeez Sayeed, who India suspects to be the mastermind behind the plan to attack Mumbai and has been let off by the Pakistan court for lack of evidence, is urging a jihad against India. It may sound ridiculous but many on this side believe that he has a hand in shaping Pakistan's policy against India.

Despite these minus factors, the common man in India has warmth towards Pakistan. Visitors returning from Pakistan endlessly talk about the hospitality and affection they had experienced. Similar is the talk of love and generosity by the Pakistanis visiting India. Therefore, the blame is on the politicians and bureaucrats for not burying the hatchet. They seem to have developed a vested interest in keeping the two countries distant. I find the same faces of politicians and bureaucrats, even after their retirement, are engaged in Track II dialogue.

One Pakistani bureaucrat with a similar thinking briefed the press the other day on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's warning that Kashmir could trigger a fourth war between India and Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif's office issued a contradiction soon enough. But the damage had already been done. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, otherwise a mature politician, too reacted in an irresponsible manner. He said that "Pakistan could not win a war against India during his lifetime." I suspect his reaction was meant to show "strength" in view of forthcoming parliamentary elections.

What the Prime Minister or the Congress party he represents does

not realize is that even the Bharatiya Janata Party has stopped raising the anti-Pakistan bogey because there is lessening response from the public. Some in the party or outside may be carrying the baggage of history, India's partition in August 1947. But the anti-Pakistan line does not sell any longer.

A wrong propaganda is sought to be made in Pakistan that the Indian media indulges in bashing it. This is not true. However, I wish there were more stories about Pakistan in the Indian media. But then the governments in both the countries are to blame. They have given visas only to one news agency and one newspaper. There is one television channel which adopts a war-like posture. But India has some 300 channels reporting on Pakistan as they do about other countries.

Where do we go from here? The two countries can join hands in fighting against the terrorists. Nawaz Sharif has made a specific proposal that the two countries should institutionalize a mechanism of meetings between their national security advisors to discuss terrorism. At last, the two countries have fixed the meeting of Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two countries to ensure the sanctity of Line of Control (LoC) on the Jammu and Kashmir border. This is a development in the right direction.

Still what is important at this juncture is how to inspire the two countries to trust each other. Nawaz Sharif has rightly said that the real reason for estrangement is the "trust deficit" between the two countries. Many in Pakistan believe that the core problem is Kashmir. This is only a symptom, not the disease. Even if we manage to solve

(Continued on Page 4)

Congress Faces Uncertainty

Nitish Chakravarty

The reverses suffered by the Congress Party earlier this month in the state assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Delhi have not come as a big surprise but the huge margin of the Bharatiya Janata Party's victory in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan has raised eyebrows. This is not the first time that the Congress has lost assembly polls in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Delhi.

But before the results in these states are analysed for Janata readers let us celebrate the fledgeling Aam Admi Party's historic triumph in Delhi. Conceived less than a year ago none outside of the AAP family had expected that its founding leader Arvind Kejriwal will dethrone Delhi's grand old chief Minister, Sheila Dikshit, by a whopping margin of 25,000 or so votes. AAP's triumph mirrors the anger of the capital's citizens over the dismal state of affairs hitting them below the belt. The main issue on which the AAP focused its campaign is corruption. It needs no repetition that if the UPA government had taken corrupt elements headlong, the electorate's verdict could have been different.

It would not be out of place to recall that in the general election in 1967, months after Indira Gandhi took over as prime minister, the Congress Party was humbled in many of the north and central Indian states, besides failing to secure a simple majority in the Fourth Lok Sabha. Once again in the post-Emergency elections in March 1977, Indira Gandhi's

Congress paid a high price for the authoritarian and dictatorial style of governance she had enforced on the nation. The Congress having suffered a comprehensive defeat, a multi-party coalition labelled as the Janata government came to power with Morarji Desai as prime minister. Indira Gandhi took advantage of the bickering among the Janata leaders, and the Janata experiment collapsed in no time. In the event, Indira Gandhi was back as prime minister within less than three years of her ouster. She had learnt from the mistakes she made and by and large did not repeat them after her return as prime minister.

The Congress party's rout in this month's polls has not sprung a surprise, for tell tale signs of people's anger against the party were visible to anyone who cared to see. Pervasive corruption coupled with a dysfunctional government at the Centre, soaring prices, et al, have turned the people against the party. This hostility has percolated to the state level wherever the Congress is an important player. Forecasts about the margin by which the BJP would capture power in the states where it was in opposition – Rajasthan and Delhi – and the Congress would fail to win Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh varied, yet the predictions reflected with a high level of accuracy the mood of the people.

None was in doubt that the Congress party was in for a drubbing in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi. Chhattisgarh however kept observers on tenterhooks till the last moment. The other state where

the Congress was in power and has emerged as the winner again, albeit with a reduced share of the polled votes, is Mizoram; but the tiny state, with only a single seat in the Lok Sabha, is not a major player in national politics.

It is hard to say whether the party's comprehensive defeat will spur a genuine introspection resulting in proper steps to win back the hearts of the people who have deserted the Grand Old Party. Sonia Gandhi has called for introspection. It looks like there will be a *chintan shibir* or two [brain storming get-togethers], and also a plenary session of Congress workers from across the country where none will have the temerity to point fingers against the lacklustre leadership. But even before any concrete step for searching souls has begun, finger pointing has started. The axe is likely to fall first on the presidents of the state units where the party has been reduced to a rump. There is no reason to expect that Congress functionaries will have the courage to go for the jugular when it comes to the performance of the party's top leadership.

Ever since the days of Indira Gandhi, the party supremo has been deified and regarded as infallible. No questions are raised about decisions taken by the party chief even on matters of high policy, especially when she or he belongs to the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. There are some in the party who strongly believe that the Congress cannot exist without a Nehru-Gandhi scion as its head. Some whispering is going on in party circles pinning the blame for the debacle on Rahul Gandhi (Rahul is more of a liability than an asset, etc., etc.), but none has the guts to come out into the open and share their true feeling. One major impact of the election results is that

the sycophants who had mounted an orchestrated campaign asking for Manmohan Singh to vacate and make room for Rahul Gandhi have fallen silent. Some of them have even begun to root for Manmohan Singh, without directly saying what they think of Rahul's competence to take over as prime minister. One hopes the good old economist is enjoying the breather. The fact of the matter is that in election after election - in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in particular - Rahul's campaigning paid no dividends. And now in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Delhi, Rahul Gandhi is seen more as vote loser than a vote catcher. The thin attendance at the rallies addressed by Rahul in some places, notably in Delhi, is a sign that the Congress party stands to gain little by using Rahul Gandhi as its mascot. With Rahul Gandhi seemingly unsure of his future role, some people have wasted no time to make a clamour that Priyanka Gandhi has to shed her aloofness and plunge headlong into politics to save the party. The interesting thing is that they cannot think of anyone outside of the dynasty.

As the general elections of 2014 are not even five months away, politicians of all hues are burning midnight oil to put together houses of cards - often described as fronts and alliances. There is much talk of regional parties with no commitment to any specific political philosophy coming together to build fronts but every regional satrap has his or her own interests at heart. The capital is abuzz with various permutations and combinations. Meanwhile the parties are fighting it out in Parliament on issues that easily arouse emotions such as Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code which regards same-sex relationship between consenting adults as a criminal offence.

Overwhelmed as it is by high prices, inflation, current account deficit and what not, the Manmohan Singh Government's plate is full.

(Continued from Page 2)

the Kashmir problem, some other problem would crop up if there is no trust in each other.

The two nations are rightly conscious of the destruction the nuclear weapons, which they possess, can cause. Hence they should solve their differences peacefully. This policy came to be adopted for the first time at Tashkent after the 1965 war between the two countries. The then India's Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, was insistent on adopting peaceful methods in sorting out their problems. The then Pakistan's Martial Law Administrator, General Mohammad Ayub, said that the requirement was met by referring it to the UN Charter. The draft joint statement carried the same words. Shastri made Ayub write "without resorting to arms."

Islamabad has stated that the responsibility of honouring the LoC lies with the two governments. The reported reaction by New Delhi is that the LoC is a military matter, not a political issue. Had this response come from Pakistan, where the army has a major say, it would have been understandable. But how can a democratic India say that the armies on the two sides could decide it?

The LoC was firmed up at Shimla in a meeting between Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The army commanders only demarcated on the ground the lines indicated in the agreement between the political masters. New Delhi should ponder over its stance once again so that the two countries move forward to normalize relations. This is what the situation demands.

Historic Election Results

D. K. Giri

The states election results have been historic in more than one respect. First, a 128-year old party, the Congress got its worst defeat ever: after ruling for 15 continuous years in Delhi, it got relegated to the third position with just 8 seats, and one of the “popular” chief ministers of Congress lost her own seat. Secondly, its main rival BJP did well in two states as there were no alternatives, nor options unlike in Delhi, where it failed to form government, emerging just three seats ahead of the newest party in Indian politics, AAP. Thirdly, AAP made an impressive debut despite a split in the movement that gave birth to the party and all kinds of attacks on it by the vested interests. Fourthly, the powerful emergence of a new voice – that of the young – which was heard in Indian politics. There are 12 crore youth voters today while the total votes polled nationwide by any party in the last 36 general elections was less than 12 crore, the Congress with the highest number of 11.9 crore, the BJP 7.8 crore, BSP 2.6 crore, and CPM 2.2 crore, with no other party touching a crore. Fifth, and most important, is the beginning of a new politics in India. That is the clearest message from Delhi state.

What are the overall messages and indications for Indian politics? Before we discuss those, let us pause on two assumptions. One is that the state elections are different from national politics. Two, the issues in each state are different from the other. Yes, given the diversity of Indian politics, society and

economy, the state issues are bound to be different in nature and intensity. For example, Chhattisgarh is badly hit by naxal violence, to some extent Madhya Pradesh also, but not so Rajasthan or Delhi. The naxal attacks in Chhattisgarh resulting in the deaths of many Congress leaders of the state have, in fact, lent sympathy to the Congress in the elections, That is how Congress did better in Chhattisgarh in comparison to the other states. However, the state legislative elections being different from the parliamentary election may no longer be the case. It is true that Indian politics has been, in the last 15 years or so, federalized. Some of the major states are under the regional parties while the Centre is with Congress-led UPA or BJP-led NDA. Political observers argue that a national or a big party with presence in many states is needed to hold an alliance like UPA or NDA. This approach may no longer be indispensable as a coalition can be built around smaller parties as well. Moreover, with the new media being so pervasively extensive, even the smaller parties can take their voice far and wide in the country, if they have a national approach and articulate national concerns in addition to raising local issues.

Let us look at the emerging political scenario keeping in view the two foregoing assumptions. Before that some reflections on the each of the state elections are in order. In Rajasthan, the commentators said power has been alternating between the Congress and BJP for a while. But the margin of defeat

has never been so huge. How did Congress manage to secure such a bad result? The former Congress chief minister blamed the Centre or the central party for his defeat. Some would say it was “Modi wave”. Even a neutral journalist who was covering Rajasthan had admitted in his columns that there was certainly a Modi factor, if not a wave. as Rajasthan is the bordering state of Gujarat. There was also the intraparty rivalry in the Rajasthan Congress as three top leaders vie for leadership; two of them have been the Union Ministers. That would not have gone unnoticed by the voters.

In Madhya Pradesh, the BJP chief Minister has been non-controversial. More than Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh Congress suffered from internecine internal feuds. Jyotiraditya Scindia was brought into the leadership a bit late in the day. Whether it would have made a bigger difference to the results is a matter of speculation. Digvijay Singh did not wait for the party clearance when he fielded his son. Digvijay Singh, after late Arjun Singh, is known as a heavy weight and the loud mouth in the Congress: he was not allowed entry into a party meeting. It is common knowledge that conventional politicians do not take such snubs lightly. A sitting Congress MP walked over to BJP as his nominees were not given the tickets. Congress rebels fighting elections is not a new trend, which was in full play in Madhya Pradesh. There are at least four centers of power in Madhya Pradesh Congress, and the president of the party, a tribal

leader found it beyond his political acumen to bring these factions together.

Chhattisgarh's was slightly a different story. Again the BJP Chief Minister, Raman Singh has stuck to his development agenda, has remained largely focused on the state without courting much controversy except poor handling of naxal violence. There is not much internal fight in the state BJP. On the other hand, Congress is rife with rivalry within the party. The Union Minister Charandas Mahant was given the leadership of the state, whereas Ajit Jogi despite his physical handicap remains the popular leader of the state. He is apparently short shrifted by the central leadership. For reasons not known to the public, he was not given the ticket although his son and wife were fielded. Ajit Jogi was not happy with the snub, was said to have fielded many rebel candidates and did not campaign actively for the party candidates. Many would suggest it to be a major factor for the defeat of the Congress. But Congress did much better compared to the other three states. This is because a sympathy in the Bastar region where Congress leaders fell to the bullets of Naxalites. The underdevelopment in Bastar areas was also a factor.

The results in Delhi state are historic as well as the most dramatic. The results defied any prediction by pollsters. Except Chanakya, whose margin of error was three, no one came close. On the Congress Chanakya was spot on with a margin of error at just one. Congress and BJP, both were badly beaten in Delhi. Congress party either overestimated the popularity of Sheila Dikshit or she was left alone to fend for votes. Sheila Dixit was the chief minister for 15 long years,

so she was to face the so-called anti-incumbency factor. Congress in Delhi was gung-ho about their development achievements in Delhi. It is largely true. They have made impressive improvement of the big infrastructure in Delhi like the flyovers, the metro, the new airport, beautification of big roads, etc. But what happened to the common people living in urban villages and slums? They got nothing of substance. They were far away from Sheila Dikshit's attention. On the contrary, they were hit by her pro-rich and pro-corporate bias. The prices of the essential commodities soared up so high that it became difficult even for the middle class families to manage their budgets. The cooking gas cylinders were hard to come by. It was rationed at 6 cylinders per family, and then was raised to 9 on protest. The urban villagers were desperate for decent streets to walk on or drive. Few of her legislators visited their constituencies. Even she was accused of gross negligence of poor slum dwellers who are her immediate neighbours. And worse, they were turned away by her sister who looks after her constituency matters when these people came to her with their grievances. With such apathy and indifference, no wonder, she lost even her own seat. The Congress was relegated to the third position in almost all the seats they lost. The BJP was no better. Without state power for 15 long years, they should have been more active. They came to the campaign with a not-so-popular leader who was replaced close on the election. It is not very effective when one changes horse mid-stream. Another BJP leader shamed himself and embarrassed the party by his misadventurous demonstration at the house of the lady managing editor of Tehelka whose editor was caught in a mess

over sexual harassment of woman worker there. To defend one woman, attacking another woman perceived to have incompetently handled the case, was simply foolish from points of view of justice as well as politics.

The hero of Delhi elections is the Aam Admi Party which surprised itself and everybody else with their massively impressive win. It was beyond any guess (except Chanakya poll) that they would cross 20 (out of 70) Assembly seats. They would have got more, had the voters guessed that AAP could win as many seats and would be able to form the government. AAP was well known in the media. Its leader has been in action since he left his job to run the NGO he had set up. For his campaign on "Right to Information" he was awarded the Raman Magsaysay award. More than that, he shot to national fame, as the right hand man of Anna Hazare in the movement for instituting the Jan Lok Pal. He carried on his attacks on corruption relentlessly exposing the big and mighty in the country, be it Robert Vadra or Salman Khurshid, or Mukesh Ambani. His dedication to the cause of clean governance and his undaunted approach to public action earned him the media attention he enjoys today. His party polled so many votes and 28 seats out of 70 is a handsomely praiseworthy performance.

There is another side of the story. Kejriwal benefitted from the negative votes against both the big parties in Delhi. That is, there is an urge amongst the people for new politics, which is issue based, cleaner, modern, and rational. Both Congress and BJP do not reflect any of these; they are highly traditional, depending on so-called

(Continued on Page 8)

Resurgence of Science Education

K. S. Chalam

Our media seldom recognises the importance of scientists and their achievements except publishing stories that have a commercial value. However, the conferring of Bharat Ratna on C. N. Rao, the prolific chemist is taken note of by the media, but for his derisive remarks on our leaders. It may also be due to the effusive attitude of some media houses who thought that it would rebound if Rao is not given space when his co-recipient Sachin Tendulkar whose image building and brand value was systematically nurtured by them. Unlike Rao, Sachin never bothered about national or social morals even at the peak of IPL scam. However, the elite game and its promoter are given their due. C. N. Rao needs to be congratulated not necessarily for his achievements in Solid State and Structural Chemistry, but, for selecting the occasion to make the provocative statement that shook the establishment.

C. N. Rao, Chairman of Science Advisory Council to the Prime Minister was responsible for the establishment of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research and is propagating scientific temper among students and laymen alike. He is known for his 1500 papers, an H-Index of 100 and training around 160 Ph.D. students during his long span of productive research activity. He got his Ph.D. from Purdue University, USA and never wished to settle there. He has helped the IISc, Bangalore to maintain high standards as Director and continue to serve on the faculty even at the age of 80. This shows his commitment to science education. But, there

are luminaries like T. R. Seshadri, Professor of Chemistry, brought by C. R. Reddy and encouraged by S. Radhakrishnan at Andhra University in the 1930s who laid the strong foundation for science education in India. T. R. Seshadri left for Delhi University to build Chemistry Labs there on the invitation from British Vice-chancellor in 1949. The solid work done by him at Andhra University produced great scholars and scientists like Gopala Rao, M. N. Sastry, B. R. Rao and the like and left a science education legacy in our state.

C. N. Rao, unlike some of his Kannadigas never minced words and is centre of some controversies. The social scientists complain (in lighter vein) that it is difficult for a Research Supervisor to guide a dozen dissertations in a life time while physical scientists manufacture hundreds of papers and dissertations with the support of team of scholars in a year sitting in cosy Labs. All of them claim authorship. Therefore, Rao was accused of plagiarism of reproducing an article from a scientific journal in 2011 (*The Hindu*, 10 March 2012). He had immediately responded to this allegation with his apologies showing his spirit of rectitude. It is exactly here economists are whispering that if Nobel is not a criterion to attain Bharat Ratna (like Amartya Sen), C. Ranga Rajan, Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council deserves this title. In fact, Ranga Rajan received brickbats from critics for some of his controversial policy statements. The Tamil Trio - Chidambaram, Ranga Rajan and Raghuram Rajan are helping the

Indian economy - what Rao could have done to Science Education. Economics being considered by the Swedish Academy as a science to receive Nobel, deserves the recognition in India too!

Science education was promoted by some jealous British chemists, J. L. Simonsen and P S MacMahon, through the promotion of Indian Science Congress Association in 1914. There are others like J. C. Bose, Meghnad Saha, C. V. Raman and others who, before Independence, along with Jawaharlal Nehru avowedly championed the principle of scientific temper as a value. Nehru has prepared the ground for modern scientific and technological development in the country by establishing IITs, promoting industrialisation and chairing annual conference of Indian Science Congress. Later Article 51-A was incorporated as a fundamental duty "to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of enquiry and reform" in 1977. In other words, the scientific aptitude and spirit have been deliberately promoted by our leaders and scientists for about three to four decades after independence. This is now destroyed with apathy and neglect, due to the attitude of some of our leaders, that C. N. Rao deliberately attacked. Rao was hitting not just at the inadequate allocation of funds for R and D in our budget but, insentient and the business-like approach to science by the establishment.

Science and technology are considered not only essential for progress and development, but they are critical for human

survival. One cannot take the risk of dependent development based on technology transfer through trade. They are always risky for the host countries as experienced by some of our neighbours. In this context, the strategy of scientific advancements carried by China and its achievements in a short period of time are exemplary. We need not replicate their politics, but we can definitely learn from their experiences particularly the foundations on which they rely as fundamentals in both the countries are the same.

There is some confusion between Science Education and Scientific Education. The former takes care of offering of subjects in physical, natural and even engineering subjects (science of engineering) through the educational institutions. Scientific education is the method of offering any course of study in a systematic, reasonable, analytical (inductive and deductive) manner under the guidance of a pedagogy. It requires continuous study and research at higher levels to charge the courses with new ideas, algorithms, etc. Unfortunately, we do not have competent teachers at higher level going in for this. I know the kind of resistance that UGC has received from teachers when I started my experiment with Academic Staff Development in Higher Education in 1987, now the largest in the world. In fact OECD countries particularly Germany and others have been practicing it (I got the idea from Brigitte Berendt) for decades.

We have several challenges today which Rao has modestly stated about the craze for ICT. I have made some observations about the ICT as "Brain Cripple" (not drain or gain) to indicate the damaging effect of generations of best brains going

in for easy money through body shopping about a decade ago. Even IIT, IIM hunters do ultimately land up in Finance and some of our so called intellectuals who are making business out of brains are responsible for this. Rao being a Kannadiga and a Banglorean knew the kind of damage done to our efforts to build science and technology being distracting from this endeavour. If the proportion of patents sealed (accepted) out of the total filed is taken as a criterion of our scientific effort, it was 68 per cent in 1970 and has come down to 33 per cent after the WTO regime and 17.7 per cent in 2006. It is not due to lack of funding alone. Though it has remained less than 1 per cent of GDP (0.87), the budget allocation has increased from Rs 53041 crores in 2009-10 to Rs 72620 crores in 2011-12. This is a reasonable amount. The shortfall is due to the meagre amount spent by private sector both in education and industry compared to any OECD country. Therefore, we should understand the anger, may be agony of Rao.

Science and technology do not progress as in fiction and myths. They are to be cultivated over a period of time. But, the hegemony of some of our traditional institutions in confronting science and even promoting or endorsing canards (Rao mentioned about ISRO-Balaji episode) would send a wrong message to the young inquisitive minds. Faith is personal and responsible people including judicial officers should discretely practice it in the interest of common good of the nation and in allegiance to the Constitution. Regrettably reasonable and rational attitudes that promote verifiability and falsifiability, the threshold of scientific enquiry are now mired in the propaganda machinery of the media. The decadence in science and

technology seem to be happening with the profligacy of, according to Rao, idiots'?

(Continued from Page 6)

vote banks. Congress is beset with dynasticism, there are many families in the Congress party and there is nepotism, corruption, factionalism. BJP is sectarian and parochial, their ideology rooted in the past. So both the parties do not appeal any more. Congress is on decline. BJP, being more organized than Congress may last a bit longer, but with the demise of Congress, BJP will also diminish. However, the onus is on parties like AAP to stand up to its promise of uncompromising principled politics. They have to retain the moral high ground. There may be some lapses here and there, which the people may accommodate, but a fall of the party's top leadership may push the people back to old politics of compromise, corruption and political convenience. For now, people see a ray of hope of fundamental change in our political culture. Let all those aspiring for leadership in the biggest democracy in the world respond to that hope.

Studies in Socialism

By

Ashok Mehta

published by

Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan
Centre for Socialist Studies
Bangaluru

Price Rs. 250.00 postage extra

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SC Judgment reversing Naaz ruling of Delhi High Court

“Repeal S.377 IPC ! Use of s.377 IPC is itself an abuse!”

The People’s Union of Civil Liberties is shocked and expresses its deepest disappointment at the judgment of the Supreme Court in ‘Suresh Kumar Kaushal v Naz Foundation’ delivered on December 11th, 2013, reversing the Delhi High Court judgment of 2009 which had recognized that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) persons are full citizens of India.

We wish to point out that the key constitutional issue underlying the challenge of sec. 377 IPC, is that sec. 377 essentially discriminates between people on the basis of their sexual orientation thereby criminalizing same-sex relations. Thus by affirming the constitutional validity of the outdated section 377 of the IPC, introduced 153 years ago, the Supreme Court has once again reinstated a discriminatory law which violates the right to equality, privacy and dignity and the freedom of speech and expression of a section of the Indian citizens, by criminalizing same sex consensual relationships in private. The effect of the SC ruling has once again relegated LGBT persons to the status of ‘second class citizens’ because of their sexual orientation and reduced them to what the Delhi High Court evocatively referred to as ‘unapprehended felons’.

The observations of the Supreme Court that in last 150 years there have been only 200 reported prosecutions is neither here nor there. Firstly, that there are only a few prosecutions is no reason to have a provision which is otherwise unconstitutional. Further,

cases of harassment, victimization and torture of LGBT persons seldom translate into ‘reported prosecutions’. Thus PUCL wishes to point out that using the number of reported prosecutions as the basis for upholding constitutional vires of any provision is unreasonable and dangerous precedent.

The PUCL is of the opinion that the Delhi High Court judgment was legally robust when it held that section 377 was violative of Articles 21, 14, 15 of the Constitution. The key reasons put forward by the Delhi High Court for reading down sec. 377 IPC have unfortunately not been fully considered or answered by the Supreme Court while upholding the constitutionality of the provision. World over there is recognition that sexual preferences are not an aberration and need to be considered as part of a natural orientation. It is with this progressive understanding that even Britain, from where sec. 377 IPC originated, has repealed such ante-diluvian provisions and is in the process of legalizing same-sex marriages. In the ultimate analysis medieval morality appears to have prevailed over constitutional guarantees.

The SC court erred in concluding that mere abuse of a penal provision does not warrant declaring it unconstitutional. In stating this, the court lost sight of the fact that in the instant case the use of S. 377 against consenting adults is itself an abuse. PUCL in its report ‘Human rights violations against sexuality minorities in India’ as far back as

2003 (<http://www.pucl.org/Topics/Gender/2003/sexual-minorities.pdf>) has documented the persecution, torture and atrocities faced by LGBT community at the hands of the State for the sole reason of their sexual orientation. Such persecution is legalized and therefore legitimized by the existence of S.377 IPC in the statute books. The SC has unfortunately added the weight of its authority to such persecution! In PUCL’s view, the judgment will therefore only strengthen the homophobic mindset which exists in a section of Indian society.

PUCL reiterates its position that sec. 377 IPC should be repealed and does not have a place in the law books of a modern India.

PUCL also calls upon political parties to undo the historic injustice done to the LGBT community and immediately repeal S 377 IPC in the current session of Parliament itself.

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AIBEA, demands that banks recover bad loans from wilful defaulters

Trade unions are usually quick to announce protests to demand higher wages or better working conditions. This time, however, the All India Bank Employees Union (AIBEA), one of the biggest employees unions in India, has decided to turn into a powerful whistleblower. On 5th December, AIBEA gave a call to ‘stop the loot of public funds’ and start recovery of bad loans. This is a welcome development. I have always held that the destruction of giant entities, such as Air India, Unit Trust of India, and giant public sector entities in telecom and engineering, is as much due to employee apathy as it is due to the loot by politicians and bureaucrats. AIBEA has signalled that it will name and shame defaulters, if necessary, to force banks to start acting tough and recover bad loans. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as the banking regulator, is fully aware of what is going on; but now, the unions are asking it to move from rhetoric to action. The AIBEA cites the overused quote about India having sick industries but no sick industrialists. It also quotes RBI governor, Dr Raghuram Rajan, who recently told banks, “You can put lipstick on a pig but it doesn’t become a princess. So dressing up a loan and showing it as restructured and not provisioning for it when it stops paying, is an issue. Anything which postpones a problem (rather than recognising it, is to be avoided.” AIBEA points out that the top four bad loan accounts add up to a massive Rs22,666 crore, which include Kingfisher Airlines and Winsome Diamond and Jewellery Co. Will RBI stop the “systematic

Money Down the Drain	Rs crore
Bad Loans in Public Sector Banks (March 2008)	39,000
Bad Loans in Public Sector Banks (March 2013)	1,64,000
Bad Loans Restructured & Shown as Good Loans	3,25,000
Fresh Bad Loans in the Past 7 Years	4,95,000
Profits Adjusted for Bad Loan Provisions (2008 to 2013)	1,40,000
Bad Loans in 172 Corporate Accounts (Rs100 crore and above)	68,000
Bad Loans by Top 4 Defaulters in Public Sector Banks	23,000
Top 30 Bad Loan Accounts	64,000
Bad Loans in 7,295 Accounts (Rs1 crore & above)	37,000
Bad Loans Written Off in the Past 7 years	1,40,000

loot of public money” by recognising these as pigs with lipstick?

The data collated and released by the AIBEA is a frightening indictment of the banking regulator and the finance ministry. While the government has been boasting about India having escaped the global financial crisis, how does it explain the four-fold increase in bad loans—from Rs39,000 crore in 2008 to Rs164,000 crore today? The creation of new bad loans is a mind-boggling Rs495,000 crore, according to AIBEA. And, corporate debt restructuring through provisioning, concessions, waivers, write-offs, concessions, one-time settlements (which are done multiple times), compromise proposals, etc, add up to a massive Rs325,000 crore.

Write-offs of bad loans by PSU banks in the past seven years amount to a massive Rs140,000 crore. If we include the bad loans of private banks and foreign banks and other financial institutions, the total bad

loans are more than Rs2,50,000 crore, says the AIBEA statement. Worryingly, it says, things have reached a point where management is making banks vulnerable by reducing the provisioning of bad loans. RBI has pointed out, and is aware, that the provision coverage ratio of India’s banking system has dropped from 55% to 45% as against a global average ratio of 70% to 80%.

AIBEA’s demand will resonate with depositors who are being asked to pay higher charges for every service, to ensure higher profits for banks every quarter. AIBEA, for once, is on the same side as two big stakeholders of banks—bank customers and shareholders. Clearly, the call to publish the names of defaulters, to make wilful default a criminal offence, investigate collusion between banks and borrowers and the demand not to ‘incentivise corporate delinquency’, will find huge support among ordinary people.

—Sucheta Dalal

Electoral Reforms

Satyapaul

1. **Negative Vote (NOTA):** We feel that if a voter has the right of choosing a candidate, then he has inherent right to reject the candidates. For this Government has to amend the People Representation Act by simple majority in the Parliament. But all political parties are hesitant to amend to grant Negative votes to the voters.

Now that the Supreme Court of India by judgment has ruled and directed the Election Commission of India to give this right to the voters by providing a column in the ballot papers, the voters can negate all the candidates by pressing the negative button.

But the negative votes will not be effective, even if these are more than the votes of the candidate securing highest votes; as the People's Representation Act provides that a candidate securing highest number of votes will be declared successful. It is unjustifiable. Why not the negative votes, if these are the highest, could win by negating all the candidates? If that happens, fresh election may be held after 2-3 weeks with the concerned parties putting up a different set of candidates, as is done in some countries. This will empower the voters to elect clean candidates for the good of democracy.

2. **Plus 50% votes:** We have been advocating that successful candidate must secure more than 50 percent votes to win any election. Such a practice is prevalent in many countries. It

will safeguard / strengthen the democracy. We found in a survey, when in Assam some militant groups declared to boycott the election, and in Punjab the militants declared to boycott the elections, then candidates securing few hundred votes, losing their deposits under a clause of the People Representation Act, were declared successful under another clause of the same Act. It was a mockery of the real democracy that a candidate losing deposit could be declared elected by securing highest votes and become a minister.

Moreover we see that a successful candidate somehow secures about 20-30% votes to win. It means that he/she does not represent the constituency. He/She divides the voters in the name of religion/ caste or even sub-caste and gets the votes to win.

Even political parties do consider this factor at the time of giving tickets. This way we are being divided day by day. But if

we could amend the People Representation Act to the effect that only those candidates will be declared elected who will secure more than 50% votes, may be in second /third round, then it will be a real democracy, and it will help to unite the people instead of dividing them. Also money / muscle/mafia power may not be so effective, as it may be difficult to influence large number of voters.

3. **Recall:** In the present circumstances it may be very easy to recall a successful candidate to recall, as he/she had secured 20-30% votes, and if we make this provision, even after one year, then it will be easy to recall by those who have not voted for him/her. Such a provision may derail democracy. The provision to recall a candidate coupled with the provision of plus 50% for winning candidate will make 49% voters may think twice before recalling a successful candidate. We should not put the cart before the horse

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela became the symbol of the struggle against apartheid after he was convicted in the Rivonia Trial of charges of sabotage and was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island.

At the end of his trial, Mandela gave a now iconic speech in which he said:

"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal, which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years before he was finally released in 1990 at the age of 71.

Gender under the spotlight in India

Vibhuti Patel

In the month following the gang rape of a 23-year-old physiotherapist in a moving bus in Delhi on 16th December 2013, debates over the social construction of gender that perpetuates sexual harassment in all walks of life have taken centre stage in India. The general public, community leaders, parents, youths, education providers, corporate, policy makers, politicians and the media: all are discussing the prevalence of sexual violence in our society. The masses, spanning four generations, have started deconstructing workplace safety in the context of misogyny, barbarism, the influence of pornography in valorising sadomasochistic relations between men and women, the influence of Westernisation on women's dress codes, consumerist culture, hedonism, and how the chivalry toward women that existed among civilized cultures is being replaced by hostility toward women.

Sexual harassment at the workplace has been one of the central concerns of the women's movement in India since the 1980s. After 30 years of consistent effort, Indian women have managed to get The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and rules for the same are awaited so that the Act can be implemented. Due to pressure from child rights organizations, previous year the Parliament of India passed The Protection of Children from

Sexual Offences Act, 2012, aimed at protecting children in India against the evil of child sexual abuse. It came into force on 14-11-2012, Children's Day (in India) along with the rules framed under the Act.

Movement against violence

During the 1980s, militant action by the Forum Against Oppression of Women (Mumbai) against the sexual harassment of nurses in public and private hospitals by patients and their male relatives, ward-boys and other hospital staff; of air-hostesses by their colleagues and passengers; of teachers by their colleagues, principals and management representatives; of PhD students by their guides and so on and so forth received a lukewarm response from the trade unions and adverse publicity in the media (FAOW, 1991). But this trivialisation did not deter the women's rights activists. More and more working women started taking systematic action against SHW. *Baailancho Saad* ('Women's Voice') in Goa mobilised public opinion through demonstrations, rallies and sit-ins against their chief minister (in 1990) who sexually harassed his secretary, till the minister was forced to resign. (Chorine *et al*, 1999).

Some Noteworthy Complaints of Sexual Harassment at Workplace (SHW) that came into the national limelight due to massive protests, were filed by:

- Rupan Deo Bajaj, an IAS officer in Chandigarh, against 'super cop' K P S Gill (1990)
- An activist from the All India Democratic Women's Association, against the environment minister in Dehra Dun (1991)
- An airhostess of Air India against her colleague, in Mumbai (1990)
- A Secretary against Chief Minister of Goa (1990)
- Medha Kotwal Lele vs. Union of India and others (2000)
- Apparel Export Promotion Council vs A K Chopra (1999)
- Nalco chief found guilty in sexual harassment and his service terminated (2002)
- An IAS officer in Thiruvananthapuram, against the state minister (2002)
- A woman Director of KPMG against 6 top bosses including CEOs (2007)
- Sun TV Sexual Harassment Case- Response from Women Journalists (March 2013)
- Two intern law students against the Supreme Court Judge (November, 2013)
- Editor of Tehalka sexually harassing journalist working for Tehalka (November. 2013)

In the post-independent India, before 1997, women experiencing

SHW had to lodge a complaint under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code that deals with the 'criminal assault of women to outrage women's modesty', Section 506 that provides for criminal intimidation and Section 509 that punishes an individual/ individuals for using a 'word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman'. These sections left the interpretation of 'outraging women's modesty' to the discretion of the police officer. As per section 228 A revealing identity of victim of sexual violence is an offense.

Supreme Court's Directive

During the 1990s, the most controversial and brutal gang rape at the workplace involved a Rajasthan state government employee who tried to prevent child marriage as part of her duties as a worker of the Women Development Programme of Government of Rajasthan. The feudal patriarchy who were enraged by her (in their words: "a lowly woman from a poor and potter community") 'guts' decided to teach her a lesson and raped her repeatedly in public view (Samhita, 2001). After an extremely humiliating legal battle in the Rajasthan High Court the rape survivor did not get justice and the rapists -- "educated and upper caste affluent men" -- were allowed to go free. This enraged a women's rights group called Vishakha that filed public interest litigation in the Supreme Court of India (*Combat Law*, 2003).

In 1997, the Supreme Court passed a landmark judgment in the Vishakha Case punishing Bhanvari Devi's rapists and laying down guidelines to be followed by establishments in dealing with complaints about sexual harassment.

The court stated that these guidelines were to be implemented until legislation is passed to deal with the issue (Mathew, 2002).

Pursuant to this, the Government of India requested the National Commission for Women (NCW) to draft the legislation. A number of issues were raised regarding the NCW draft, until; ultimately, a drafting committee was set up to make a fresh draft. Several women's organisations were part of this committee, including Majlis from Mumbai and The Lawyers' Collective, Delhi. Women's organisations and women lawyers associated with trade unions in Mumbai had collectively worked on the draft. Particular concern, whilst finalising the draft, was to include the unorganised sector and to incorporate provisions of the labour law. The bill introduced in Parliament was known as the Sexual Harassment of Women at The Workplace (Prevention and Redressal) Bill, 2004. It provided for the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment of women at the workplace, or arising during and in the course of their employment and matters connected thereto, in keeping with the principles of equality, freedom, life and liberty as enshrined in the Constitution of India, and as upheld by the Supreme Court in *Vishakha vs State of Rajasthan* [1997(7) SCC.323] and as reflected in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which has been ratified by the Government of India.

Several organisations have carried out research on SHW that has been widely disseminated. A survey by Sakshi (Delhi) threw

up some worrying data: 80% of respondents revealed that SHW exists, 49% had encountered SHW, 41% had experienced SHW, 53% women and men did not have equal opportunities, 53% were treated unfairly by supervisors, employers and co-workers, 58% had not heard of the Supreme Court's directive of 1997, and only 20% of organisations had implemented the Vishakha guidelines (Dalal, 2003). Controversy over SHW by the senior manager of Infosys (Nair, 2003), by the chairman and managing director of NALCO (Ramanujan, 2004), the Medha Kotwal petition on SHW of a PhD student by her guide at M S University, Vadodara, complaints against a senior professor at Lucknow University (*Times of India*, 2003), complaints about SHW by the film star Sushmita Sen against the CEO of Coca-Cola have all alerted employers to the economic burden and efficiency loss from SHW. Still, most private companies and even media houses who report cases of sexual harassment refrain from investing funds in such committees. On October 20, 2004, students beat up an anatomy professor from Versova, Andheri, for alleged sexual misconduct (*The Indian Express*, *Mumbai Newslines*, 21-10-2004).

A Sophia Centre for Women's Studies and Development study showed that awareness and implementation of the Supreme Court's guidelines is very low and there is a need to spread awareness about the new law. A study by Samhita (Kolkata), throwing light on the Bhanvari Devi case, has highlighted to the state and civil society the gravity of the menace of SHW (SCWSD and ICHRL, 2003).

During 1997-2013, increasing number of corporate houses,

educational institutions, public and private sector enterprises and government bodies have started instituting grievance redressal cells within the organization to deal with complaints of sexual harassment at workplace. The testimonies of several employees projected by media have revealed that SHW is prevalent even in companies where the victims are highly educated, are holding important positions and have considerable economic leverage. Similar views have been expressed in the business journals. NGO members on committees in several MNCs say that complaints sent to global head offices always elicit quicker and pro-active responses.

Definition of sexual harassment at work

The Supreme Court directive of 1997 clearly and unambiguously provides an answer to the question 'What is sexual harassment?' Even the new law draws heavily from the Vishakha directive.

As defined in the Supreme Court guidelines (Vishakha vs State of Rajasthan, August 1997), sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour as:

- Making Physical contact
- A demand or request for sexual favours
- Sexually coloured remarks
- Showing pornography

Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature, for example, leering, telling dirty jokes, m sexual remarks about a person's body, etc

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention,

Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 provides for protection of all working women, including domestic helps and agricultural labourers, against sexual harassment at the workplace. The Act makes it mandatory for all workplaces including homes, universities, hospitals, government and non-government offices, factories, and other formal and informal workplaces to have an internal grievance redressal mechanism for complaints related to sexual harassment. The in-house committee has to dispose of a complaint within 90 days. There are also safeguard against false or malicious charges. If a woman is found to have filed a complaint with mala-fide intentions, she can be punished. Failure to prove charges, however, will not be construed as mala-fide intention.

As per this Act, cases of sexual harassment of women at workplace, including against domestic help, will have to be disposed of by in-house committees within a period of 90 days failing which penalty of Rs 50,000 would be imposed. Repeated non-compliance of the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 can even lead to higher penalties and cancellation of license or registration to conduct business.

Major Challenges

The Supreme Court directive provided the legitimate space for the hidden truth about SHW to surface; earlier one only heard about victim-blaming, witch-hunting and blackmailing. Now women are fighting back tooth and nail. The electronic and print media have become extremely responsive to the issue of SHW. My first-hand

experiences with sitting in the grievance redressal committees regarding SHW has convinced me that we need to counter the myths about SHW with concrete facts, case studies and a database.

Myth1: Women enjoy 'eve-teasing'/sexual harassment.

Fact: *Eve-teasing/sexual harassment is humiliating, intimidating, painful and frightening.*

Myth 2: 'Eve-teasing' is harmless flirtation. Women who object have no sense of humour.

Fact: *Behaviour that is unwelcome cannot be considered harmless, or funny. Sexual harassment is defined by its impact on the woman rather than the intent of the perpetrator.*

Myth 3: Women ask for SHW. Only women who are provocatively dressed are sexually harassed.

Fact: *This is the classic way of shifting the blame from the harasser to the woman.* Women have the right to act, dress and move around freely without the threat of attack or harassment. The most popular slogan of the women's rights movement of last 3 decades has been:

However we dress, where ever we go, 'Yes' means 'Yes' and 'No' means 'No'.

Myth 4: Women who say NO actually mean YES.

Fact: *This is a common myth used by men to justify sexual aggression and one sided sexual advances.*

Myth5: Sexual harassment is not really an issue. It doesn't hurt anyone.

Fact: Persons subjected to sexual harassment experience a wide range of physical and psychological ailments. There are economic consequences for the victim's physical and mental well being and the organisation's productivity, efficiency and work ethics.

Myth6: Sexual harassment! It's only natural male behaviour. A man

is a hunter and Woman is a prey.

Fact: Men are not born knowing how to sexually harass others. It's learned within the context of a sexist and patriarchal environment that perpetuates control over women's sexuality, fertility and labour.

Myth 7: Women keep quiet: that means they like it.

Fact: Women keep quiet to avoid the stigma attached and retaliation from the harasser. Women are

afraid that they will be accused of provoking it, of being victimised, of being called liars and made the subject of gossip.

Myth 8: If women go to places where they are not welcome, they should expect sexual harassment.

Fact: Discriminatory behaviour and abuse is unlawful. Women have equal access to all work facilities. Safe work place is women's legal right.

(to be concluded)

An Unfair Deal

In the Middle East and elsewhere there is much excitement, jubilation and fear about the deal between Iran and US backed by UK, France, Russia, China and Germany. Much of the jubilation is premature, as it is only an interim agreement that, if Iran abides by faithfully to the satisfaction of the United States, will lead to the lifting of some of the sanctions on it.

As it is, it may not be the beginning of a strategic US-Iran partnership that can isolate and harm Saudi Arabia. After their initial negative reaction to it, the Saudis have come to realise that it is not going to threaten their vital interests or upset the balance of power between Shias and Sunnis in the Middle East. They have welcomed the deal.

After evaluating its potential they have welcomed the deal that seeks to put a freeze on further enrichment of nuclear fuel by Iran. The interim agreement does not oblige Iran to hand over all the fuel enriched up to 20 percent to outside powers for

reconversion into low-grade fuel which is several steps away from bomb-grade uranium or plutonium. Nor has Iran been committed to destroy its highly enriched fuel.

It is a fact that Iran, as a signatory to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, has the right to enrich nuclear fuel. However, the Western powers, egged on by Israel, would not allow it to use its right, while allowing nearby Israel to have as many nuclear bombs as it fancies. Israel is said to have at least 80 such bombs.

The Saudis have a point when they demand a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East, not just an Iran or Saudi Arabia shorn of fuel-enrichment capability. Any disarmament arrangement that excludes Israel is transparently dishonest and cynical.

Iran has clarified that "Arak will be the red line" and it is non-negotiable. Iranians will have no talk on a moratorium on this reactor - that

much is clear. The Western powers would love to bring it under future understanding on Iran's nuclear establishment.

The Arak heavy water plant is capable of producing enough plutonium at a later stage, which can allegedly be used for making bombs. Israel, which is behind all the Western activity to deprive Iran of its nuclear programme, would not want anything less than a complete shutdown of Arak. This has the potential to undo the agreement and prevent future progress.

At best the present agreement has an uncertain future as soon there will be pressures on Iran to close down most of its centrifuges and hand over all well-enriched fuel to the West. Even the present agreement has provisions for intrusive international checks of Iran's nuclear installations on a daily basis. How far the Iranians can be pressured to yield will show how successful the imposition of Western will on a free nation is going to be.

-M. Manzoor Alam



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Vol. 68 No. 51
December 29, 2013

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Kuldip Nayar

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Keep Fingers Crossed**
Nitish Chakravarty

**Why AAP model is
unsafe for India?**
K. S. Chalam

Muzaffarnagar Calling
Qurban Ali

**Gender under the
spotlight in India – II**
Vibhuti Patel

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The government formed by the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi deserves to be welcomed and supported if only because it represents a process of change and transformation in national politics. Apart from the voters in Delhi, the entire nation has high expectations from the AAP.

The party has come to power on a minority mandate having won only 28 of the 70 seats in the Delhi Assembly, with the BJP securing 32 and the Congress left far behind with a single digit tally of eight seats. The ideal, and the most democratic, course that suggests itself in a situation where poll outcome results in a hung assembly is to have a repoll. However, none of the parties seemed adventurous enough to risk a repeat election where the outcome was even more uncertain. One cannot say if the AAP would have performed better in a repoll. Likewise, one cannot prophesy that the BJP could have secured a majority or that the Congress would have been further decimated.

In any case, speculation in this regard is futile and irrelevant now that the AAP has decided to take the outside support of the Congress to form a government. Even with Congress support, the new government will

have the backing of only 36 seats which is a precarious majority. The track record of the Congress is none too flattering. One recalls that poor Chandra Shekhar was forced to resign after the Congress, then under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi, withdrew support for no honest, credible or genuine reason. This time, the Congress has committed itself to “permanent” support rather than to “unconditional” and has “clarified” that the support will be “issue-based” and “performance-based”. There is a marked risk in both varieties since the AAP’s issues are not and have not been acceptable to the Congress. Indeed, the announcement that the AAP intends to probe the conduct of the Sheila Dixit ministry and investigate possible scams has sounded a warning of the things to come. The BJP, with 33 seats (its ally Akali Dal has a single seat), can also pose a threat if not to the stability but to the comfort of the ruling dispensation. However, all these must be seen as challenges to be overcome.

Arvind Kejriwal heads a government which is inexperienced in the art and skill of governance, but that is not a major handicap. In retrospect, it is clear that the politician in him was well hidden during the

Between the lines

Unimportance of parliament

Kuldip Nayar

days he agitated side by side of Anna Hazare against corruption in high places. Once, he took his mask off, he fell foul with Anna but captured the hearts and imagination of the Delhi voters and the public at large. The very fact that he has no experience of governance but is keen to cleanse the administrative system and uphold moral standards made him the popular leader he has turned out to be. His unconventional approach in resolving the dilemma whether or not to form a government with Congress support, viz. an informal referendum, was also appreciated. This was reflected in the enthusiasm with which the people responded to what was at best a political gimmick. The so-called referendum in effect legitimised Kejriwal's decision which was taken clearly in anticipation of a favourable and decisive response. Kejriwal faces the arduous responsibility of delivering on his promises. This is a mammoth challenge since most of his promises are idealistic without being practical or implementable. The 18 issues he has identified for delivery are far-fetched and are difficult to implement since they are tied up with actions that need to be taken by other agencies and authorities. The elevation of Delhi to full statehood is one such issue. The supply of free water and affordable power is another. Kejriwal is experimenting on the methodologies and practicalities of governance. It is a touch and go case. Let us see how he goes about meeting the high expectations he has aroused. The Congress cannot be comfortable in a situation in which it is constantly reminded that despite two chances at governance it did not rise to the occasion. In essence, Kejriwal is attempting to do what the Congress ought to have done but failed to do.

The year 2013 was grey and grim. Prices rose, unemployment increased, moral standards fell and corruption was accepted as a normal phenomenon. Parliament and state legislatures hardly functioned. Then there was summer in the cold month of December. The 46-year-old Lokpal Bill became an act. I wish the Central Bureau of Investigation had been made independent, directly under parliament. But since its own committee has prepared the bill after holding consultations with nearly all political parties, it should constitute the Lokpal.

The credit must go to Gandhian Anna Hazare who spearheaded the movement. Yet his hasty judgment and harsh words for the Aam Admi Party (AAP) do not help the dissemination of fresh ideas. The party is an extension of voluntary work done by the activists at the grassroots. These people are naïve and do not know the tricks of politics. This is their strength. That they, unlike the Naxalites, have put their faith in the ballot box and have successfully fought the state election in Delhi is the result of their realization that democracy demands a way to determine who will direct the people to reject dictatorships or an authoritarian system. How far the AAP can ensure the people's participation as well as sovereignty may decide the fate of other experiments born out of millions of mutinies, however small, waging in the country. In fact, leading activists like Medha Patkar, Aruna Roy and

Nikhil Dey should assemble on the platform which the AAP has provided. By no means should they leave their ideal to strengthen the people's movements to put pressure on the government. But why don't they constitute the governments themselves? Had Medha headed the Gujarat government the height of the Narmada Dam would have been decided by her to avoid the uprooting of people from their homes and hearths. In fact, the very dam, to which she objected, may have been replaced by a series of small dams which would have assured water to far-flung places like Rajkot and still not disturbed lakhs of people, most of them not getting land for land. Aruna Roy should have realized that the Right to Information, for which she mobilized people, would not have come about if parliament had not enacted the law. Her brief stint with Congress president Sonia Gandhi's National Advisory Council should have proved how the land acquisition and the food security demands became laws because Sonia Gandhi represented the authority of the governing party. People's movement cannot be ended by itself.

Another striking feature of December is the emergence of Rahul Gandhi as the leader of the Congress. Sonia Gandhi has stepped back. Lately he is speaking and taking stances which may force the intelligentsia to rethink about his capability, written off earlier. Maybe, he is beginning to peak when Narendra Modi, the

prime ministerial candidate of the Bharatiya Janata Party is lessening in gathering people's attention because he peaked too early. This takes me to the Modi phenomenon. No doubt, he has jolted the political parties and the people. He speaks excellently in Hindi and goes down well in northern India. The rout of the Congress in Rajasthan in the state election has been primarily because of Modi. He even increased the tally of seats in Madhya Pradesh. Yet Modi has not clicked in West Bengal, Odisha, Kerala, the northeastern states and to a large extent in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Even otherwise, his preference of Hindu nationalism in place of Indian nationalism has alienated the minorities, particularly the Muslims who influence the outcome of the parliamentary elections at least in 200 constituencies out of 545. The BJP may emerge as the largest party in the next Lok Sabha, going to the polls in May. The defeat of the Congress in the four states, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Delhi is a clear indication of people's anti-Congress mood. But it does not mean that Modi is the next prime minister. The BJP may have to have a more acceptable person to form the government. He has not even said "sorry" for the loss of lives and property of Muslims in the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat. There is a possibility of a dark horse, a non-Congress and a non-BJP person, who will have the support of regional parties to be the prime minister. It all depends on the election results. Lately, there are so many outcries against corruption that the political parties have begun to pay heed to morality. One example is that of Delhi legislature. Even though the BJP was only short of four members for the formation of the government,

(Continued on Page 6)

Aap In Power: Keep Fingers Crossed

Nitish Chakravarty

The Aam Admi bombshell has unnerved large sections of the Congress party in Delhi and across the entire country. The Congress has not only lost the battle for Delhi but has been reduced to a minor entity with only eight members in the state legislature. The Bharatiya Janata Party is also bitter about the AAP upstaging it in Delhi. It has reasons to regret its setback in Delhi, for it is running all three elected municipal corporations in the national capital for a long time without a break, and earlier also ran the state government for many years. But the AAP's spectacular rise to power appears to have unnerved the Congress more than the BJP.

One section – Rahul Gandhi, the youthful vice-president of the Congress, leads this section – has however put up a brave face and argued that the shock of defeat will help infuse fresh blood into the party and enable it to weed out self-serving and corrupt elements who have battered on the common masses and blackened its image, and thus do the party good in the long run. Even though one suspects that Rahul Gandhi is being over-optimistic about the electoral defeat enabling the Congress to purge corrupt elements, one would like to wish the Rahul brigade god speed. They must however remember that the task they face in freeing the Congress from the stranglehold of the corrupt and the dishonest is by no means simple.

There is little doubt that the sharks and wolves having a field day in the Congress will use all the arrows in their bow to overturn

their efforts. These forces – much larger in number and many of them ensconced in key positions in the government and the party -- have already pressed the panic button. They fear that if the newly formed government led by Arvind Kejriwal is allowed to run even for a half of its five year term and translate its election agenda into concrete action, they will never again have a chance to do business as usual. The emergence of the AAP as a major player in the political arena will hit them where it hurts the most – dry up the reservoir of black money -- and thus make it impossible for them to win elections in future. A senior Congress leader – a Minister in several Congress governments at the Centre – once confessed to me that all that mattered in the Congress party's election strategy was money – matters like ideology, manifesto, principles had no place in its electoral battles. He said he did not trust Congress workers, for all the time they wanted money.

Even as they have not yet picked up the courage to question the party leadership's decision to support the AAP government, they are claiming that such support cannot be unconditional. Sheila Dikshit, the ousted chief minister of Delhi, whom Mr Keriwal trounced by a whopping margin of 26,000 votes, has declared that support for the AAP government will be based on its performance and issues.

It is a different matter, however, whether Mrs Dikshit should be taken seriously, for in revamping the Delhi unit after the recent elections the Congress leadership has sidelined

her. Mrs Dikshit has not only lost the chief minister's post she held for 15 long years [and her seat in the Delhi Assembly] but also a prominent position in the revamped party leadership structure as well.

One of the first steps the AAP government is likely to take is to launch an investigation into the massive loot of public funds that took place in laying the infrastructure for the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in 2010. Rumours have been afloat for several years that all the Commonwealth Games booty was not cornered alone by Suresh Kalmadi but it was shared with others in key positions. After spending several months in Tihar jail, Mr Kalmadi and his cohorts were enlarged on bail; the case against them on criminal charges is proceeding at snail's pace. Mr Kalmadi has claimed publicly that if money was made during the Commonwealth Games he was not the only beneficiary. The Delhi Government was in the loop and it cannot evade responsibility for the loss of public funds. If the Commonwealth Games records are prised out again, many skeletons are likely to tumble out the cupboard.

In spite of their promise to support the Aam Admi government, the Union government has already set in motion measures to create obstacles. On the eve of AAP Ministers taking the oath at a public function at Delhi's Ramleela grounds various agencies of the the Union Government have set about queering the pitch. The prices of LNG and PNG were raised all of a sudden on the eve of the AAP government's swearing in. This was obviously an attempt to warn the AAP not to go ahead with its epoch making plans to reduce the price of water and electricity in the national capital. Many other

(Continued on Page 15)

Why AAP model is unsafe for India?

K. S. Chalam

The astounding victory of the AAP in Delhi is a clear indication of the strong democratic foundations of our country. We may also congratulate Kejriwal and his team for effectively reaching out to the imagination of the Delhi voters and especially applaud Anna Hazare for the Lokpal Act. The emergence of the AAP enables us to reflect on the background of recent developments that led to popular Jasmine revolution in Egypt, Syria, Yemen and nearby Tunisia with spillover effects on India. It is also termed as Arab Spring by the new genre of public policy scholars who have manufactured scores of papers (under sponsored research) to educate *aam admi* (common man). The orange revolution in Ukraine with alleged US support is still unresolved.

The Anna Hazare-centred India Against Corruption and the civil society activity for the implementation of Jan Lokpal Bill with huge corporate media coverage needs to be reflected as a phenomenon set out in the backdrop of the events in the Middle East. The kind of dissensions and discords that became apparent in AAP and Anna Hazare last week is anticipated as wads in the Arab Spring. If someone is seriously following the events, it is clear that they are programmed like that. Instability and internal contradictions are a part of the formation of most of the civil society movements in the recent years.

The concept of civil society so popular now in public discourse was conceptualized by London School of Economics (popularised by Gramsci) after looking at the phenomena of autonomous movements that are

neither a part of State nor Market. The scholars have been trying to convince their readers that state and market, the two institutions became sane and progressive after the end of the Cold War. There seem to be some confusion between Habermas and Gramsci on civil society as to its relations with state and political parties, associations, and some academics have their own way in supporting whatever is convenient. The World Bank supports some 30 popular NGOs that are called as civil society organisations. But, it is everybody's knowledge today that the institution of state is class/caste oriented and markets are manipulated by corporate interests. Some of the scholars do try to hoodwink the commoners with their sophisticated language skills to avoid the awkward questions what constitutes the fundamental problem of the present crisis: concentration of economic wealth or capitalist expansion with lack of opportunities to the marginalised? Is it not a design to make some of the weak and resource rich countries unstable to install puppet governments and the so-called democratic movements are only excuses of American involvement?

In this context, none other than the Russian President Putin, in his article in *New York Times* a few months ago said, "millions around the world increasingly see America not as a model of democracy but as relying solely on brute force". It is not only Putin an avowed American *bête noire*, but American academics like Charles Kupchan commented that, "democracy and open markets have spread so widely in part because they have been defended by US aircraft-carriers". Therefore, India with vast resources

and a huge market potential in the neighbourhood of the so-called Arab world must be very careful in assessing every move of the West.

The current events in our polity require to be assessed in the given circumstances of instability and turmoil in some of the traditional totalitarian states like Syria. India, despite its weaknesses in certain social sectors is different from the Arab world and therefore, one should refrain from a conclusion that civil society agitations would naturally give rise to systems that are alternatives to a decadent system. AAP triumph in Delhi and its all-India ambition needs to be critically reflected in the interest of our democracy and institutions. No doubt, the party has some honest, sincere activists and a few with academic credentials to project and provide inputs and strategies to win elections. But, that does not make it credible and sustainable. One gets this impression with its brief record of election statements and communications (media reports). Kejriwal appears to have said that he has no ideological obligations and is willing to take ideas both from left and right. Is it not an opportunistic statement? It seems he has 70 manifestos for 70 constituencies and a general manifesto. He may have different manifestos for different communities, faiths, political ideologies and for East, West, North and South. The voters as per the election campaigns in Delhi were promised regularisation (paradises) of unauthorized colonies. The supporters in urban metros like Delhi coming from the new petty-bourgeois, seem to have behaved like '*Aap Pahle*' type persons (see Jugsurya's column, *ToI*). How can such a party be trusted? Does the party limit itself to municipal elections? What is its record against corruption, not in public statements but in practice? Politics is not a

business activity where one can afford to give publicity about a product and after capturing the customer forget about the promise without any remorse till next move?

The record of events show that there is some fall in the moral positioning of AAP party and seem to have already trapped in a mainstream political sludge. We may brush aside the allegations and averments against AAP as political vendetta of opponents. But, a political party that projected itself as an anti-corruption crusader without a program of action, ideology, manifesto etc, cannot be considered as trustworthy, given the record of events in Middle East. The conditions in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, etc. that have undergone similar situations are now under great stress of anarchy and common people or aam admi are shattered even three years after the spring and the promised bliss and peace. In Egypt, Mubarak government was overthrown and Morsi occupied the position with an Islamist agenda (with American backing). Now Morsi is deposed in a coup in July 2013. Media, the mischief monger is silent on the aftermath of Arab spring. There seem to be a conspiracy against the spontaneous movements of victims of exploitation, globalisation and the wicked designs of MNCs through sponsored and outsourced dramas to ease the intensity of anger of victims. The designs and strategies to be operated are regrettably processed through democratic institutions. The excess use of the institutions without the expected results, might burn the system. In this connection we may query what happened to the visibility of Social Summit? Therefore, the free world without reliable alternatives cannot afford this at this stage. Look at some of the consequences of the social media based movements. The agenda of Tea Party in USA

seems to have created problems for Democratic Obama, the Muslim Brotherhood is spreading fundamentalism in Arab nations and NGOs in India volunteer for private sector in education alleges Anil Sadgopal in a recent statement and so on. All of these groups give us an impression that they have short term agendas, some may appear to be sincere, but do not interrogate how crony capitalism, manipulation of market by corporate bigwigs with corrupt practices led to economic crisis and human deprivations. Whether AAP is concerned about the corrupt practices of corporate business houses that are involved in all scams? Would Jan Lokpal be sufficient to sweep out all corruption and fraud in our country? Which of the two, public or private sector corruption is higher in value in India? Why the corporate media projecting only select individuals and issues with huge costs involved? Did AAP and other protest groups notice how the onion prices in Delhi have suddenly come down immediately after elections and what does it indicate? Are the share markets reflecting the mood of the murky hand of bigwig modules?

Indian democracy has graduated over a period of time through ontogenetic maturity using traditional institutions and not necessarily by the Western values of democracy. The established national political parties like Congress, BJP, Communists, J D and the regional parties like SP, TDP, BJD, BSP, YSRCP, DMK, AIDMK, etc have some ideological positions or an agenda. In a democratic country where parliamentary politics decides many things in governance, ideological position of a party irrespective of left or right or centrist is predictable. But, a party or movement without an ideological commitment might send

Muzaffarnagar Calling

Qurban Ali

warning signals to some parties to get them vigilant. But, the process will make the citizens casual and might harm the democratic values, ultimately turning out to be a disaster to common man in the long run. We wish that a kichidi of sincere workers as in AAP should introspect and endure for posterity with a difference and do not burst like a bubble!

(Continued from Page 3)

it did not try to prod or get the support of independents. The party said that it did not get the mandate, something which was never the case before. This is a good beginning. Whether the political parties admit it or not, the AAP has set into motion an era which is harking back on the values. What has been disturbing in the year 2013 is the rise of communalism. To an extent, it is Modi's divisive politics which he has camouflaged under the garb of development. Once a *pracharak* of the RSS, he is creating a wedge between Hindu and Muslims who have been living in peace for more than a thousand years. The worst fallout of his propaganda has been the killing of Muslims in Muzaffarnagar. They were sharing a common life. But this did not fit into the BJP's scheme of things. The police force was, as usual, partisan. The victims are still languishing in camps despite the claim by state chief minister's father Mulayam Singh Yadav to be pro-Muslim. That is the reason why the Prevention of Communal Violence Bill should have been enacted during the winter session. This would have enabled the central government to intervene at a place where the police force was contaminated and where the state administration lax. Parties can tear a leaf out of the book of AAP. It has initiated a politics that transcends caste and creed. The AAP's success shows that the people are ready for it.

A brief report after a visit to Muzaffarnagar/ Shamli Relief Camps on December 20, 2013:

- There are two kinds of victims
 - those who have vacated their villages where riots erupted and those who have vacated out of fear of rioting, Migration is in huge numbers and people are not willing to go back to their villages at any cost.
- Government is paying Rs. 500000 to riot affected people and the list does not include those who have left out of fear and their side of story tells that had they stayed there, they would have been killed too. They left their places only to ensure safety to their women and children. It utterly is a police failure that it couldn't ensure them of their safety, otherwise the situation would not have been so bad as it is due to huge migration.
- Another big issue is that government is paying Rs. five lakh to each family, and it is not taking a note of families of married sons separately. A father aged 70 is getting five lakh for a family which includes his wife along with his married sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren and his daughters as well. Whereas when they left their original places they had all separate houses to live. Creepy situation it is.
- Some of the victims have got the relief amount and they've bought a piece of land and are living in tents on the same land as they have no funds to construct a house. There are several riot victims whose names are missing

in government lists.

- Government in addition to compensation of five lakhs, supplied food for the first ten days. Afterwards, only after media pressure, now officials are once again visiting the camps. In Loi, there was a medical camp and in Malakpur, they are supplying a quarter liter of milk each tent every morning.
- In Paladi there are 40 tents and approximately 220-250 people are taking refuge from Kutba. They are waiting for their compensation and are under pressure of land owners to vacate. They have no means to cook, there are hand-made chulhas. Due to rain, they don't get dry fuel to cook. They have excess of blankets and mattresses. They just want some of grocery and kid's warmers along with some cooking solution. Five policemen are guarding tents. Torches are required.
- In Shahpur there are 265 tents with around 1500 people taking refuge from Kutba, Lisaadh. Those who have got the compensation bought land but have no material to construct houses. Others are waiting for their relief money. Urgent requirements are the same as in Paladi. They need bricks, cement, iron sheets, and so on. They have excess of blankets. Jamait e Islam e Hind and Jamait e Ulema e Hind are doing commendable work. They're constructing one bhk houses for 70 families and are going to extend the efforts. There

(Continued on Page 10)

Gender under the spotlight in India – II

Vibhuti Patel

In the herstory of combating sexual harassment at workplace over last three decades, we have encountered the following four perspectives on SHW, as explained below.

Responsibility of Employers

Both, the Vishakha guidelines and the The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 categorically state that:

Every employer shall—

- a. provide a safe working environment at the workplace which shall include safety from the persons coming into contact at the workplace;
- b. display at any conspicuous place in the workplace, the penal consequences of sexual harassments; and the order constituting, the Internal

Committee under subsection (I) of section 4;

- c. organise workshops and awareness programmes at regular intervals for sensitising the employees with the provisions of the Act and orientation programmes for the members of the Internal Committee in the manner as may be prescribed;
- d. provide necessary facilities to the Internal Committee or the Local Committee, as the case may be, for dealing with the complaint and conducting an inquiry;
- e. assist in securing the attendance of respondent and witnesses before the Internal Committee or the Local Committee, as the case may be;
- f. make available such information to the Internal Committee or the Local Committee, as the case may be, as it may require having regard to the complaint made

under sub-section (1) of section 9;

- g. provide assistance to the woman if she so chooses to file a complaint in relation to the offence under the Indian Penal Code or any other law for the time being 45 of 1860. in force;
- h. cause to initiate action, under the Indian Penal Code or any other law for the 45 of 1860. time being in force, against the perpetrator, or if the aggrieved woman so desires, where the perpetrator is not an employee, in the workplace at which the incident of sexual harassment took place;
- i. treat sexual harassment as a misconduct under the service rules and initiate action for such misconduct;
- j. monitor the timely submission of reports by the Internal Committee.

Thus, it is the duty of the employer

Feminist	Legal	Organisational	
		View A	View B
Power relation, male over woman	Exploitative	Inter-personal	Inter-personal
Constitutes economic coercion	Involves both implicit and explicit terms of employment	Consists of misinterpretation or misunderstanding of person's intentions	Improper use of power to extort gratification
Threatens women's livelihood	Used as a basis for employment decisions	'Love affair gone sour'	Treats women as sex objects
Reflects women's subordinate status in society	Produces consequences from submission to/or refusal of advances	Personal matter. Why should organisation get involved?	Coercive, exploitative, improper
Asserts women's sex role over her work role	Promotes intimidating, hostile or offensive work environme	Can hurt reputation of accused	Asserts women's sex role over work role
Parallels rape			Aberrant behaviour

or other responsible persons in the workplace or institution to:

- Prevent sexual harassment
- Provide mechanisms for the resolution of complaints
- All women who draw a regular salary, receive an honorarium, or work in a voluntary capacity in the government, private sector or unorganised sector come under the purview of these guidelines.

Complaints mechanism

- All workplaces should have an appropriate complaints mechanism with a complaints committee, special counselor or other support services.
- A woman must head the complaints committee and no less than half its members should be women.
- The committee should include an NGO/individual familiar with the issue of sexual harassment.
- The complaints procedure must be time-bound.
- Confidentiality must be maintained.
- Complainants/witnesses should not experience victimisation/discrimination during the process.

Preventive steps

- Sexual harassment should be affirmatively discussed at workers' meetings, employer-employee meetings, etc.
- Guidelines should be prominently displayed to create awareness about the rights of female employees.
- The employer should assist persons affected in cases of sexual harassment by outsiders.
- Central and state governments must adopt measures, including legislation, to ensure that private

employers also observe the guidelines.

- Names and contact numbers of members of the complaints committee must be prominently displayed.
- *Employers' responsibilities*
- Recognise sexual harassment as a serious offence.
- Recognise the responsibility of the company/ factory/workplace to prevent and deal with sexual harassment at the workplace.
- Recognise the liability of the company, etc, for sexual harassment by the employees or management. Employers are not necessarily insulated from that liability because they were not aware of sexual harassment by staff.
- Formulate an anti-sexual harassment policy. This should include:
 - A clear statement of the employer's commitment to a workplace free of unlawful discrimination and harassment.
 - Clear definition of sexual harassment (using examples), and prohibition of such behaviour as an offence.
 - Constitution of a complaints committee to investigate, mediate, counsel and resolve cases of sexual harassment. The Supreme Court guidelines envisage a proactive role for the complaints committee, and *prevention* of sexual harassment at work is a crucial role. It is thus imperative that the committee consist of persons who are sensitive and open to the issues faced by women.
 - A statement that anyone found guilty of harassment after

investigation will be subject to disciplinary action.

- The range of penalties that the complaints committee can levy against the offender should include:
 - Explicit protection of the confidentiality of the victim of harassment and of witnesses. A guarantee that neither complainant nor witnesses will be subjected to retaliation. Publishing the policy and making copies available at the workplace. Discussing the policy with all new recruits and existing employees. Third-party suppliers and clients should also be aware of the policy.
- Conducting periodic training for all employees, with active involvement of the complaints committee.

Freedom from sexual harassment is a condition of work that an employee is entitled to expect. Women's rights at workplace are human rights.

Conclusion

Sexual harassment at the workplace is a universal problem. Sexual harassment is a form of abuse. At the workplace, it is also about power play of a bully over a vulnerable individual, regardless of age, class, ethnicity, race, religion or sex. It impinges on the fundamental right to earn a livelihood by making it difficult to work.

Even though the occurrence of sexual harassment at the workplace is widespread in India and elsewhere, this is the first time it has been legally recognised as an infringement of the fundamental rights of a woman, under Article 19(1) (g) of the Constitution of India "to practice any profession or to carry out any

occupation, trade or business". Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Indian Constitution provide safeguards against all forms of discrimination. As there is no clarity in definition of 'woman', transgender community is clubbed with women and when any transgender person faces sexual harassment they don't even get legal redressal.

Of late, the problem of sexual harassment at the workplace has assumed serious proportions and some of the survivors of SHW are also reporting to the complaints committees. Surprisingly, however, in most cases women do not report the matter to the concerned authorities.

India is rapidly advancing in its developmental goals and more and more women are joining the workforce. It is the duty of the state to provide for the wellbeing and respect of its citizens to prevent frustration, low self-esteem, insecurity and emotional disturbance, which, in turn, could affect business efficacy, leading to loss of production and loss of reputation for the organisation or the employer. In fact, the recognition of the right to protection against sexual harassment is an intrinsic component of the protection of women's human rights. It is also a step towards providing women independence, equality of opportunity and the right to work with dignity.

In the last 50 years, various international human rights organisations have been focusing on promoting and protecting women's rights. The United Nations has acknowledged that women's rights are synonymous with human rights. Most international women's human rights movements have raised their voice against abuse

and violence perpetrated against women in general. In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Areas where discrimination was found to be rampant include political rights, marriage, family and employment. The convention emphasised that discrimination and attacks on a woman's dignity violated the principle of equality of rights. The same was reiterated in the Beijing Declaration, 1995.

With a meteoric rise in the number of cases, the women's groups in India have begun lobbying with parliamentarians to get the rule of the Act in the winter session of Parliament. For any sexual harassment law to be successful in India, it is important to be aware of the difficulties confronting our society and ways to overcome them. We all know that in a patriarchal society most cases of sexual harassment remain unreported. Women are reluctant to complain and prefer silence due to lack of sensitivity on the part of Indian society. There is a need to gender-sensitise our society so that the victim does not feel guilty and is encouraged to report any form of harassment. The victim's privacy must be protected. The police and the judiciary, in particular, also need to be gender-sensitised. There should be speedy redressal and an increase in the conviction rate. Women themselves should be made aware of their right to a safe and harassment-free work environment. The concept and definition of sexual harassment and range of punishments should be clearly laid down in service books of all industries, enterprises and government bodies and the redressal mechanism made known

to women in each and every sector of the economy. Structures and mechanisms should also be created for women in the unorganised/informal sector to combat SHW. The legal institutions, media houses, police and other government departments have still not instituted sexual harassment complaints committee. Recent controversy around sexual harassment of law interns and journalist working for Tehalka has again brought this issue centre stage. The apex court must direct the various workplaces to form sexual harassment committees within a stipulated time frame.

In any civilised society, it is the fundamental right of people to be able to lead their lives with dignity, free from mental or physical torture. To ensure this, transgressors must pay for their unsolicited sexual advances. At the same time organisations such as Men Against Violence and Abuse, that conduct gender-sensitisation programmes and self-defense classes to combat sexual harassment at the workplace, must be encouraged (Sadani, 2003).

To effectively prevent SHW we need both a top-down initiative by the state and employers and pressure from civil society- from working women, citizens' groups, women's organisations and trade unions.

For any sexual harassment law to be successful in India, it is important to be aware of the difficulties confronting our society and ways to overcome them. There is a need to gender-sensitise our society so that the victim does not feel guilty and is encouraged to report any form of harassment. The victim's privacy must be protected. The police and the judiciary, in particular, also need to be gender-sensitised. There should be speedy redressal and an

increase in the conviction rate

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is a regular police vigil. Torches or solar lights are required.

- In Loi there are 485 tents which house 2500 plus refugees from Phugana, Kutba and Lisaadh, its dharavi like slum. We found SDM there and a medical camp too, police vigil is there but people complained that they were terrorizing "us" so as to get the place vacated as soon as possible. Loads of complains against the Government list of riot victims. They have same requirements as in Paladi and Shahpur. They have blankets and winter material. Some of the tents are not in good shape. Hygiene is a big issue as there are man-made temporary toilets. Requirement of construction material along with cooking means. Torches are required.
- Rautera Mansura (Jhinjhana) is in worst condition, due to its

remote location and neglected by media. There are 400 plus tents with 2200 plus refugees. Rain has made the situation miserable. They need whatever is possible, local administration has neglected it badly. No access to water as well, some hand-pumps are required with solar lights and hand torches. Chaarpai is another requirement as the camp is directly in-between standing crops. Rain has increased with reptiles moving around..

- Malakpur is another Dharavi with 785 tents and around 5000 refugees. They have blankets and other material but are looking for some cooking solution. They also need solar lighting and hand torches as it was under complete dark and without police patrolling. Some of them got the relief fund but have no money left for construction.

Politics of Secularism

D. K Giri

A Pakistani Christian once asked me: how you can call yourself a secular country, when people are deeply religious and added: what an unworkable concept you have adopted! In *Hindu*, 30th November 2013, historian Sanjay Subramanian, who has a prestigious chair in France, says that Indian secularism means the state mediating between religions. Between a common man's perception and scholarly interpretation, where do we locate the meaning and practice of secularism in India? Admittedly, secularism is misunderstood by both citizens and leadership and often misused by the latter. Talking of the two big parties, while Congress panders to each religion community depending upon the political exigency, BJP is seen as a sectarian party accusing the Congress of pseudo secularism. After the unfortunate, perhaps avoidable, partition of the country in 1947 on the religious line, accompanied with a horrendous bloodbath, we should have had no communal violence, but it continues to haunt us. So obviously, secularism has not secured the religion or the religious groups, especially the minorities.

Secularism seems unworkable, but it is the fundamental principle enshrined in our Constitution, therefore, we cannot drop it from our political life. Recall the verdict of the Supreme Court in 1973, in the case of, *Keshavananda Bharati, vs the state of Kerala*: "although no part of the constitution, including the fundamental rights, was beyond the amending powers of the Parliament, the basic structure of the Constitution could not be abrogated by constitutional amendments". The

Court held that the basic structure consisted of the following; (i) supremacy of the Constitution, (ii) a republic and democratic form of government, (iii) the secular character of the Constitution, (iv) maintenance of separation of powers, and (v) the federal character of the Constitution. We, therefore, need a clearer understanding and workable interpretation of secularism.

Origin and meaning.

The concept of secularism was created by the British writer George Jacob Holyoake in 1846. He used the term to describe a social order separate from religion, without actively dismissing religious beliefs. He said people should be concerned with questions of life that can be tested in this life. Holyoake was a leader of the English secularist and free thought movement, and his time was the "age of enlightenment", in which the state/society was being separated from the dominance of the church. In Europe, secular meant non-religious, secular work meant anything not related to church activities. This became the dominant understanding and practice of secularism. Holyoake had meant secularism to be a particular line of thinking, not the negation or denial of religion. In his 1896 publication, *English Secularism*, he defined secularism as, "a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on considerations purely human, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable. Its essential principles are: improvement of this life by material means and that science is the available providence of man." In this sense, secularism is

a social and philosophical category, not strictly political.

In France, secularism is explained by a concept called *laïcité*. This is even a stronger separation between the state and religion, in fact pushing the latter into private realm. The strong state in France attempts to privatise religion. The essence of laicism is to create a neutral public space in which religious beliefs, practices and instincts have lost their political significance and have been pushed to the private sphere. Mixing of politics and religion are regarded as irrational and dangerous. With such an understanding, the French government is prohibiting any ostentatious religious practices like wearing of burkha by the Muslims or turbans by the Sikhs and so on. It is another matter that faced with a strong and vibrant civil society and the dilution of state power across the world, the French government may have to rethink civil society accommodation, instead of domination. In the US, religion is separated from the state, from the day of founding of the Constitution. The first amendment of the Constitution expressly prohibits Congress from making laws "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof". In other words government in the US is prohibited from preferring one religion to the other, and from preferring religion to non-religion. In European countries in England, Finland and Denmark they recognise an official church. In Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain the state and church think of common tasks. The governments in those countries

even fund church organisations. Therefore, secularist division between religion and politics is not fixed, but rather historically and socially constructed.

Indian Secularism

Indian secularism has been interpreted in various ways. The literal meaning of secularism in the Constitution, looking at the Hindi translation of the word as mentioned in the amendment, is *dhramanirapekshata*. This means the state neutrality. The state is neutral in the matters of religion. But the state has not been neutral, it has been, according to historian Subramanian and others, mediating between religions. There are also many religious scholars who would not equate *dharma* with religion. *Dharma* means the principle or law that orders the universe and its practice means an individual's conduct in conformity with this principle and the essential function or nature of a thing. Furthermore, in Hinduism *dharma* is an individual's obligation with respect to caste, social custom, civil law, and sacred law.

Without getting into the semantics between *dharma* and religion, let us focus on the meaning and practice of secularism. The other interpretation of secularism is "*sarvadharmasambhava*", meaning all religions should be equal. Political commentators have questioned the practicality of this interpretation, how unequal religions (in number of its followers, Hindus are 83 per cent or more, Buddhists are 0.9 per cent, Christians are 2.3 per cent, Jews are too small in number) can be possibly treated equally? Consequent to this interpretation, the small religious groups are crowded out of public space by big religious groups namely, Hindus and

Muslims. The third interpretation is a bit Nehruvian, which was then followed by communists, equating secularism in public life with atheism or agnosticism. Karl Marx, the Guru of Communists, had famously said, "Religion is the opium of the people". The Marxism has declined, so has the indifference if not the opposition to religion. Besides, in India, the vast majority of people are religious, atheists being very few.

From the above, it is clear that there is no standard definition of secularism in Indian politics. Whatever has been the motivation of those who included this fundamental principle in the Constitution, it has not worked well. We have witnessed too much communal violence to call ourselves secular. How can we prevent the sectarian strife and violence, give secularism a robust meaning?

What should Secularism mean?

Secularism should be seen as an ethic by itself in regard to the religion, not a negation of the latter. It should be seen as doing at least three things. One, it should maintain harmony in a pluralist society. When we call ourselves secular, we respect all other identities in a society, be it religious, linguistic, ethnic or regional. That is how we would respect each other and learn from each other. The beauty of life lies "in unity in diversity". In an individual, he or she does many things but all actions are united in giving a meaning to one's existence, and in a society, making it viable. A society is not monolithic, and if it is, it will not be viable as it requires many interdependent units to make it work. Second, secularism leads to growth of modern knowledge system, the concepts of rationality. There are things in life like poverty,

malnutrition, hunger, disease that cannot be cured by religion. They require, science, technology, medicines. That is why we have secular institutions like laboratories, hospitals, banks, and universities and so on. Third, secularism should balance the twin spheres of life - religion and politics. Religion however interpreted is also needed in life, there are things in life, that any project of modernity or rationality, cannot explain, for instance, the pain and pleasure, life and death, bliss and serenity, etc. Hence, secularism should maintain the purity of religion, but promote rationality in life including in religion, not mysticism nor blind allegiance. Secularism is therefore a combination of reason and religion

To conclude, secularism in India should mean promotion of religious pluralism. The state should oversee the practice of religions to the extent that they do not override human rights universally recognized or the laws of the land. It should promote religious pluralism; let the religions play out in the open, in the public domain so that people are not victims of false and misleading religious propaganda. Let Indians maintain the judicious balance between religion and politics giving each other their respective *individual and collective* space, not private or public. This is the key difference in approach one is suggesting. When we say individual, it could mean religious communities too as it is inevitable in Indian context, but even that community will be treated as individual community, when it comes to public life, and collective would mean political community, which is plural and secular, governed by collective and commonly negotiated and agreed principles, like those enshrined in Constitution.

Rajya Sabha MPs

National Election Watch (NEW) has analyzed affidavits of 227 out of 245 MPs of Rajya Sabha. 12 members of Rajya Sabha are nominated by the President and are not mandated under current laws to submit their affidavits to the Election Commission. There are 4 seats vacant right now (2 in Uttar Pradesh, 1 in Andhra Pradesh and 1 nominated seat) and 3 affidavits were either badly scanned or a few pages are missing (Nand Kumar Sai of BJP from Chhattisgarh, Aayanur Manjunatha of BJP from Karnataka and Mohammed Adeb an Independent member from Uttar Pradesh).

Criminal:

- **MPs with Criminal Cases:** Out of the 227 MPs analyzed for Rajya Sabha Election, 38 (17%) MPs, declared criminal cases against themselves.
- **MPs with Serious Criminal Cases:** Out of these 227 MPs analyzed, 15 MPs (7%) declared Serious Criminal cases against themselves.
- **Top three MPs with Serious Criminal Cases:** Among the 15 MPs who have declared serious criminal cases, Prof. Baghel S.P. Singh of BSP from Uttar Pradesh has declared 1 case including charges related to Attempt to murder followed by Shri Parvej Hashmi of INC from Delhi with 1 case including charges related to voluntarily causing grievous hurt and Thiru T.Rathinavel of AIADMK from Tamil Nadu with 1 case including charges related to undue influence or personation at an election.

Financial:

- **Average Assets of MPs:** The average asset of the 227 Rajya Sabha MPs analyzed is Rs. 20.17 Crore.
- **Party wise Average Assets:** Among major parties, the average asset of Rajya Sabha MPs from INC is Rs 16.74 crores, from BJP is Rs 8.51 crores, from BSP is Rs 13.82 crores, and from CPI (M) it is Rs 39.65 Lacs.
- **Crorepati MPs:** Out of 227 MPs analyzed from Rajya Sabha, 153 (67%) are crorepatis.
- **High Asset MPs:** The MP with maximum assets in the Rajya Sabha Election is Mahendra Prasad of JD(U) from Bihar with assets worth Rs 683.56 crores, followed by Dr. Vijaya Mallya, Independent member from Karnataka with Rs 615.42 crores and Jaya Amitabh Bachchan of SP from Uttar Pradesh with assets worth Rs. 493.86 crores.
- **Low Asset MPs:** 9 MPs have declared assets worth less than Rs 20 Lakh. Anil Dave of BJP from Madhya Pradesh is the MP who has declared lowest assets worth Rs. 2.75 lakhs followed by Mohammed Nadimul of AITC from West Bengal who has declared assets worth Rs. 3.19 lakhs and Shymal Chakraborty of CPI (M) from West Bengal with assets worth Rs 5.47 lakhs.
- **Liabilities of MPs:** A total of 4 (2%) MPs out of 227 analyzed declared liabilities of Rs. 20 Crore and above. 99 MPs declared Zero Liabilities.

- **MPs with Highest Liabilities:** Jaya Amitabh Bachchan of SP from Uttar Pradesh declared the highest liabilities worth Rs. 152.34 Crores, followed by Abhishek Manu of INC from Rajasthan with liabilities worth Rs. 37.24 Crores
- **PAN detail of MPs:** 32 (14%) MPs have not declared their PAN details.
- **MPs Education:** A total of 190 (84%) out of 227 MPs analyzed are Graduates or with higher educational qualification. About 5% of MPs (12 out of 227 analyzed) have educational qualifications equivalent to 10th Pass or below.
- **MPs Gender:** Out of the 227 MPs analyzed, there are only 20 women MPs in the Rajya Sabha.
- **MPs Age:** Out of 227 MPs analyzed, 3 MPs are above 80 years of age.

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Socialist Party [India]

National Committee of Socialist Party (India) met at New Delhi on 22-12-2013. Bhai Vaidya was in the chair. Twenty-two members, five State presidents and four invitees were present, amongst whom prominent was Justice Rajinder Sachar.

In-depth discussion took place on the results of the five State Assemblies. It was decided to contest Lok Sabha election from only those constituencies where minimum organizational structure is created and minimum resources can be mobilised. Applications from those who want to fight election on the Party ticket are required to submit their applications, through State secretary, so as to reach the same to Pannalal Surana, Chairman, Central Parliamentary Board, Sane Guruji Smarak, Sinhagad Road, Pune, 411030 before 1st February, 2014. The Central Parliamentary Board will meet at Pune on 3rd February, 2014 at 11 a.m.

State units are expected to get election manifesto translated in the regional languages, prepare State addenda and get these printed in abundant quantity and arrange their publicity in newspapers as also through wide manual circulation.

Dr. Prem Singh moved a resolution extending felicitations to Justice Rajinder Sachar on his 90th birthday. The meeting gave standing ovation to the leader. It was also decided to organize seminars at different places in the country on the Sachar Report as also on ideology of democratic socialism.

Following resolutions were adopted at the meeting:

1 With a view to implement directive principles of State policy as enshrined in our Constitution,

policy planners are called upon to put full employment as the main objective of economic planning and ensuing policies and programs.

Since agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery have great employment potential with less capital investment, agro-industrial model, instead of the Western one, be developed. Water is an important input required by the sectors. As it is a natural resource, it should be treated as Commons right and not a marketable commodity. Potable water be made available to all families, within five years, residing in rural as well as urban areas. These days many urban areas, particularly inhabited by the poor, are getting water once in two or three days. Steps must be taken to make it available daily in adequate quantity. This must be done by public authorities. There should be no privatization in this field. Secondly, adequate water should be made available to irrigate as many far off lands as possible so that each cultivator is assured at least one crop a year.

Socialist Party calls upon the youths of the nation to engage more and more in ventures in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and fishery and run them on cooperative basis.

2. The Sixth Pay Commission had enhanced disparity (1) between the upper and lower grades of Government employees and (2) between the salaried classes on the one hand and other self-employed or unorganized sector workers on the other. Financial burden on the public treasury

became unbearable rendering little resources for development schemes. Therefore the Party calls upon the Central Government. to give following terms of reference to the Seventh Pay Commission namely (1) to reduce disparities mentioned above, (2) cut down public holidays (3) lessen the burden on public exchequer.

3. Education is an organic ingredient of the right to life guaranteed by the Constitution. So it should be viewed as social service and not a marketable commodity. All efforts at allowing corporate, foreign and indigenous institutions to enter education at different levels must be given up. Common, free and qualitative education to children from 3 to 12 years must be provided by the State. Right to Education Act be amended suitably. Services of non-profit-making voluntary societies be harnessed for running educational institutions at secondary, higher and vocational levels.
4. The party is dismayed by the act of all important political parties of the country making unanimous recommendation to omit political parties from the ambit of the RTI. Since all those parties ask for transparency in the transactions of the governments at all levels, they must throw open all their financial transactions for public scrutiny. The Party calls upon the Parliament to ensure citizen's right to ask for information about receipts and expenditures of political parties.

All party units and members are requested to propagate these resolutions. Seminars be organized to elicit public opinion and mobilise pressure on the authorities.

– Pannalal Surana

Open letter

Respected Anna Hazareji,

I have for long been a great admirer of yours. The social mobilisation and moral transformation that you brought about in Ralegan Siddhi in the 1980s was a truly historic achievement. You went on to bring about another and even bigger achievement two decades later, namely a national anti-corruption mass movement. With this, you became a national and even international figure of great importance and put corruption firmly on the national agenda.

Against that background I am distressed and dismayed at some recent developments. One knows that Arvind Kejriwal and you parted ways over the issue of forming a political party. It should be possible to maintain those differences without any loss of mutual regard.

While maintaining your reservations on the conversion of a movement into a political party, you could have been generous enough to wish Arvind well in his efforts to cleanse the system in his own way. Initially you made some positive remarks about his dramatic electoral success, but your tone changed very soon. You became critical, tried to downplay his success by claiming that he would have done better if you had campaigned for him, obliquely suggested doubts about AAP's funding, and made snide remarks about people who go before cameras. The tone and tenor of these attacks seem uncharacteristic of you. As an admirer of yours, may I implore you to get away from these aberrations and revert to your innate greatness and nobility of nature?

On the Lokpal Bill (now a law), you are ready not merely to accept a compromise but to do so

enthusiastically. I am mystified by this dramatic change in your attitude from what it was a year ago. AAP is still adhering to your earlier position of a firm stand on the Jan Lokpal Bill. My own view is that the law now passed, however imperfect, is a useful start, and is certainly a historic development. However, AAP is entitled to its views. This again is a legitimate difference of views.

You seem to regard the passing of this law as a personal victory. No one will wish to dispute that claim. However, the shaking up of politics caused by the recent Assembly elections brought about a change in the thinking of the political parties, and this partly accounts for the sudden willingness to pass a Lokpal law. Thus, AAP's electoral success also had something to do with this development, even though AAP itself is critical of the new law.

A combination of circumstances brought about the quick passing of a law, a development that would have been inconceivable not very

long ago.

The anti-corruption movement is very important. The impression must not be created that it is a fractured movement. Unfortunately, it seems to me that having started a great revolution you are now weakening that revolution yourself by your attacks on a former trusted lieutenant who still remains your disciple though you have disowned him. He has no doubt chosen a different path, but he and you are on the same side in the battle against corruption. AAP itself is an offshoot of the movement that you started. If AAP can claim a part of the credit for the passing by Parliament of the Lokpal law (though they consider it weak), you in turn can claim AAP's electoral success as partly your own because it is the outcome of the movement that you started. If you keep this in mind, much of the misunderstanding will disappear. This is as much an appeal to Arvind Kejriwal as to you.

With respectful salutations, warm regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Ramaswamy R. Iyer

(Continued from Page 4)

steps would no doubt follow. The AAP leadership must watch their steps and move cautiously. The AAP leaders themselves as well as those who wish them well will keep their fingers crossed.

The BJP is crying hoarse about the Aam Admi Party "betraying the people's trust" by accepting Congress support to climb to power. This does not, at least for the time being, give any leverage to the BJP to manipulate or manoeuvre. The BJP's election managers had calculated that the elections would throw up

a split verdict with no party being in a position to form a government in a hung legislature in Delhi. The expectation of a hung assembly proved right but the AAP mopping up so many seats was beyond their imagination. And what upset the BJP leadership more is the formation of the government by the AAP. Because this has preempted their calculation that there would be fresh elections for the Delhi Assembly and, riding the crest of their stunning wins in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh, they would romp home in Delhi too.



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